

Dotty DeCoster is currently preparing a biography of John Nagle. She contacted Laurel Lemke, Grave Concerns Association, to determine whether his gravesite was at the historic Western State Hospital patient cemetery. Laurel did not have a match, Dotty pursued her search and found his burial site in King County. She prepared this obituary which describe a fascinating life. Thank you, Dotty, for your research and allowing us to know about this important person, who spent so many years at the institution.

John H. Nagle (1830 - 1897)

Seattle Pioneer

John H. Nagle (pronounced Nail^l), was born in Germany and came to the United States in 1833 with his family, to Hagerstown, Maryland, then to Pennsylvania and Indiana. In the summer of 1853, Nagle arrived in Seattle. Family history recounts that he was joined by his sister, Catherine Anna Nagle, who arrived by sea with the Rev. David Blaine and Catharine Paine Blaine in November, 1853. (It is possible that Mr. Nagle also arrived with the Blaines, or he may have come overland through the new Naches Pass trail.)

John H. Nagle was one of the first members of the church the Blaine's established, the Methodist Episcopal Church or White Church [□], the first church in Seattle. Nagle filed Donation Land Claim #233 on September 24, 1855 for 161 acres. This is the area of Seattle now from Harvard Avenue to ½ block east of 14th Avenue; and E. Union Street to E. Thomas Street. In March 1866, Nagle received a patent from the U. S. government and took over

ownership of his homestead. Catherine Anna Nagle married Alexander Murray Gow in March 1866 and moved with him to his farm near the White River (near O'Brien). The Nagles were friends of Arthur Armstrong (1822-1899) and Mary Ann Boren (1822-1912) Denny and John Nagle's homestead was neighboring to their donation claim as well as that of his brother and her sister, David T. (1832-1903) and Louisa Boren (1827-1916) Denny.

John H. Nagle participated in an exploring expedition for a new pass over the Cascades at what is today Snoqualmie Pass in late July and early August 1855. In July 1857, Nagle was elected King County Assessor and served until 1859. He was elected Assessor again in July 1860 and served until July 1861. In 1858 he was elected County Commissioner with Henry Yesler and served for a year. In 1865, Mr. Nagle was on the executive committee of the King County Agricultural Fair and served as a judge of fruits, along with David Denny and C. Clymer. He was a farmer and raised stock and maintained an orchard.

In 1874, the King County probate court arranged for John H. Nagle to be examined by Dr. G. A. Weed (a respected local medical practitioner) who found him "insane and dangerous." On July 13, 1874, Nagle was transported by the court to the Hospital for the Insane in Washington Territory at Ft. Steilacoom. At the request of his sister, Kate Gow and her husband Alexander Gow, his only relatives in Washington Territory, David T. Denny was appointed guardian of John H. Nagle's estate on July 14, 1874.

On February 8, 1897, John W. Waughop, M.D. and N. J. Redpath, M.D. reported the death of John H. Nagle due to "exhaustion from chronic mania" at the Western Washington Hospital for the Insane where he had resided for 22 years 6 months and 26 days. His remains were transported to Seattle that night and he was buried at what is now Mt. Pleasant Cemetery on Queen Anne hill. A brief notice appeared in *The Seattle Post-Intelligencer* on Tuesday, February 9, 1897, p. 8.

Mr. Nagle was survived by the children of his sister and brother-in-law, Catherine Anna and Alexander Murray Gow, who had died in Sumner, Washington in 1895 and 1894 respectively. Mr. Nagle's care at Western Washington Hospital for the Insane was paid for by his estate through his guardian, David T. Denny and the King County probate court. Mr. Denny platted the first portion of the Nagle Estate in 1880 in order to pay Mr. Nagle's bills and taxes.

The inscription on John H. Nagle's grave stone reads "Sweet His Beloved Sleep". His remains are joined at Mt. Pleasant Cemetery (originally the Free Methodist Cemetery) by those of Rev. David Blaine (1824-1900) and Catharine Paine Blaine (1829-1908) who returned to Seattle in 1882.

Prepared by Dotty DeCoster, November 24, 2009 based on public records

