

Speakers *of the* Oregon House of Representatives

William T'Vault

Jackson County

1st Speaker of the Oregon House

William Green T'Vault (1806–1869) was a key figure in Oregon's early history and a pioneer of the Oregon Country, serving as the first Speaker of the Oregon House of Representatives during its inaugural session in 1858–59.

In 1845, he led a wagon train of 300 settlers along the Meek Cutoff, a branch of the Oregon Trail, before settling in Oregon City.



T'Vault was appointed Postmaster General by the Provisional Government of Oregon and became the first editor of the Oregon Spectator, the first newspaper published west of the Missouri River. After publishing 13 issues, he was fired due to reported conflicts with other members of the Oregon Printing Association.

T'Vault was a pro-slavery Democrat and served in the Provisional Legislature of Oregon in 1846. He was part of a group that petitioned Congress to disallow land claims of earlier settlers, including John McLoughlin's at Willamette Falls. In 1851, he led an ill-fated expedition to explore an overland route from Port Orford, where half of his party was killed in an ambush by Native Americans.

Later, T'Vault moved to southern Oregon, where he established the Table Rock Sentinel in 1855 and the Oregon Sentinel in 1858. He also practiced law in Jacksonville, advocating for the creation of an independent Pacific Republic. T'Vault died on February 4, 1869 at the age of 62.