

**F**ranz Edmund Creffield, aka "Joshua," came to Oregon from Germany and formed the "Bride of Christ Church" in Corvallis. He attracted a cult-like following, and the group became known locally as the "Holy Rollers," based on their practice of rolling around on the floor or ground for extended periods of time during prayer. Creffield claimed he received messages directly from God and in January of 1904, some locals tarred and feathered him.

Soon after, he was charged with adultery and sentenced to prison in the Oregon State Penitentiary and a number of his followers were committed to the Oregon State Insane Asylum. Following his release from prison seventeen months later, he relocated to the Oregon Coast.

The wife and daughter of Lewis Hartley, a wealthy mine owner from Corvallis, were involved with the "Holy Rollers," and followed Creffield to the coast. Mr. Hartley also followed them and unsuccessfully attempted to assassinate Creffield, who then fled to Seattle, Washington. In 1906, Creffield was assassinated by the brother of one of his followers, who was later found not guilty by reason of insanity, only to then be killed by his sister, whom Creffield had proclaimed was the Virgin Mary reborn. Creffield's wife, Maud, committed suicide in 1906, following their divorce in 1905, and two other followers also committed suicide. The case of Edmund Creffield and his followers has generated ongoing interest, being the focal point of several web sites, as well as the subject of television documentaries and a full-length feature film.

Records in the Archives relating to Creffield and his followers include an inmate case file containing Creffield's mug shot; Oregon State Hospital admission, personal history and discharge records for six of his followers, who were all committed on grounds of "religious excitement," "Holy Roller," or "Creffieldism;" and Benton County divorce case files for Maud and Edmund Creffield and Lewis and Cora Hartley. The records show how the church's members were viewed in terms of their outrageous behavior, given the mores of society at the time, as well as details of their behavior through the personal history records from the insane asylum, and Mr. Hartley's complaint in court against his wife for divorce.

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