

FOUR SUCCESSFUL OUTINGS IN MAY AND JUNE SPOKANE AREA DISCOVERY TREK

by *Stanton Rickey*

Fur traders, missionaries, soldiers and settlers of the Spokane and Colville area were introduced to participants of the Northwest OCTA Outing on May 3 and 4. A lively caravan of 11 autos was taken on a whirlwind tour of historic sites that portrayed the early settlement of the region. With **Gerri Williams** as designated driver in the lead vehicle, tour leader **Lethene Parks** kept up a running commentary on our CB radio connections, providing all with interesting, detailed descriptions of early-day activities and functions at many historic locations. Lethene also furnished each car with detailed local maps and a well documented, 50 page illustrated guide book that described places, events and names of organizations and individuals that settled this wild frontier.

On Saturday, we headed north from Spokane on the route of an old Indian trail through the Colville River Valley, used early in the 19th Century by Hudson's Bay Company fur trappers enroute to their post at Fort Colville. At Chewelah, we viewed a restored Indian Agency log building that was established in 1873.

Copies of **Stanton Rickey's** "Rickey Roots & Revels" were handed out. They featured a story about John Rickey, pioneer settler in the Colville Region in 1866. He established the first commercial orchard in Stevens County and captained a steamboat carrying cargo and mail on the Columbia River between Rickey Rapids (near Kettle Falls) and Fort Spokane.

Our OCTA convoy drove northwest of Colville to the present day town of Kettle Falls. We passed the site of Regis Mission, which was initially built in 1869 as a residence for Catholic missionaries ministering to various Indian tribes south of the Canadian border.

The original town of Kettle Falls now lies at the bottom of the Columbia River, flooded when the Grand Coulee Dam was built in 1940. A new town was formed in 1941. We visited the site of the original grist mill, built by the Hudson's Bay Company in 1830 to grind wheat for its several fur trading posts.

Next stop was the site of St Paul's Mission on the Columbia River. In 1845 Father Ravalli was sent by Father De Smet to help the local Indians build a chapel on the bluff overlooking the falls. The present day historic site stands among a pleasant grove of ponderosa pines. A perfect spot for the group picture.

Saturday evening we were treated to photo slides that showed **Tom Laidlaw, Richard** and **Lethene Parks** slogging across the muddy exposed Columbia River bottoms during the drought of 2000. The presentation included migrations into Stevens County and activities of the Hudson's Bay Company at their Fort Colville, which was established in 1825.

Sunday, we visited the former site of the military Fort Colville. In 1859, four companies of the US Army 9th Infantry Regiment, were sent to construct 45 buildings there. The American and British Boundary Commissions were located there and soldiers were employed to survey the 49th Parallel of Latitude and mark the new boundary with Canada (70 miles north) by cutting a wide swath through the timber. When it was abandoned in the 1880's, local people wrecked the fort buildings, removing the lumber and bricks for their own use. Today, only a historical marker attests to the location.

Tour leader **Lethene Parks** led us up over a gravel mountain road to her home in a delightful bucolic setting. Her property included an orchard and a precarious uphill one-way airstrip that her late husband had used for many years. Her home was a remodeled version of her grandparents homestead.

We continued southward into the Spokane Indian Reservation to the confluence of the Spokane and Columbia Rivers, where the US Army built Fort Spokane in 1880 to replace Fort Colville. In 1899 the post was decommissioned and became headquarters of the Colville Indian Agency and a boarding school was established to teach European ways to Indian



*Spokane Trek participants at site of St Paul's Mission overlooking Kettle Falls.
photo by Glenn Harrison*

Northwest Chapter OCTA OFFICERS



President:

Glenn Harrison

1132 30th Place SW
Albany, OR 97321-3419
541-926-4680
harrison@cmug.com

Vice President:

Jim Tompkins

21421 S Ferguson Road
Beavercreek, OR 97004
503-632-4557
tompkins@bctonline.com

Past President:

Lethene Parks

3214 Clark Lake Road
Hunters, WA 99137-9714
509-722-6161
lethene@theofficenet.com

Secretary:

Marley Shurtleff

1700 Blaine Avenue NE
Renton, WA 98056-2729
425-271-2485
shurtgarmarley@comcast.net

Treasurer:

Joyce Bolerjack

10813 NE 20th
Bellevue, WA 98004-2907
425-454-7118
jbolerjack@comcast.net



VISIT OUR CHAPTER WEBSITE

<http://www.nwocta.com>



DO YOU HAVE A CHANGE OF ADDRESS?

Please let Joyce Bolerjack know when you change your e-mail address. You can reach her at **10813 NE 20th St., Bellevue, WA, 98004** or by e-mail at jbolerjack@comcast.net

children. An 1892 brick guardhouse serves as a National Park Visitor Center and Museum.

Our group drove to Walker's Prairie, where Congregationalist Missionaries Rev. Cushing Eells and Rev. Elkanah Walker established Tshmakain Mission in 1838. The two log cabins they built are long since gone, but a stone monument marks the location.

Our final stop was at Spokane House Interpretive Center, where Lethene had made special arrangements for the park historian to open the facility for an after hours guided tour of their museum and grounds. In 1810 the North West Trading Company built a small trading post at this location, which became the first permanent white settlement in what is now the State of Washington. In 1812 John Jacob Astor's Pacific Fur Company arrived in the area and built their trading post nearby, but sold out in 1813. Many Astorians remained to work for North West Company, which was merged in 1821 with Hudson's Bay Company. Spokane House prospered between 1813 and 1825. Relationships with the Indians were friendly and peaceful. In 1826 the post was abandoned in favor of relocation to Fort Colville.

We bid Lethene a reluctant farewell with our unbounded thanks for a truly superb and well planned experience. OCTA members in attendance were: **Bill and Jacque Ar-ends, Judith Bentley, Charles Blair, Tuck Forsythe, Robert Foxcurran** and son, **Hanne & Ed Gwilym, Glenn and Carol Harrison, Richard Herman, Chuck Hornbuckle, Guy** and **Natalie Moellendorf, Lethene Parks, Dick Pingrey, Stanton** and **Addie Rickey**, and **Gerri Williams**. Guy is a descendent of Elkanah and Mary Walker, missionaries at Tshmakain.

THE THREE LITTLE PIGS

by Jim Tompkins

Eva Emery Dye wrote McDonald of Oregon: A Tale of Two Shores in 1906. She also wrote books about McLoughlin, Lewis & Clark, and the Whitmans and is responsible for saving the McLoughlin House from destruction. She writes history with flowery embellishment that is alluring to women readers, free of today's political correctness. This book is about Ranald McDonald who ended up in Japan teaching English.

Dye describes the 1826 settlement of Kettle Falls, Spokane House and Fort Colville by John McDonald and John Work. "... March of 1826, and McDonald, McLeod, and other Macs set out [from Fort Vancouver] with three little calves and three little pigs in paddleboats to found Fort Colville, a thousand miles up the Columbia. It was a trying trip. Chill winds blew, and hungry Indians at the cascades, the Dalles, and the Falls of the Columbia wanted to kill the strange and novel game. ... At last, after peril by storm and rock and rapid, and savage red men, the three little calves and three little pigs were landed on the bank of the great river, where an old trail intersected the Indian highway between the Okanogan country and the Flatheads."

We all know how knowledgeable **Tom Laidlaw** is about the fur trade. He comes by it honestly. Dye reports that William Laidlaw, Nor'Wester, was at Fort Pierre in 1832.

OVER A ROUGH AND HILLY COUNTRY TO THE GRAND RONDE RIVER

by Chuck Hornbuckle

Thirteen NWOCTA members along with six local enthusiasts and five Boy Scouts enjoyed two National Trails Day weekend hikes; the first a moderate trek and the second quite strenuous. Hikers ranged in age from about 12-years to a little over 84-years of age.

The June 7 hike was a "working" hike to replace and add new Carsonite posts to the La Grande to Hilgard section of the Oregon Trail, and to take new GPS readings along the way. The following day four members traced the 1836 Whitman Route into and out of the Meacham Creek canyon (see story by Tuck & Kay Forsythe).

The hike across the hill to Hilgard Junction was the first since the 1997 Trails Day. Five local Boy Scouts, **Jon Mattes, Sam Werner, Ross Kemp, Chuck Kennicott**, and **Jeremy Moore**, working on their History merit badges, and Scoutmaster **Ed Kennicott**, joined us for the day.

Crossing over the first ridge overlooking La Grande, wild flowers invited us to a day that would be full open meadows, scattered pine trees and endless views of the



*Five LaGrande area Boy Scouts and scoutmaster.
Chuck Hornbuckle photo*

surrounding country. The Scouts and several others carried 35 posts and 30-pound driver across the nearly 6-mile section. After driving a post into the rocky ground each hiker wrote their name on the post to commemorate their contribution to Oregon Trail preservation.



*Gerda Brownnton holds a carsonite post next to one of her rock cairns.
Kay Forsythe photo*

Near the one-mile point **Gerda Brown-ton** told the story of her first hike nearly 30 years ago. The trail was not marked and they were unsure where the trail was located but a few discernible ruts kept them headed in the right direction. Along the way they built rock cairns to mark the trail where they believed it went. Today she takes pride in knowing their stone markers were “right on.”

Oregon Trail signs along the route. Our Trails Day work added 35 Carsonite markers,

providing line-of-sight guidance for future trail enthusiasts.

On our way to Hilgard, we nooned at the first of three marked gravesites. Here we gave a “trail” rendition of Happy Birthday to **Tuck Forsythe**. The second grave we viewed was that of Emily Doane, apparently buried here along the trail in the late 1800s. Each of the gravesites was marked with steel posts installed by the Oregon DOT many years ago.

In the 1950s the Boise Cascade Timber Company and the Oregon DOT placed about eight plywood

Nearing the plunge to the Grande Ronde River we crossed a very rocky ridge that R.W. Conyers described on August 30, 1852, “We came eight miles over rough and hilly country and came to the Grand Ronde River again.” Our appreciation of those who met that challenge increased with each step.

The final leg, down the steep hill to Hilgard, left each of us wondering how the wagons survived. The joy we felt in reaching the Grande Ronde river could only have been exceeded by that of the emigrants stopping for camp.



*The joy of fording a stream.
Kay Forsythe photo*

We were all deeply indebted to **Jennifer Mattes**, sister of Scout **Jon Mattes**, who rounded up parents and others to transport us back to La Grande. NW OCTA hikers were **Ron** and **Dee Anderson**, **Tuck** and **Kay Forsythe**, **Ed** and **Hanne Gwilym**, **Rich Herman**, **Jenny Miller**, and **Jim** and **Marilyn Seed**. Others included **Pam Smith** (friend of Jenny), **Susan McGee**, and **Lanetta Paul** (the LaGrande hike organizer).

1836 WHITMAN - NEZ PERCE TRAIL ROUTE HIKE

by Tuck and Kay Forsythe

The 8 June 2003 NW OCTA hike completed the Meacham Canyon missing-link, which had been omitted from the 1998 OCTA convention field trip along the 1836 Whitman route across the Blue Mountains east of Pendleton. Four hikers - **Tuck and Kay Forsythe**, **Jerry Sobotta**, and **Jerry Martin** (both of Hermiston) - gained new respect for the Nez Perce guides and horses who not only crossed Meacham Canyon 29 Aug 1836, but also traversed 20 additional miles over the Blue Mountains on horseback. It took almost 8 hours for us just to hike across the few miles of Meacham Canyon itself! The car shuttle pick-up crew of **Chuck Hornbuckle** and **Keith May** performed the more difficult task of enduring those hours waiting for us! That morning Chuck had displayed his large map/poster of the 1836 route, so we all had an overall picture in the context of the historic route before starting our hike from the USFS Whitman Overlook.



*Jerry Martin, Jerry Sobotta, Tuck & Kay Forsythe
Kay Forsythe photo*

Except near the Union Pacific RR tracks in the canyon bottom, the only footprints we found were made by elk or bear. Shortly after our initial descent to just below the canyon rim, we found only one carsonite post marking the Whitman route. So it's remotely conceivable that we might have been the first party in 40 years to recross the entire route of that historic trail across Meacham Canyon. **Chuck Hornbuckle** says the last known crossing was the 1962 Guy Tucker USFS horse party. The 1600 foot descent and reascent of the other rim onto Horseshoe Ridge was described in Narcissa Prentiss Whitman's diary of that 29 Aug 1836 crossing accompanied by her Nez Perce guides, Dr. Whitman, Rev. Henry and Eliza Hart Spalding, and Wm Gray: "Before noon we began to descend one of the most terrible mountains for steepness & length I have yet seen. It was like winding stairs in its decent [sic] & in some places almost perpendicular." Yet in centuries past it was apparently a main trail for the Nez Perce and other Native people, from what is now Walla Walla, WA and Milton-Freewater, OR, over to what is now LaGrande, OR. One of our 2003 party, **Jerry Sobotta**, attended all 12 grades of school at Lapwai where the Spaldings lived 1836-1847. Jerry's wife is Nez Perce.

On the trail we enjoyed the flowers and trees that Narcissa's journal says were reminiscent of her native Steuben Co., NY. Balsam root "sunflowers" were the most showy and characteristic flower. Both Jerrys from Hermiston kept us all relaxed with cheerful banter and oral ribbing of each other. During recent decades, the trail along the bottom of East Meacham Creek has become obstructed by overgrown brush.



Short Canyon Ridge after crossing Meacham Creek.

"We had no sooner gained the foot of this mountain when another more steep and dreadful was before us. We did not mount this until we had taken some refreshment and rest." - Narcissa Whitman, *Kay Forsythe photo*

So now we contended with slow bushwhacking, instead of the presumed rapid and well-worn East Meacham Creek horse-trail, which apparently existed decades ago. We easily forded Meacham Creek over to the railroad tracks. During our steep ascent up the other canyon rim, a couple of Union Pacific freight trains provided entertainment by chugging through the canyon below us. We believed that the hike had left **Jerry Martin** feeling worn-out, but at the end, with the Hornbuckles' pick-up truck a mere 100 yards uphill from us, Jerry surprised us all by sprinting uphill to become the first to complete the hike!

THE DALLES TO VANCOUVER CONVENTION TOUR PREVIEW

by Susan Doyle

On Saturday, June 28, thirteen NW Chapter members took a preview tour of the Columbia River Route Tour that will be offered at next summer's convention. Tour leaders **Roger Blair** and **Susan Doyle** were joined by **Jerry Snyder**, **Lowell Tiller** and **Ruth Mahoney**, **Glenn** and **Carol Harrison**, **Joyce Bolerjack**, **Carol Ann Buss**, **Tuck** and **Kay Forsythe**, **Lynne Alvard**, and **Barbara Coffey**. (Barbara was Lynne's guest but joined the chapter before the weekend was over!) It was a beautiful, sunny day when the intrepid group left the Red Lion at the Quay.

Driving east on Washington 14 on the north side of the Columbia River to the bridge at Biggs, with two stops at the



Carol Buss and her marker Roger Blair photo

bridge at Biggs, with stops at Fort Cascades and Memaloose, and a viewpoint stop to see across the Columbia where the trail came down to the river bank. After crossing to Oregon at Biggs, seven of the group hiked a 1.2 mile stretch of trail, which the earlier bus groups will do. **Carol Ann Buss** was happy to find that the Carsonite marker she had planted during the trail

marking was still intact! The hikers enjoyed the trail segment in spite of the 101 degree temperature. Fortunately, Roger had the foresight to pick up a 24-pack of bottled water and ice it down for the tour.

After stopping at a grocery in The Dalles, we enjoyed a restful picnic under the shade trees in Sorosis Park. The last stop was at the Rock Fort, a Lewis and Clark site at The Dalles. By then it was late and hot, so by mutual agreement the visit to the Cascades Locks was passed up and all drove straight back to Vancouver to recuperate. In the evening the group gathered at *Who Song & Larry's*, where **Jim Tompkins**, **Tom Laidlaw**, and **Mary Cross** and her friend **Bob Newman** joined us for dinner. After celebrating Roger and Susan's sixth anniversary. Afterward we all walked over to the old apple tree that dates to 1826.

On Sunday morning **Tom Laidlaw**, in the character of Peter Skene Ogden, was our tour guide at Fort Vancouver. Peter Ogden was a most congenial guide, and the tour was very informative and enjoyable, visiting Officers' Row, the fort visitor center, and the O. O. Howard House before breaking up.



Tom Laidlaw as Peter Skene Ogden Roger Blair photo

THE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

As we spring into summer, NWOCTA has a wide variety of activities waiting for your involvement. Whether it is a hike on a trail, a chance to pound in carsonite markers to show the route, a car caravan ride, a 4-wheel vehicle adventure, a picnic, a search for a new section of a trail, a marker placement or dedication, the national convention in Kansas, library or family research, or some other activity, do take an active part. Make your plans for Manhattan, Kansas in August.

There is much to learn and share. There are newsletter articles to write and a website to maintain. There are opportunities to meet new acquaintances and great old friends. There are trails to preserve. For the next year there will be many opportunities to help out at the 2004 Vancouver OCTA Convention, to be sponsored by our chapter.

Thanks to all those who have volunteered to assist at the conventions and in planning and conducting outings and activities. Thanks to the active members of the Idaho chapter and affected historical groups in the areas for the marker placement in western Idaho and eastern Oregon and for leading an outing on the Meek Cutoff.

Keep track of those volunteer hours. Chuck Hornbuckle will be collecting the information for the NW chapter. Keep up the good work! - *Glenn Harrison*

THE PEOPLE OF NWOCTA IN MEMORIAL

HELEN HOLMES



Photo from Trudy Ackerman

The Northwest Chapter has lost another faithful Charter Member of our chapter. **Helen Holmes** died May 3, 2003 after a long battle with cancer. She was a student of the migration trails and descendant of an Oregon Trail pioneer who farmed in Coos County.

She attended many conventions, was a tour guide at Baker City, and donated needle point pictures, many trail related, to every raffle from it's inception, for a total of 15 years.

Helen and her husband **Jack**, traveled the full length of the Oregon Trail from Independence to the Willamette Valley while working seven summers for Western Oregon State College. She loved working for OCTA and everyone who was a friend of the trails. - *Trudy Ackerman*

Gerald Swaggart, "the man credited with restoring and maintaining many of the authentic wagons used by the [Pendleton] Round-Up" died May 23, 2003, at age 92. He was awarded the national "Friend of the Trail" award at the Pendleton convention. He was a long friend and watchdog of the Trail in Eastern Oregon. - *Carol Buss*

GERALD SWAGGART



Photo from The East Oregonian

LETTER TO THE EDITOR UPDATE FROM THE KANAB, UTAH, "TRAIL"

We received our on-line NWOCTA update recently, and enjoyed (as always) catching up with the goings-on at "home." Congratulations to Jim Renner on his Ackerman award!!! It is always so good to read familiar names and recall good times together. Here, in a nutshell, is our news from the red rock country of the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument:

My new book, [They Call Me Sacagawea](#), has just been released by the same folks who published [Sacagawea Speaks](#). It's being marketed as a childrens/young readers book, but I am finding adults are enjoying this simpler format, too. [They Call Me Sacagawea](#) retails for \$9.95 and is available from any bookstore (real or internet).

Another of my nonfiction books will be released this July. Title is [Seeing The Elephant: Voices from the Oregon](#)

[Trail](#), published by Texas Tech University Press. This one is hard cover, 272 pages. It's been YEARS in the making. I'm awfully proud of it.

Oh, and did I mention that one of the scholarly sources I used and cited in [Seeing The Elephant](#) was [The Road to Oregon: Articles about the Oregon Trail](#), by Dr. Jim Tompkins?

Dave continues to work harder than he should. He is responsible for creating FIVE interpretive centers on the Grand Staircase, each focusing on a different scientific or cultural aspect of the Monument. With two million staggeringly gorgeous and arresting acres within its borders, this BLM vanguard is Dave's full time job...and then some. We've been here two years now. Can you believe it?

Say hello to everyone for us. We are still with you, in spirit, on the trail. - *Joyce Hunsaker* <mdolrk@kanab.net> or <<http://www.fannyandfriends.com>>

OUTINGS & ACTIVITIES

2003 OUTINGS

FRENCH PRAIRIE: Champoeg, St Paul July 12 - Jim Tompkins

2nd ANNUAL FALL PICNIC: Centralia September 27 - Joyce Bolerjack and Marley Shurtleff

FREE EMIGRANT ROAD: Bend to Eugene October 11 - Glenn Harrison, Gary Brumbaugh, Del Spencer

FRENCH PRAIRIE

On Saturday July 12, a car-pool caravan using CB radios will tour the original Eden at the End of the Trail - French Prairie, where the retiring French-Canadian fur traders claimed the first farming settlements in Oregon.

Starting at the End of the Oregon Trail Interpretive Center in Oregon City and after a brief stop at the Willamette Falls Overlook, we will proceed to the New Era Spiritualist Camp, the town of Barlow, the German utopian community of Aurora, Butteville and Champoeg. A two hour lunch stop at Champoeg will include a visit to the museum and the pioneer cabin.

Then we will head to St Paul where we will see the first Catholic Church in Oregon and stop briefly at the newly marked Billy Cannon grave. Then it is on to St Louis to see the burial spot of Madame Dorian. From Gervais and we follow Boones Ferry Road all the way to Boones Ferry. We will head back to Oregon City, with a drive through visit to the old community of Willamette. - *Jim Tompkins*

2ND ANNUAL FALL PICNIC

A special occasion is coming this fall, so be sure you don't miss out! Set aside September 27th, 10:30 - 3:00, for the second annual NW OCTA Fall gathering and picnic!

Everyone who attended the 2002 picnic and gathering in Centralia had a grand time just visiting, as well as enjoying some local landmarks and Cowlitz trail history. The 2003 picnic is back in Centralia, in a bigger and better building than before! The day is shaping up with wonderful opportunities, activities and entertainment. The **Williams**, members from Seattle, will provide "Fiddling Down the Oregon Trail; a program of fiddle tunes and Northwest Pioneer History." A Toledo-area historian, **Maria Obert**, will offer some historical reminiscences of Southwestern Washington. **Keith May** will provide us with a humorous overview of his experiences guiding teachers on Oregon Trail discovery tours. As always, part of the day's enjoyment will be seeing what special item you can snag at the raffle.

There will be a table of items that will be available for sale at the 2004 convention - a pre-convention pre-sale.

We'll send out a special announcement with directions and more specific information closer to the actual picnic date. We're looking forward to seeing you there. - *Marley and Joyce*

Animated Atlas, the Growth of a Nation

A must web site for any history buff is
<<http://www.animatedatlas.com/movie.html>>.

NEW FREE EMIGRANT ROAD SIGN

Approval has been given for the placement of the Free Emigrant Road OCTA sign. Thanks to all who helped.

On October 11, the Northwest Chapter of the Oregon-California Trails Association will place a marker to commemorate 150 years since a wagon train first passed through the forest on the Free Emigrant Road in October 1853 on the way to the Willamette Valley.

We will gather on the south side of Crescent Lake off of highway 58. The sign will be placed on Forest Service land at the Windy-Oldenburg Trailhead parking area.

Following the marker dedication on October 11, there will be a hike along a section of the trail, a continuation of last year's hike. I have requested approval for placement of carsonite markers as well, so we hope to take GPS readings as we go. - *Glenn Harrison*

PIONEER CONVENTION CLOTHING

In the last newsletter **Wendy Welch** and **Susan Badger Doyle** proposed that we wear pioneer clothing at the Vancouver convention. This is a wonderful idea, and I have a few more resources to add their list. For historically accurate patterns go to <<http://www.pastpatterns.com>>. **James Country Mercantile** <www.jamescountry.com> sells "Homespun Patterns" and "Period Impressions Patterns." I have used the Period Impressions work dress pattern #453. Easier to locate patterns for women are the new "Martha McCain Fashion Historian" patterns. Well respected costume historian, Martha Kelly, created these for Simplicity. I would recommend Day Dress #7212, and for accurate underclothing, pattern #9769 is a good choice. Other Simplicity costume patterns and ones from other pattern books are not historically accurate.

I have purchased 19th century reproduction fabric from <<http://www.appalationneedleworks.com>>. They have small photos of their fabrics in a lot of colors and designs. They do not always have a particular cotton calico in stock. I picked out five choices and only one was available. I emailed them my order and had it in two days. Quilters might know about the book: "Dating Fabrics, A Color Guide 1800-1860" by Eileen Trestain. It has wonderful photos of mid 19th century calicoes, and has been a great help to me in finding the right colors and designs of calicoes.

If you are interested in making a corded petticoat, I have easy instructions I would be glad to mail you. A corded petticoat was worn prior to hoops, and gives body to the dress. Best of all I don't step on the hems of my emigrant dresses anymore. I would be happy to answer any questions. Email <cypcmcg@oregontrail.net>, write to 18160 Cottonwood Rd. #751, Sunriver, OR, 97707, or call 541-593-2190. - *Muriel Carbiener*

FREELAND ACCOUNT

Suggested by Bob Carey. Biography by Glenn Harrison

Benjamin Freeland was born on May 5, 1794 in Maryland. He fought in the War of 1812. On February 15, 1820, he married Mary Ann Clark in Monroe County, Indiana. They lived in Owen County, Indiana. Ten of their children were born in Indiana and the last was born in Illinois in 1845. Their Linn County Donation Land Claim application says they arrived in the Oregon Territory on September 22, 1853 and settled on their claim near Brownsville in November 1853. Their son Edward Archer Freeland settled on a DLC southeast of Halsey. The Freelands were active in the Methodist Episcopal Church. Benjamin died at age 86 on October 15, 1880 and is buried in the Riverside Cemetery in Albany.

Bill Adams noted the following was a typed copy of the original 1854 letter of his great-great-great-great uncle. Benjamin Freeland was also OCTA member Bob Carey's grandmother's grandfather. It describes the family's travel on the Oregon Trail and finding a place to live.

Calapooya Postoffice
Oregon Territory, Feb 3rd, 1854

Dear Brother:

We left Edgar County, Ill. the 2nd of March and crossed the Missouri River the 5th of May. We had a great deal of rain till we reached Snake River, then we had dust till we got to Fort Boissa, then good roads to the Cascade Mountains. Here we had the worst part of the road. It was very dangerous for the wagons and hard on the cattle. There were 60 miles without grass. The 23rd of Sept. we got into the valley, that is to Fosters, which is on the edge of the settlement. We enjoyed ourselves on the road as well as the case would admit of, and we all had good health. Mary Ann could walk up and down the mountains and she could get in and out of the wagons as it was going along. She walked up the Grand Round which is one of the bad mountains. Her health was very good until we got over the Blue Mountains, then she took the flue. We had to take her down into the valley where her health began to improve, soon she was well. We were six months crossing the plains and mountains.

After reaching the Plains Valley we began to look for a home. We traveled very slow and stopped often to look. We traveled this way over a hundred miles, till we crossed the Calapooya River and on the Calapooya we found a claim for which we paid four yoke of oxen. Claims are scarce to take up but there are plenty to buy. They are selling from one hundred to one thousand dollars. We have a good prairie claim. I dont believe it can be beat in Oregon or any other country for production or for beauty. The prairie and parts of the mountains are covered with grass from eight to ten inches long and as fine quality as your blue grass in the states.

The balance of the country is covered with good timber. One acre will fence our claim and enclose it in. We can cut an eleven rail cut off of a tree. Some of the trees are three hundred feet long. The timber is pine, cedar, fir, balm of giliad, ash. Balm of giliad is first rate to split for rails and lasts well.

We are living thirty to forty miles from the ocean and when the wind blows from the west we can hear it lashing the west shore of America. We have to the west the Coast Mountains, on the south the Calapooya, and to the east the Cascade. On the south [sic] is the Columbia River. It is one of the handsomest sites in the west. You can see the prairie all covered with green grass and the mountains covered with green trees at all seasons of the year.

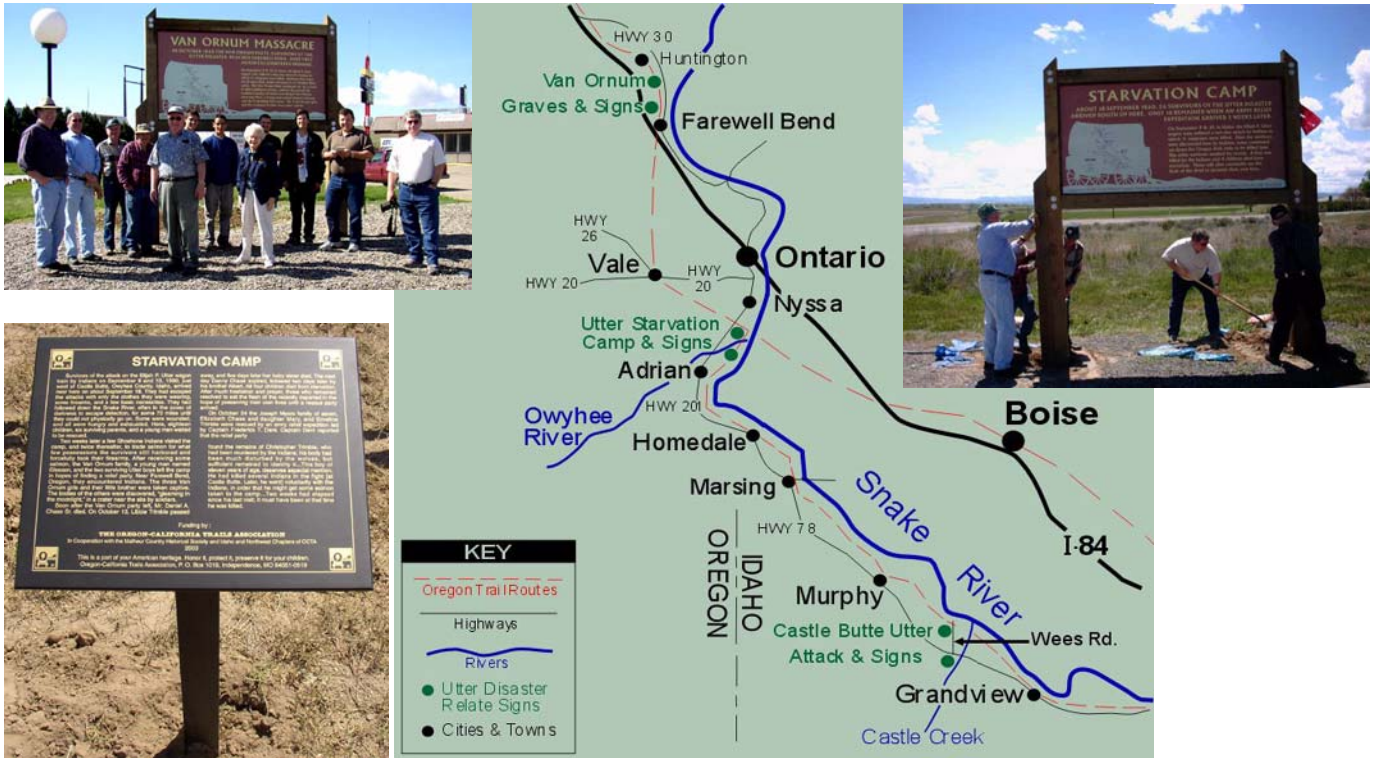
The Willamette River [Valley] is said to be sixty miles wide. We are living two hundred miles from the gold regions. It is supposed by some that gold will be found in Washington Territory north of the Columbia. They are making discoveries every little while two hundred miles up the Alaska Coast. They say they are making from twenty to a hundred dollars a day. There is all of the time great excitement about the gold diggings.

We have two wagons, two mares, five yoke of oxens and five cows and two calves and our claim, which I would not take two thousand dollars for. Good wagons are worth two hundred dollars. Our mares are worth two hundred dollars each. The oxens are from a hundred and fifty to two hundred. The cows are worth one hundred apiece. The heifer calves fifty each and the steer calf worth twenty five. Beef calves sell from ten to twelve dollars a hundred, or fifteen dollars a hundred. Wheat is two to three dollars a bu and oats worth one dollar a bushel, onions three dollars, peas a dollar and fifty cents, flour six dollars a hundred pounds. It looks like there are as many cattle in Oregon as there are in the states but it is owing to the heavy emmigration and the demand in the gold region and the heavy demand in California for all kinds of produce. They come here to take it from home, this is home produce not from abroad. We are all well pleased with the country with the exception of the old woman. I think she would be well pleased if she had all her children here. Washington, they say, is a good farming country but can't be beat for timber.

There are two or three surveys from the states, the one to the sound seven hundred miles, from the head waters of the Missouri to the head waters of the Columbia, or the head of navigation. Edward has a claim one mile, and Benjamin has a claim two miles from us. James H. Payne's claim joins us on the south. Our health is good at this time. The girls' skin is clear and they are fat and look the picture of health.

Show Robert this letter and tell him to write me how things are going with him, and if you want to know anything more about this country write and ask and I will take great pleasure in telling you.

Paper fails me.
Your brother
Benjamin Freeland



REVISITING THE UTTER SITES

In September 2003 we are again planning the two-day field trip on the route of the Utter Disaster: the massacre site, escape routes, and death sites. We hope many will go this year to see the new signs, and to meet some new friends of I-OCTA who live in the area and have found an interest in our work. One family was **Ferrell and Marjorie Peterman**, who have lived and farmed along the Owyhee River for 50 years. These new people are just now learning the story of the Utter Disaster. We may be crossing their farmland next September to see the Utter Starvation Camp site, from the north side of the River. (You won't need to walk out on the Railroad Bridge this time!) - *Glenn Harrison*

[VAN ORNUM HIGHWAY SIGN, L. to R., Bill Wilson, Past President I-OCTA, Don Shannon, Hugh Lackey, Tom Gray, Jerry Branson, a new I-OCTA member, (front) Chris Moore, a lady with the Ontario News Paper, (rear) 4 students and Lance Dixon, Principal of Huntington, OR, High School, and Roger Blair.]

[STARVATION CAMP HIGHWAY SIGN, L to R, Don Shannon, Author Utter Disaster on the Oregon Trail, Tom Gray (Malheur Country Historical Society President), Hugh Lackey (MCHS Treasurer), Roger Blair, and Jim McGill]

PIONEER GRAFFITI PASSPORT IN TIME (PIT) PROJECT JULY 28 - AUGUST 1

Pioneers on the Barlow Road segment of the Oregon Trail reportedly carved their names on large boulders at a campsite near the crest of the Cascade Mountains. It was believed that both the campsite and boulders were subsequently destroyed during later highway construction. A recent discovery, however, indicates that these carvings may have survived. This project will record the recently discovered carvings and determine if there are more nearby. We'll also perform test excavations in an attempt to locate archaeological evidence of the reported campsite and to establish the stratigraphy that existed prior to the current highway. Volunteers will identify boulders with carvings in the area, clear them of vegetation and debris, record the carvings, excavate test pits, record the stratigraphy and any artifacts discovered, and assist a professional survey team in recording the entire site. - *Gail Carbiener*

NW OCTA
10813 NE 20th St
Bellevue, WA 98004

THIS WE DO FOR YOU

by Chuck Hornbuckle

There are many reasons we mark and map the emigrant roads in addition to working with the National Park Service. I think a prime reason is our belief that we pay tribute to our ancestors and to our descendants by increasing awareness of our history.

I believe those present this year would agree this year's work should be dedicated to the memory of Jessica Hazelett. Jessica passed away unexpectedly on June 21, 2001. She was born March 31, 1981 and, with the encouragement of her parents **Stafford and Nancy Hazelett**, came to appreciate emigrant trails, especially the Applegate Trail of her ancestors. Jessica's spirit forever rests with her hardy ancestors.

Marking and mapping field work on the Applegate Trail in northeastern California was completed the last week of June. Over the next several months the field notes will be transcribed and maps of the route compiled and submitted to the National Park Service.

This year's work included marker installation and recording GPS coordinates within the Modoc National Forest. Project work began last year with the installation of markers west of the Forest while awaiting permit approval.

Three of this year's volunteers were descendants of the 1846 emigrant train; **Leta Neiderheiser** descended from Jesse Applegate, **Stafford Hazelett** descended from Virgil Pringle and Tabitha Brown, and **Suzanne Hornbuckle** descended from Wilson and Abigail Lee and Abigail's father John D. Wood.

Two work crews were used this year; one installing Carsonite posts and another installing steel rail posts with emigrant diary quotes. Under the NPS Challenge-Cost Share grant we installed nearly 200 Carsonite markers identifying

the route as the "Applegate Trail – South Road to Oregon." Separately, the steel post crew installed eight posts and replaced two existing emigrant diary plates.

A minor problem developed at the beginning when the USFS offer to provide an ATV to transport two steel posts several miles beyond the end of the road fell through. There were two options, manually carry the posts up to 2-miles. Not a pleasing thought in any bodies book!

That prompted "Plan B". I knew several of the Thurston County (Washington) Sheriff's search and rescue members own ATVs. Plan B found me in the Modoc County Sheriff to see if their volunteers would assist us.

I soon learned search and rescue in Modoc County consists of one deputy, **Sgt. Mike Crutcher**. After explaining our dilemma, Sgt. Crutcher and **Officer Mike Poindexter**, California Highway Patrol, quickly volunteered to help on their day off.

The two officers along with one son and a nephew followed us to the end of the road, loaded the nearly 200-pound posts on board their Quads and transported them to the waiting holes. They learned about the historic Applegate Trail and we came away appreciating the great cooperation we found in Alturas.

The eighteen participants in this year's work were **Richard and Orsola Silva, Stafford Hazelett, Vern Arnold, Joe and Leta Neiderheiser, Jim and Sallie Riehl, Gail and Muriel Carbiener. Bob Black, Milt Otto, Jim and Marilyn Seed, Mike Banks and Chuck and Suzanne Hornbuckle.**

To each and everyone who participated this year and last, thank you for your dedication to past, present and future generations. They applaud your efforts.

ANTIQUES ROADSHOW MEETS CSI ON PBS

History Detectives, premiers July 14, 2003 at 8PM. The 10-part series explores the true stories behind historic sites, artifacts and tall tales told in cities across the country, with the help of an inquisitive team of fact-finders with an uncanny talent for uncovering the truth: Wesley Cowan, independent appraiser and auctioneer; Gwendolyn Wright, professor of architecture, Columbia University; Elyse Luray, an independent appraiser and expert in art history; and Tukufu Zuberi, professor of sociology and the director of the Center for African Studies at the University of Pennsylvania.

Each week, detectives track down the best in the fields of forensics, historical research, architecture and archaeology, taking old-fashioned sleuthing to a whole new realm. In three modern-day conundrums per hour, viewers take a roller coaster ride through history as our investigators combine hard evidence and good ol' intuition in the search for the truth about the historical records of the homes, towns and personal possessions of everyday Americans.

"Good history is all about telling great stories, and what is so riveting about the series is that all the stories are

prompted by everyday Americans who have questions about family heirlooms, works of art, even the houses they live in," said Lion TV's executive producer Nick Catliff. "The program uncovers the investigation as it happens, it will be history for real and, best of all, we will show how our lives today are inextricably linked to our individual and collective past."

Co-producer Oregon Public Broadcasting's executive producer, David Davis, said: "We are extremely excited about the chance to bring American history to life in a whole new way, connecting history to the objects that surround us through the excitement of on-camera investigations. We are extraordinarily proud to work with Lion TV."

Stories highlighted in the series truly run the gamut... Are bullets tucked away in a trunk at a Wisconsin home responsible for the demise of Bonnie and Clyde? Was a guest book found in a New Jersey fire station actually signed by Ulysses S. Grant on July 4, 1876? Could this mean that the former president visited a small town in the Northeast on the country's centennial?

EZRA MEEKER

by Dennis Larsen

Dennis Larsen, NW OCTA member, has spent the past two years transcribing Ezra Meeker's unpublished journal and correspondence covering the 1906-1908 Old Oregon Trail Monument Expedition. He and his wife have traveled the Oregon Trail from end to end searching out Meeker monuments and sites. They have visited some parts of the Trail several times. Glenn Harrison, aware of the research, asked him to write a short article about Meeker's journey through Washington & Oregon. Dennis limited his remarks to Mile 0 and let Ezra tell as much of the story as possible.

Here is a highly edited version, a teaser of what is involved.

Mile 0-The Dalles, Oregon

The wagon had an odometer on it and when it was working Ezra recorded his cumulative mileage in his journal. Mile 0 in the journal was at The Dalles. This is the story of "Mile 0" of the Old Oregon Trail Monument Expedition.

March 9th (1906)

Set alarm clock at 4 and had an early breakfast and struck camp before it was fairly daybreak as we were booked to be at the dock by 6 to ship to The Dalles on the steamer Bailey Gatzert.

Arriving a little late at the dock it was found the wagon cover was too high to enter the dock or go on the steamer and that the only alternative was to unload, unsnap the brake and take off the bed cover and all; this was done and the things placed on the dock in a promiscuous heap and that is the situation now with the prospect of arriving in The Dalles after night; a rather unpleasant outlook. (*Journal*)

March 10 The Dalles

Arrived last night at 7:30 all in a muss with load out of the wagon but the mate had his men put the bed on and a number of willing boys helped to tumble all loose articles into the wagon; drove nearly 3/4 of a mile to a camping ground near the park, selected by the citizens; surprised to find the streets muddy; cattle impatient and walked very fast and necessitated my tramping through the mud at their heads. It was clear last night but raining this morning which turns to sleet and snow by 9 O'clock. Will remain camped here several days. (*Journal*)

March 11

Heavy wind last night that threatened to bring our tent down on our heads and which brought cold weather; ice formed in the camp 1/2 inch thick. In consequence of the weather, the dedication ceremonies were postponed. Great numbers of people visited the camp during the afternoon. Met the ladies committee in the evening where it was agreed to dedicate The Old Oregon Trail monument at 1:30 P.M. tomorrow. (*Journal*)

The Dalles: March 12th

The most notable event of the day was dedicating the monument to perpetuate the memory of the Old Oregon Trail erected by the ladies of the landmark committee appointed by the Federation of Women's Clubs of Oregon. My address was published in The Dalles Chronicle in full this evening. At 8 P. M. lectured to a small audience and exhibited stereopticon views. Receipts \$10.00 (*Journal*)

Admission for Ezra's lecture was 50 cents for adults and 25 cents for children.

... I carry my screen with the stereopticon and also the stand which is easily knocked down for transportation [he showed slides of the trail and lectured about the views]... My Grand Daughter [Bertha Templeton] a gifted singer and one of her chums both say they are going to The Dalles with me to aid by singing at my lecture. I carry the old melodeon with me and have the "old settler" song by Francis Henry of Olympia illustrated and it always brings the house down with roars of laughter; then there is the "fifty years ago" song and "Tenting on the old camp ground" all three appropriate to the occasion." (*Letters to Mrs. Shackelford March 5 & 6, 1906.*)

The ladies of the landmark committee were indeed a remarkable group of ladies who worked hard to get this monument erected. However, they couldn't resist a little joke at Ezra's expense.

The ladies, hearing about my mission and that I was coming, put their heads together, suitably inscribed a granite slab [tombstone], put it in place and awaited the arrival of the ox team. Some wag seeing it, sedately asked, "who's dead?"

The next day the granite slab disappeared and a suitable monument soon took its place. (*Seventy Years of Progress*)

Ezra left the Dalles on March 14, 1906, heading east. Ezra returned in 1910 and placed a second monument in The Dalles, a pipe with a brass cap inscribed "Old Oregon Trail 1843" at Harbor Rock at the mouth of Mill Creek as the initial point for the drive over the Old Oregon Trail during the summer of 1910. The pipe and cap disappeared within a week of being placed. (*Meeker papers*)