



# WEBFOOTER EXTRA

## JANUARY 2025

### A HISTORY OF ORIENT OREGON



Early postmark from Orient, Oregon from Dec. 14, 1898.



Real photo postcard of J.N. Campbell's Postoffice Store at Orient, Oregon, circa 1908.

# COVER POSTCARD:



Orient, Oregon had its own post office for twelve years. It was established at the Orient Postoffice Store on March 6, 1896, after the Pleasant Home post office closed.

The "Postoffice Store" was located about two miles west of Pleasant Home on US Route 26, and about a half-mile north of the Clackamas-Multnomah County Line.

The first and only Postmaster at Orient was store proprietor James N. Campbell on the left. The post office was discontinued on Nov. 30, 1908 after the route was absorbed into the Boring and Gresham mail carrier routes.

The Orient Postoffice Store carried items such as hardware, dry goods, stationery, tools, notions, harnesses, groceries, flour, tinware, feed, garden, and grass seeds, as well as boots and shoes.

The Railroad is Coming  
BUT —  
**J. N. Campbell**  
is here with GOOD GOODS and RIGHT PRICES

Dry Goods, Boots and Shoes, Notions, Stationery, Crockery, Etc.	GROCERIES Flour, Feed, Etc.	HARDWARE, Tinware, Shelf and Builder's Hardware, Harness Supplies.
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SATISFACTION or MONEY BACK

Postoffice Store, - - Orient, Ore.

Advertisement for the Orient Postoffice Store from the Beaver State Herald on August 24, 1906.

# A HISTORY OF ORIENT OREGON

## BY MARK MOORE



Glittered Greetings from Orient, Oregon postcard, circa 1909.

Orient, Oregon is an unincorporated community located in East Multnomah County approximately five miles southeast of Gresham, Oregon and four miles north of Boring, Oregon in nearby Clackamas County. For many years, agriculture was the prominent industry in Orient, as well as Gresham and the surrounding communities. Orient, Oregon is one of seven communities nationwide to claim the name of Orient.

The town of Orient, Oregon was home to the very first person of Japanese descent to settle in Oregon, Miyo Iwakoshi, who arrived in 1880 with her Scotsman husband, Andrew McKinnon, and their five-year-old adopted daughter, Tama Nitobe. Her arrival spawned the immigration of thousands of people from Japan who would contribute to the state's economic development as they struggled against discrimination and tested America's civil rights.

Oregon was growing rapidly at the time, and McKinnon purchased a railroad-tie sawmill from J. W. Roork and renamed the business Orient Steam Sawmill, in honor of his spouse. MacKinnon formed a partnership with his close friend, Robert Smith and two other local men (William Maxwell and Allen--last name not known) to operate the mill.

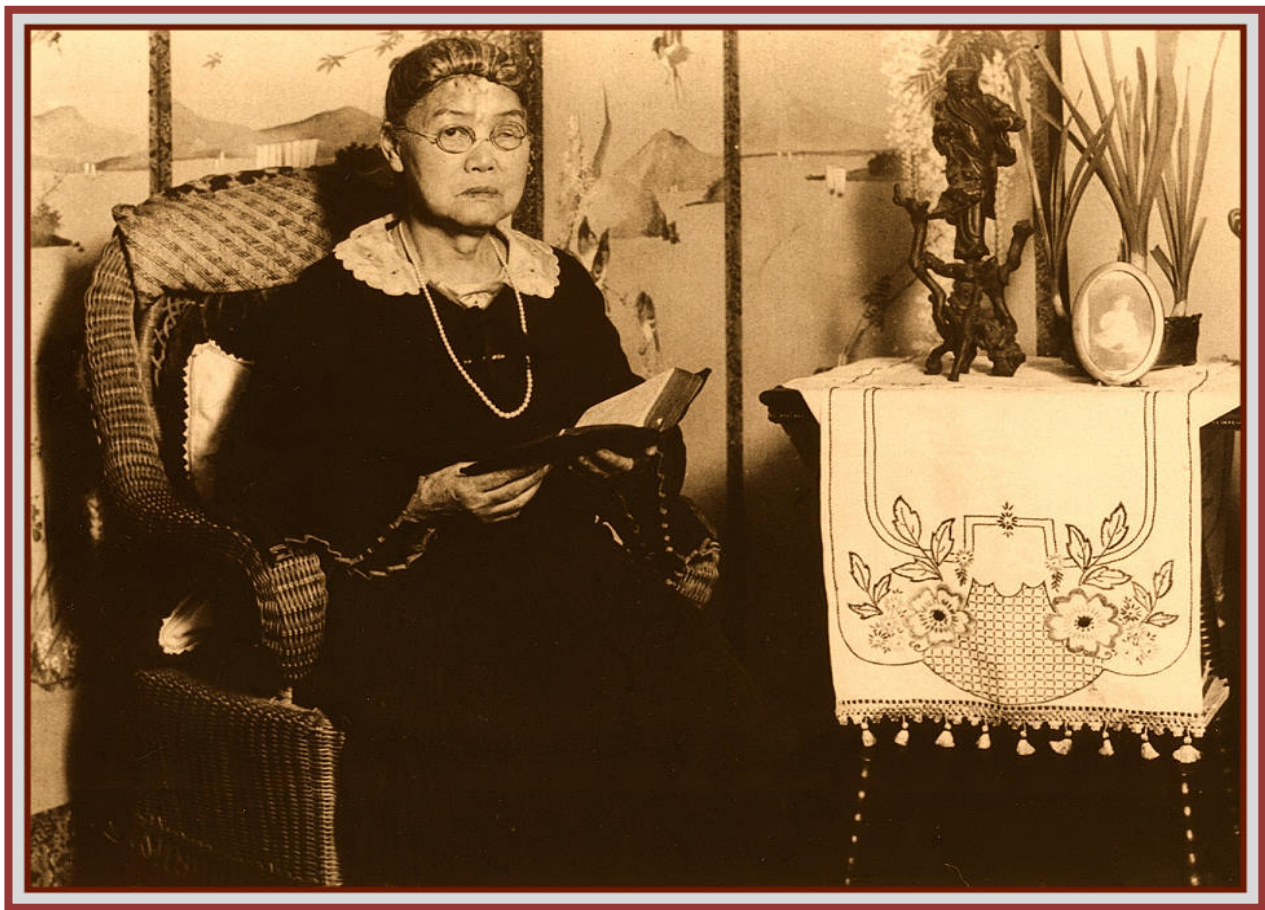


Photo of Oregon's first Japanese immigrant, Miyo Iwaboshi, resident of Orient, circa 1920s.



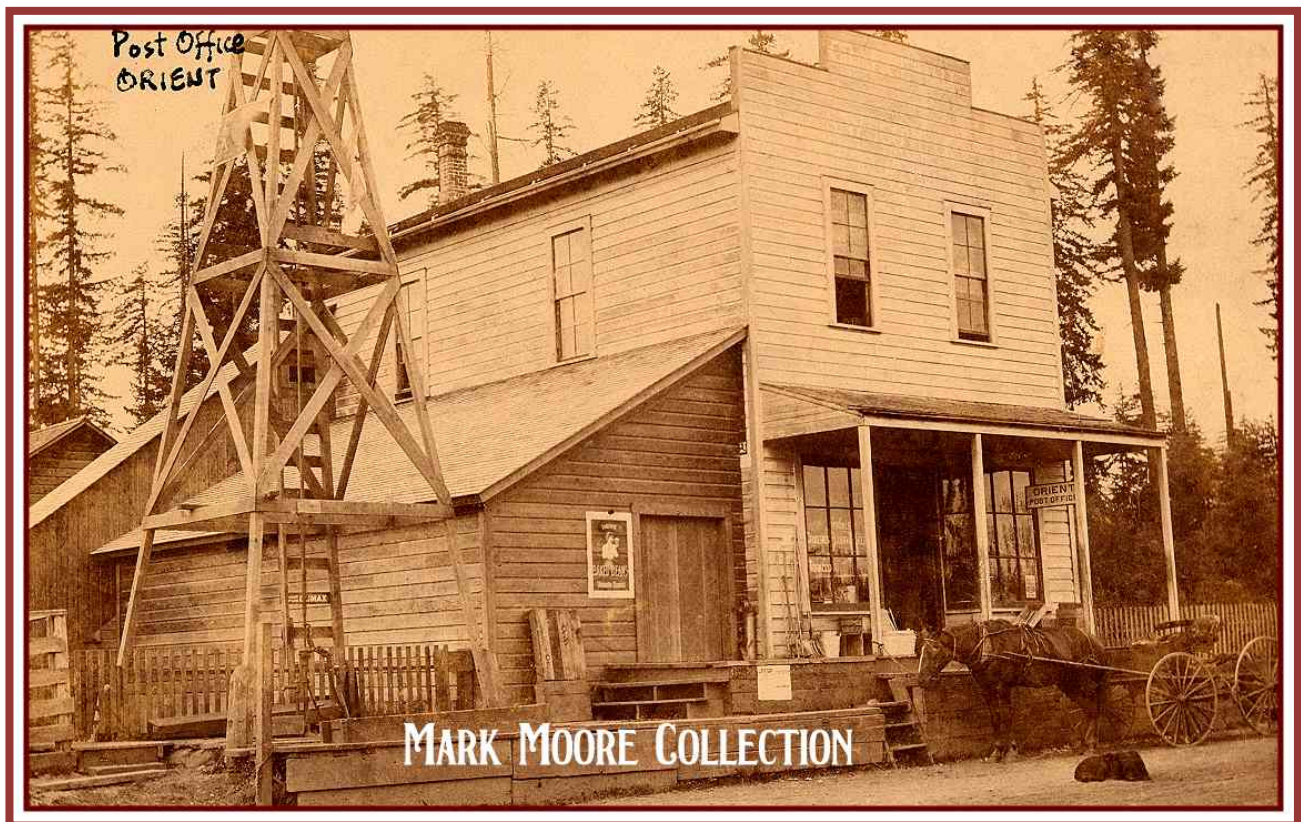
Resting in the shade of the Gresham Pioneer Cemetery, there is now a grave marker with the name Miyo Iwakoshi.

Andrew MacKinnon was born in Argyllshire, Scotland in 1822. He first immigrated to Australia from Scotland like many other Scotsmen did in the mid-19th century. His expertise was mostly in livestock and large-scale industrial farming. In 1873, he moved to Japan after Australia experienced extreme droughts.

At this time, the Japanese government had opened up previously unused land for farming. They needed westerners to help train farmers with new machinery and methods in an attempt to industrialize the Japanese agricultural system. MacKinnon found work training the Japanese farmers. It is unknown why in 1880 he traveled to the United States with 28-year-old Miyo Iwakoshi and a five-year old child, Tama Nitobe. Not much is known of Miyo and Tama's early life in Japan. Some historians believe Tama was the illegitimate child of a "high-ranking" official. There is only a record of her birth in the city of Nagasaki.

Miyo was known by hundreds of first-generation Japanese immigrants as the "Western Empress," because of the years of service she devoted to helping them find their way and start new lives in the United States.

MacKinnon died in 1886, only six years after arriving in Orient, Oregon. Miyo lived to the age of 79, passing away in 1931. At the time she died, there was much anti-Japanese feeling in the community and state. A league of American citizens had tried to block Japanese from owning land. Despite her position in Oregon history and her acceptance by neighbors, there was only a terse comment in the Portland papers, and no stone was placed on her grave. Instead, a small Japanese cedar was planted as her grave marker. Many years later, a headstone was added to mark her grave.



Real photo postcard of J.N. Campbell's Postoffice Store at Orient, Oregon, circa 1907.

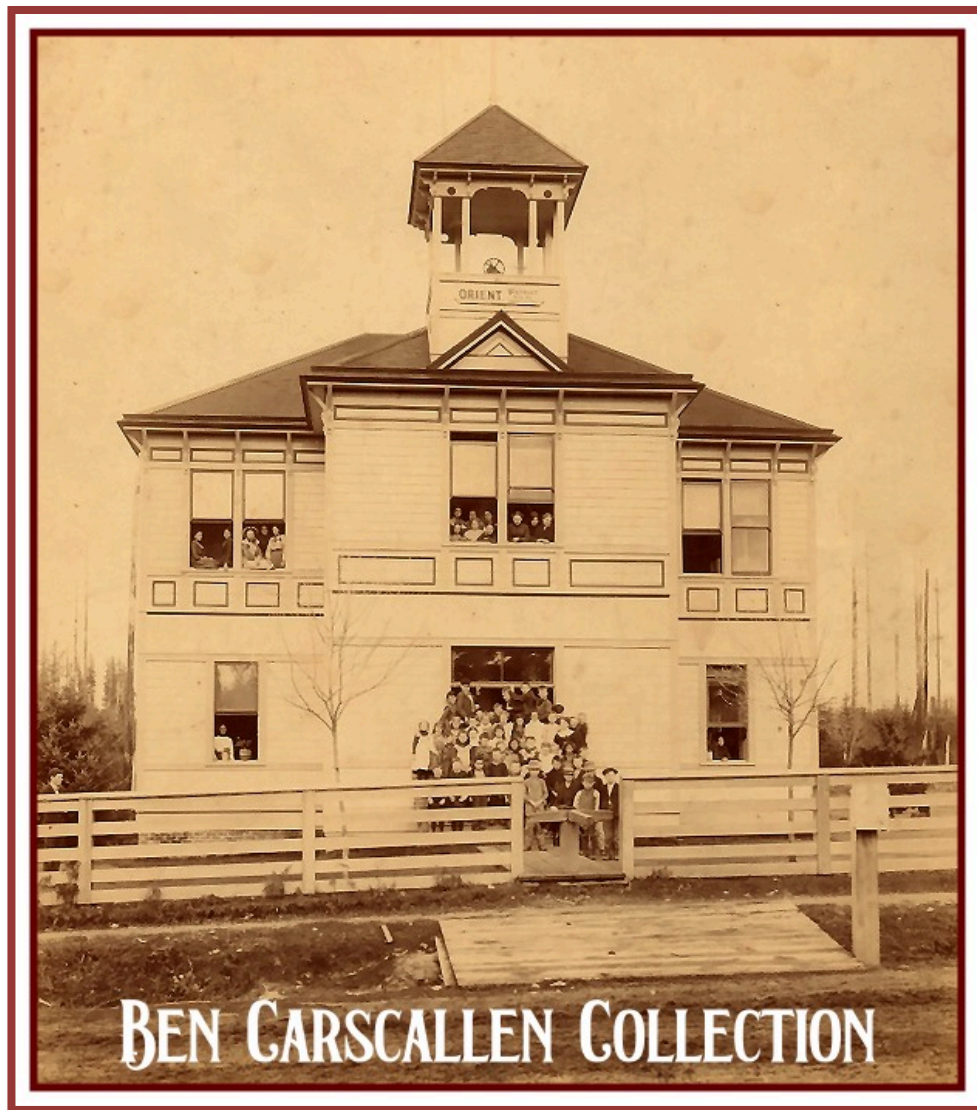


Photo of the two-story Orient Grade School which opened in 1896, circa 1898.

Orient School District was organized in 1853 and it was originally named District 6—Jt. 300. It included Cedar Victory, Lusted and portions of the Powell Valley and Cottrell School Districts. The first school building was located on the Archon Kelly homestead.

In 1875, William Henry Maxwell donated two acres of land located on present-day Orient Drive for the construction of a new school building, built that year by Fairview carpenter, John Snover. The one-room building also served as a community center.

In 1896, Orient School District built a two-story school building to accommodate the growing student population. In 1925, the West Orient Middle School building was completed, and in 1954, the East Orient Elementary School building opened. The Orient School District was incorporated into the Gresham-Barlow School District in 1994.

**Sources:**

*"A Community School Remembered"* by Thomas Greene; *"Oregon Postmarks, A Catalog of 19th Century Usage"* by Charles A. Whittlesey & Richard W. Helbock, La Posta Publications, 1985; Oregon Encyclopedia; Wikipedia; *"Oregon Post Offices 1847-1982"* by Richard W. Helbock, Postal Historian Charles Neyhart.

GEORGE R. ANDERSON

J. A. LAUDERBACK

# Orient Lumber Co.

Paint, Shingles and Roofing

Gresham, Oregon, Rt. A

Phone 1083

**STEPHEN KENNEY COLLECTION**

Advertisement for Orient Lumber Company from 1922.



Join the Antique Paper Round-Up at Lloyd Center on Sept. 19-20, 2025.