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THE WAR BRIDE | CHAPTER FOUR

Allen v. Allen



IMAGE: FRANCIS/THE OREGONIAN

The Waverly Baby Home was founded in 1858 by pioneers to care for Oregon Trail orphans. In 1935, the home built a sprawling brick structure at Southwest Woodward Street and 35th Place, and the facility broadened its mandate to take in abandoned or mistreated children. In 1951, the son and daughter of Esther and Larry Gault were placed in the baby home while their mother recovered from a beating at the hands of their father.

A lead reveals how two children suffered the legacy of a violent, broken marriage as wards of the court



THE STORY THUS FAR
Melissa Gault of Ashland receives a phone call from Esther Gault's niece in Iceland, and Melissa agrees to help search for the war bride. While Melissa chronicles leads in Oregon, a sister of a former Icelandic prime minister offers her research skills to Esther's family. Then Lily Valgeirsdottir finds a huge clue on the Internet. This is the fourth of five parts.

To read the entire series online, look at a photo gallery, watch the series, go to oregonian.com/portland. To read the story on your smartphone, scan these photos with the Oregonian's Mobile Reader app. Details on Page A2.

By ANNE SAKER | THE OREGONIAN

On Sept. 24, 1956, the Oregon Supreme Court ruled on an adoption case. The adoptive parents were Louise and Benson Siles of Portland. He was the grandson of timberman, philanthropist and Portland city father Simon Benson, who built the Benson Hotel, renamed Benson Polytechnic High School and installed the Benson Builders on city street corners to assist working people a refreshing alternative to sports. Already the parents of one adopted daughter, the Siles took in a brother and sister who by 1955 had been in the Waverly Baby Home two years. The Siles soon discovered the girl was "mentally deficient" and that Waverly officials had withheld the information. They used the home for passing the girl up for adoption even though the birth mother had not surrendered her parental rights.

The Supreme Court decided no law allowed the breaking of the adoption contract. If anyone had a right to sue, the majority opinion said, it was the birth mother.

The Oregonian published an Associated Press dispatch from Salem about the decision involving prominent local citizens in a letter case.

Melissa Gault turned the court decision into the night, revealing facts that were new to her with the ones she had.

The war bride Iona Lyland, Esther, married Larry Gault, and they had two children, Raymond and Dorella. As Esther was recovering from a beating at the hands of Larry, the children went into the baby home. Esther and Larry divorced in December 1951, and that was the last time of Esther — until Lily Valgeirsdottir found Allen v. Allen.

The Supreme Court decision said that on Jan. 31, 1952, Esther went to Multnomah County juvenile court to reclaim her children, but she could not pay the \$40 fee for Waverly's care. So the juvenile court made Raymond and Dorella wards of the court, "to remain until they arrive at legal age." The children were to stay in the baby home until a judge decided otherwise.

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Healthy food, healthy mind?

Diets high in trans fats may be linked to brain shrinkage with age, Oregon researchers find

By JOE ROJAS-BURKE
THE OREGONIAN

Human brains tend to shrink and become less nimble in old age, but healthier eating may slow the process.

A study of older adults in Oregon identified mistakes of nutrients that seem to protect the brain, and other food ingredients that may worsen brain shrinkage and cognitive decline.

Trans fats, high in trans fats, long known to harm the heart and blood vessels, stood out as posing the most significant risk for brain shrinkage and loss of mental agility. People whose diets supplied an abundance of vitamins B, C, D and E consistently scored better on tests of mental performance.

Increasing IQ in teens

A study suggests teens can raise IQs with more time in school. BY

and showed less brain shrinkage than peers with lower intake of those nutrients.

"Trans fats appeared the most detrimental to cognitive function and brain volume in our study," said lead author Gene Bowman, a neurologist and assistant professor of neurology at Oregon Health & Science University. "Levels of trans fat weren't that high in the blood, so it doesn't take that much."

Unlike previous studies, which have relied on questionnaires to estimate nutrient intake, the Oregon researchers directly measured levels in the blood. That makes the evidence stronger, although not as definitive as a controlled clinical trial. "We wanted to take recall ability out of the picture," he says. **Page A7**

The BCDE diet

Researchers found that people whose diets supplied them with an abundance of vitamins B, C, D and E consistently scored better on tests of mental performance and showed less brain shrinkage than peers with lower intake of those nutrients.

Here are some nutrients and the foods in which they are found.

Thiamin (B1): Whole grain cereals, legumes, nuts, lean pork, yeast

Biotin (B7)

Eggs, nuts, fish, chicken, broccoli, spinach

Folate (B9): Green leafy vegetables, citrus fruit juices, legumes

Cobalamin (B12): Shellfish, fish, lean beef, chicken, eggs, milk

Vitamin C: Citrus fruits, strawberries, tomatoes, sweet peppers, broccoli

Vitamin D: Salmon, sardines, mackerel, eggs, milk

Vitamin E: Olive and other vegetable oils, nuts, whole grains, green leafy vegetables, avocados

You can put a price tag on preventive care

When screening turns into a diagnostic procedure, some insurance won't pay

By CARLA K. JOHNSON
THE OREGONIAN

CHICAGO — Bill Daughly thought his colonoscopy would be free.

His insurance company told him it would be covered 100 percent, with no co-payment from him and no charge against his deductible. The nation's 1-year-old health law requires most insurance plans to cover all costs for preventive care including colon cancer screening. So Daughly had the procedure in April.

More coverage | Page A8

• Oregonians file complaints

• Cost-saving tips and information

Then the bill arrived: \$1,100. Daughly, a 63-year-old Phoenix small-business owner, angrily paid it out of his own pocket because of what some prevention advocates call a loophole. His doctor removed two precancerous polyps during the colonoscopy. So while Daughly was sedated, his preventive screening turned into a diagnostic procedure. That allowed his insurance company to bill him.

Like many Americans, Daughly has a high-deductible insurance plan. He hadn't spent his

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Some diets protect aging brains, others accelerate harm, Oregon study suggests

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By Joe Rojas-Burke, [The Oregonian](#)



Marv Bondarowicz/The Oregonian

Human brains tend to shrink and become less nimble in old age, but healthier eating may slow the process.

A study of older adults in Oregon identified mixtures of nutrients that seem to protect the brain, and other food ingredients that may worsen brain shrinkage and cognitive decline.

Diets high in trans fats -- long known to harm the heart and blood vessels -- stood out as posing the most significant risk for brain shrinkage and loss of mental agility. People whose diets supplied them with an abundance of vitamins B, C, D, and E consistently scored better on tests of mental performance and showed less brain shrinkage than peers with lesser intake of those nutrients.

"Trans fats appeared the most detrimental to cognitive function and brain volume in our study," said lead author Gene Bowman, a naturopathic doctor and assistant professor of neurology at Oregon Health & Science University. "Levels of trans fat weren't that high in the blood, so it doesn't take that much."

Unlike previous studies, which have relied on questionnaires to estimate nutrient intake, the Oregon researchers directly measured levels in the blood. That makes the evidence stronger, although not as definitive as a

controlled clinical trial. "We wanted to take recall ability out of the equation," Bowman said.

Researchers at OHSU and Oregon State University enlisted 104 of the women and men who have volunteered for the [Oregon Brain Aging Study](#) that began in 1989. Their average age was 87. All of them completed a battery of tests of memory and thinking skills, and 42 volunteers also had MRI scans to measure their brain volume.

Rather than focus on single nutrients, the researchers analyzed combinations of nutrients and how they related to brain health.

"We used statistical models that help us appreciate the interaction of nutrients," Bowman said. "There is never just vitamin E or vitamin B-12 circulating in the blood, there's 1,000s of molecules circulating there."

Measuring blood levels allowed researchers to account for important variables all at once, including differences in the way people metabolize food.

"Thus, nutrient biomarker patterns may more closely reflect what is available to brain tissues," said Christy Tangney of Rush University Medical Center and Nikolaos Scarmeas of Columbia University in a [commentary](#) on the study.

The Oregon researchers found two nutrient patterns that appeared to promote brain health: The BCDE pattern high in vitamins and antioxidants found in fruits and vegetables, and an omega-3 pattern high in the fatty acids found in fish. But the effect of omega-3 was only significant on one of the six tests of brain function after researchers took into account differences in blood pressure and depression, big risk factors for cognitive decline. The lack of a strong effect fits with a 2010 clinical trial in which fish oil supplements **failed to slow** the advance of Alzheimer's disease.

The BCDE diet

Nutrient	Good food sources
Thiamin (B1)	Whole grain cereals, legumes, nuts, lean pork, yeast
Riboflavin (B2)	Milk, eggs, nuts, fish, chicken, broccoli, spinach
Folate (B9)	Green leafy vegetables, citrus fruit juices, legumes
Vitamin B12	Shellfish, fish, lean beef, chicken, eggs, milk
Vitamin C	Citrus fruits, strawberries, tomatoes, sweet peppers, broccoli
Vitamin D	Salmon, sardines, mackerel, eggs, milk
Vitamin E	Olive and other vegetable oils, nuts, whole grains, green leafy vegetables, avocados

The negative effect of trans fats (also called "partially hydrogenated vegetable oil" or "vegetable shortening") showed the strongest link, consistent with earlier observational studies. Trans fats are abundant in processed convenience food, fast food, margarine spreads, and baked goods such as cookies, doughnuts, and pies.

Factors such as age, education and high blood pressure accounted for about half of the variation in cognitive performance among the 104 study volunteers. The influence of dietary nutrients wasn't as strong, but it accounted for 17 percent of the variation in cognitive performance. And nutrients accounted for 37 percent of the variation in brain shrinkage. The study, funded by the National Institutes of Health the Portland Veterans Affairs Medical Center, **appears in the journal [Neurology](#)**.

Bowman says the next step is to conduct a clinical trial. His group hopes to pin down the key nutrient combinations that could provide the most protection, and find out whether it's best to get them from whole foods or with supplements.

For now, Bowman says the evidence isn't strong enough to recommend supplements to prevent age-related dementia. To protect the brain, experts agree that it makes sense to follow the measures proven to protect the heart: quit smoking, exercise every day, maintain a healthy body weight, and keep cholesterol, blood pressure and blood sugar under control. Bowman says his study provides more evidence that people should steer clear of all foods containing trans fats, and commit to eating a diet rich in fruits, green leafy vegetables, beans and other legumes, nuts, and fish.

"They are the food medicine cabinet," he says. "They've got all the nutrients we detect with these blood tests."