



Northwest Trails

Newsletter of the Northwest Chapter of the Oregon-California Trails Association

Volume 25, No. 4

Fall 2010

4th of July at Fort Laramie

By Muriel Carbiener

I had a wonderful opportunity to be part of an Oregon Trail reenactment group at the fort's annual event this year. It was organized by Janet Wragge, one of the three teachers in OCTA's documentary, *In Pursuit of a Dream*.



There were six adults and three children dressed in historically correct period trail clothing doing trail camp activities. Kim Merchant, one of the other teachers in the documentary, has his own wagon and two mules. He and Janet are from Casper, WY. There were two of us from Oregon. OCTA member Heidi Hollister from Portland took five airplanes to get there. She was an interpreter at the End of the Oregon Trail Interpretive Center before it closed.

Gail got me there in our travel trailer on our way east in a four-week trip. On July 3rd, everyone but me walked five miles into the fort along with Kim and his wagon. They all camped at the fort for two nights with three tents and all

the necessary, historically correct camping supplies. The fire was kept going all day cooking food and heating water for dishes.

There were a lot of visitors and we all expected a warm day. It turned out to be in the mid-60°s with rain showers off and on. One of our visitors was Barb Netherland, co-chairman of the Scotts Bluff convention, and now on OCTA's Board of Directors. She was wearing an OCTA tee shirt and kept coming back to our fire to get warm. I was demonstrating hand sewing a chemise, which is worn under the corset. I learned that it is difficult to sew on damp material.

In the photo of the three of us, Janet and Heidi are wearing a knitted vest. That is called a Sontag, which was worn for warmth by mid-19th-century women. Janet is always prepared for trail emergencies and had an extra Palatot, which she insisted that I wear. It is a type of mid-19th-century wool coat that women could wear over their full skirts.

Even though I can no longer do a lot of walking or trail related activities, it was such a great experience. That night as the rest of the group ate their beans and apple pie, there was a huge storm with wind, thunder, lightning, and a downpour. I was back in our trailer thinking about them and all the emigrants who had to deal with those storms.



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President's Message

Northwest OCTA has some truly remarkable members. Those of us who attended the annual picnic in Centralia had the privilege to hear Vivian and Phillip Williams, members from Seattle, put on a masterful and entertaining music history lesson. They are but two of our members who have done research into specific aspects of the trail experience.

The week before the picnic I had the opportunity to meet a really remarkable group of people, all living in the community of Hugo, Oregon, a few miles north of Grants Pass. They call themselves the Hugo Neighborhood Association, and although they are not all OCTA members (yet), they have adopted a 20-mile segment of the Applegate Trail. Using OCTA methods outlined in the MET manual, they have done a professional quality job of locating and documenting "their" trail. Mike Walker, Karen Rose, and Joe and Leta Neiderheiser led a quality field trip on their section of the trail.

Dave Welch, as our designated chapter preservation officer, is not spending all that much time at his new retirement address. He is spending much of his time tilting at windmills—not all windmills, just those dangerously near the Oregon Trail. He says the Antelope Ridge project, planned to be built on Ladd Hill near La Grande, needs letters from concerned citizens written to the Oregon Department of Energy (to Sue Oliver, 625 Marion St NE, Salem, OR 97031-3737). Dave says these letters should be from the heart, not just form letters. They should generally oppose siting windmills near the trail (such as the planned 500 foot tower a few hundred feet from the trail) that threaten the setting and experience of trail enthusiasts (especially those whose ancestors came over the trail).

Another of NWOCTA's remarkable people is Marley Shurtleff. Although it was reported that she is stepping down as national website coordinator, she wants us to know that she is still the chapter communications and website coordinator. She will still be distributing the newsletter electronically as well as posting events on the NW Chapter website.

—Jim Tompkins

EDITOR'S NOTE

Due to editorial error, the article on the Saddle Hill Wind Farm project and accompanying photograph in the Fall 2009 *Northwest Trails* were attributed to Stafford Hazelett without his permission.

—Susan Badger Doyle

NW OCTA Fall Picnic

By Susan Badger Doyle

The chapter fall picnic on September 18 was held again at Borst Park in Centralia, WA. This is a popular location for the annual picnic, which was again enjoyable and well-attended. The morning began with President Jim Tompkins leading a business meeting.



A special guest, Bill Martin, OCTA President, attended the event from his home in Texas.

After the business meeting, OCTA members Vivian and Phil Williams presented a delightful nineteenth-century dance music program.

The program was informative as well as musical. They told us that the tunes played were simplified so everyone could play, and that a distinctive style developed in the Pacific Northwest. The people who came to community dances would dance all night because they had to wait for daylight to see their way home. Most dances had a fiddle alone or a fiddle-based band, but banjos, horns, accordions, and flutes were often played.



Vivian and Phil Williams

Diary and reminiscence quotes enhanced the program. In particular, we learned about two manuscripts that have rewritten the history of

dance fiddling and of dances in the Far West. One was the Peter Beemer manuscript of dance music collected in an Idaho mining camp. The other was the Haynes family manuscript of pioneer dance music from the Willamette Valley. Vivian Williams edited and published both manuscripts. They are available on the website www.VoyagerRecords.com.

Following the lunch break, Peri Muhich presented a fascinating program on the Mercer Girls. In 1863 Asa Mercer recruited women from the East to go to Seattle. Mercer and eleven women arrived by ship in Seattle in May 1864. Muhich, a historian from Camas, WA, related the stories of the eleven “Mercer Girls.” For more information, visit her website www.mercergirls.com.



Peri Muhich

The meeting ended with the always-popular raffle and silent auction, which made \$305.00 for the chapter.



Jim Tompkins and Rich Herman drawing raffle tickets.

More Fall Picnic Photos



Gary and Marley Shurtleff greeted everyone at the registration table.



Audience enjoying Vivian and Phil Williams's performance.



Glenn Harrison and Jack Fletcher.



Board meeting after the picnic.

IMPORTANT!

It's Time to Report Volunteer Time and Expenses

In order to provide an accurate accounting of OCTA members' volunteer time and expenses related to OCTA activities, each participant is asked to report hours and non-reimbursed expenses annually to the Chapter Volunteerism Coordinator by **January 1**. This is important data that is compiled and submitted to the Partnership for the National Trails System, which uses it as the basis for arguing to Congress for trail funding.

NOTE: Time and personal expenses should be reported "home-to-home." A form is available.

Email or mail to: Chuck Hornbuckle
7245 118th Ave. SW
Olympia, WA 98512-9264
360-352-2113
hornbucklecs@juno.com

Who Was David R. Koontz?

By Dennis Larsen

Just south of Echo, Oregon, is the grave of David R. Koontz. In 1993 OCTA placed a marker at the gravesite that gave a little history about David's wagon train. Mildred Koontz of Albany, Oregon, apparently supplied much of the information used on the marker.

From a totally unexpected source, we now have a more complete history of that wagon train. In the Winter 2009 issue of *Northwest Trails* I announced the discovery of Edward Jay Allen's 1852 letters to his family describing his trip over the Oregon Trail. This April, while in Pittsburgh, I located Allen's 1852 Oregon Trail diary. Upon transcribing it, much new information about David's wagon train has come to light.

Allen's diary supplies us with a watch list—the names of the men who guarded the grazing oxen and stock at night. David Koontz had the first watch, along with “Absalom Dorr, Wil Carnahan, Jas Wood, W T McClure, and Wm Lyon.” Edward Allen had the fourth watch.



David Koontz grave at Echo.

Men listed in Allen's diary who had watch duty (ages are as of 1852):

- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| 1. Edward Jay Allen | age 22, home Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania |
| 2. J. William Carnahan | age 29, home Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania |
| 3. William T. McClure | age 28, home Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania |
| 4. Jacob Resser | age 30, home Pittsburgh, PA |
| 5. John Barker | age 24, home Comanche, Clinton, Iowa |
| 6. Richard Crist | age 25, home District 13, Wapello, Iowa |
| 7. John Davis | age 36, home District 13, Wapello, Iowa |
| 8. Martin Davis | unknown |
| 9. William Day | age 28, home District 13, Wapello, Iowa |
| 10. Absalom Dorr | unknown |
| 11. William Gates | age 16, home District 13, Wapello, Iowa |
| 12. Able/Abe Godfrey | unknown (probably early 20s), home Wapello, Co Iowa |
| 13. Moses Hale | age 31, home District 13, Wapello, Iowa |
| 14. William Kitterman | age 27, home District 13, Wapello, Iowa |
| 15. David Koontz | age 24, home District 13, Wapello, Iowa |
| 16. Martin V Koontz | age 66, home District 13, Wapello, Iowa |
| 17. Martin Koontz #2 | age 27, home District 13, Wapello, Iowa |
| 18. Riley Koontz | age 38, home District 13, Wapello, Iowa |
| 19. William Lyon | age 20, home District 13, Wapello, Iowa |
| 20. Peter Ruffner | age 29, home District 13, Wapello, Iowa |
| 21. Silas M. Titus | age 22, home Ohio |
| 22. John W Watkins | age 26, home District 13, Wapello, Iowa |
| 23. James Wood | age 39, home District 13, Wapello, Iowa |

The marker at David's grave quotes F.M Koontz, years later saying, “When we came to Oregon it was like a tribal migration. There were 24 wagons in our train, all members of the train being related.” This is partly correct. Allen says there were 32 wagons. Indeed, it was a party of relatives. Two families

in particular, the Koontz and Wood families, were intermarried to the point of needing a flow chart to figure out who was who. Others like Moses Hale and Peter Ruffner married into this mix. The Kitterman family, longtime friends of Martin V. Koontz, was also related by marriage.

A complete and interesting history of these families and how they came first from Virginia, next to Ohio, then to Iowa, and finally over the Oregon Trail can be found at Stephenie Flora's "The Oregon Territory and Its Pioneers" website (OCTA's 2005 Distinguished Service Award winner). Included are the details of the family groups that came west in the Allen/Koontz/Wood 1852 wagon train. Martin V. Koontz's story, in particular, is quite interesting. Go to www.oregonpioneers.com/ortrail.htm and click on 1852. Then go to item # 13 under Captains of 1852, "Wagons from Wapello" for the story, or simply Google "Wagons from Wapello."

Edward Jay Allen and three friends from Pittsburgh arrived at Council Bluffs on May 11, 1852, coming up the Missouri River from St. Louis on the steamer *St. Paul*. These four single, well-armed men, with a wagon and four yoke of oxen were quickly welcomed into a wagon train made up primarily of Iowa farmers that had been sitting on the east bank of the Missouri River for a number of days waiting for their turn to be ferried across.

The Allen/Koontz/Wood wagon train crossed the Missouri on May 17, a day when there were only two ferries operating on the river. One of the ferries was managed by Ezra and Oliver Meeker, making it a 50-50 probability that one of the Meekers ferried Allen and his new-found friends across the Missouri. Allen quotes the fare as \$2. Done with ferrying, the Meeker/McAuley train started west on May 19. The Allen/Koontz/Wood train started the same day and moved ahead almost immediately; however, the two trains stayed within a day or two of each other all the way to Idaho. They climbed Dempsey Ridge on the same day and camped at the same locations for several days after that. Only when McAuley decided to stop at Big Hill, near Montpelier, Idaho, did they separate. At Fort Boise the Meekers and Allen joined forces and together ran the Snake River ferry for a time. Allen did not mention the Meekers until Fort Boise. In his diary he wrote, "Good fellow Oliver Meeker." Ezra was not mentioned.

Allen states that their first duty upon crossing the Missouri was to elect a captain. James Wood seems to have been the choice, as he had been over the trail previously and had come back to get his family. (Yes, his wife was a Koontz.) Wood butted heads often with 66-year-old Martin V. Koontz, the patriarch of the Koontz family. Traveling with Martin V. were all his living children, including David R. Koontz (b. September 20, 1828, not 1839 as it says on the OCTA marker). Allen writes much about David's older brothers Martin and Riley, but beyond the watch list he makes no reference to David per se. He didn't particularly like the elder Martin and usually referred to him as "Old Man Koontz."

Allen confirms Koontz family reminiscences, noting that on the fifth day out from Council Bluffs the Pawnee Indians stole a number of their horses. He tells of a mutiny near Fort Hall in protest of Wood's leadership. "Have had some little trouble all through encampment for some days—and this morning we came to a focus—Woods two teams—Martin Koontz [The younger]—Mose Hale and our wagon starting out, the rest refusing to go—saying on account of sickness—but their pretended sick are only lying ill through contrariness which has struck in upon them—and so we rolled out—They have been cussing Woods up and down and now can see how well they can do without him—We five wagons nooned in good grass." The mutiny was short lived. Within days the 32 wagons were traveling together again.

Allen and Moses Hale had become close friends on the journey. When Allen decided to build a boat and float down the Snake River at Three Island Crossing, he loaned his oxen to Hale, whose stock were faltering. Hale's death, just east of Fort Boise, is described in Allen's letters in excruciating detail.

Neither Allen's diary nor his letters mentions anyone carving their names into the rock face at Names Hill, but the names are there. The OCTA grave marker states that six members of the wagon train, including David, carved their names in the cliff. There were ten who did so; eleven if you count the E Allen carving, which is separate from the others and also different in character (and which I personally think is suspect).

Party members who carved their names at Names Hill, Wyoming, on July 7, 1852:

- E Allen ?
- J. Barker
- J. W. Carnahan
- R. Crist (also carved his name on
June 24 at Independence Rock)
- Wm Gates
- m. hale
- D. R. Koontz
- E M Koontz
- M. Koontz
- Wm d. f. Lyon
- J. W. Watkins



Names Hill, Wyoming.

Allen did not witness David Koontz's death, as he remained at Fort Boise for three weeks earning needed cash operating a ferry at the Snake River crossing while the wagon train continued on. Nor does he tell us the first name of David's widow. All we know about her is that she was a Wood. Allen finished his journey on horse and foot, and on Saturday, October 2, after many adventures he caught up with the Koontz/Wood train and his oxen at the Cascades of the Columbia, forty miles downstream from The Dalles. The party arrived in Portland on Monday, October 4. Allen made his way to the Yamhill house where he slept under a roof for the first time in months.

Both Allen's letters and his diary have been surveyed for COED. Photographs are by Dennis Larsen except where noted.



E^d Allen. Photo by Randy Brown.



David R. Koontz.



E. M. and D. R. Koontz.



Barker, Carnahan, and Watkins.



R. Crist and M. Hale.



W^m Gates and M. Koontz.



W^m d. f. Lyon. Photo by Randy Brown.

NOTE: Printing space does not permit larger images, but they can be enlarged when viewed on your computer.

Goodale Cutoff Workshop: 55 Miles Across Oregon

By James McGill

During three days, June 18–20, Friday to Sunday noon, about 35 people from several states met in Baker, Oregon, part of the time at the National Oregon Trail Interpretive Center, and participated in a workshop on the Goodale Cutoff. They also took part in trail-tour activities. The trail tours—all day on Friday on the eastern part of Goodale Cutoff and half-day on Saturday following the trail nearer the trail center—were an opportunity for most participants to experience first-hand viewing and walking in the remaining trail remnants.

On Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning, presenters offered information on different aspects of Tim and Jennie Goodale’s history and about searching and finding the remaining part of the trail in Oregon. The Oregon section of Goodale’s 1862 trail ran from Brownlee Ferry in Hells Canyon to Baker Valley and Auburn, Oregon.

A thirty-five page Field Note Report compiled for the participants, with maps and photos, was offered and is available upon request. Many other photos—ground trail photos and satellite photos—are also available.

Since Goodale Cutoff has been approved for a study concerning the possibility of being classified as a National Historic Trail—as part of the Oregon Trail system of trails—leaders in the BLM, NPS, Idaho Power, OCTA, and others interested in preserving parts of the trail were involved in the workshop. Some individuals who will be involved in the study, and also some possible trail volunteers in the later permanent marking of the trail, took part in the workshop activities. The trail experience and witnessing what is left of that trail was the part of the foundation for turning over much research and information to those involved in the study.

The BLM had given permission for temporary markers to be placed on sections of the trail for the workshop and tours. Those markers were removed shortly after the workshop. Earlier one outstanding experience was appreciated by Katy Coddington, BLM Baker City office, when she went along for the trail marking. A one-mile section of the oldest swales near Ruckles Creek and parallel to another variant—probably Tim Goodale’s first wagon route—was discovered on May 19 by the trail markers and partially GPSed by Katy.

This was a section of trail that early evidence suggested existed, but only some later research and ground searching accurately placed its location. This was an unusual occurrence after the prior years of discovery and mapping of so much of the trail and its continuity. It had not been inscribed on the early GLO map of the area, but the surveyor had recorded its evidence of section line crossings in his notes.



Katy Coddington recording GPS data on the Ruckles Creek.

An earlier discovered parallel variant had been used in the later 1800s as parts of other area roads. One section became common as part the 1875 Lower Powder Union Road, and another section became part of the 1891 Seven Devils Wagon Road. The older trail found in May more straightly follows near the east side of Ruckles Creek, with a little more rising and falling over ridges.

The oldest route was used for part of the 1.5 mile hike led by Dave Welch that began the trail preservation training given at the workshop. The hikers were probably the first in more than a hundred years to hike the whole section and understand its significance.

During the presentations Dave Welch offered his trail preservation training, and Fred Dykes presented some of his early research that finally brought the Goodale Cutoff out of the shadows of almost being forgotten. Will Bagley presented on Tim Goodale as a road builder and rancher in the Rocky Mountains. And Jack and Pat Fletcher offered information on Tim Goodale's work and adventures in the Colorado/New Mexico areas.

Susan Boyle and John Cannella, New Mexico NPS employees, and Jere Krakow discussed the latest progress on the research and study of the additional trail routes being considered for National Historic Trails status. James McGill discussed the Oregon part of Goodale's trail route, the miles of remnants that have been found, and used Google Earth to follow all the remaining trail remnants for viewing on the big screen.

Adventures and activities on this route were new to most participants, and many responses were offered with favorable experiences for an outstanding workshop. A lot of interest was expressed in a similar tour and workshop on the Idaho side of the Snake River.

It has now been decided that in May or June 2011 the trail route from Cambridge, Idaho, to Brownlee Ferry will be the subject of a similar workshop. Goodale's Cutoff from the Boise Valley to Cambridge was the subject of several earlier tours, including the 1863 variant through the Crane Creek area. But for folks new to this trail, a driving tour may be offered prior to the workshop along these trail remnants as well.

Anyone interested in upcoming trail involvement and workshop presentations can contact James McGill at jwmcgill@cablone.net or 208-467-4853. The dates for the 2011 tour and presentations will be announced as early as possible through *Trail Dust* and other chapter newsletters.



Dave Welch, center, and hikers viewing the trail.

Northwest Trails

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MASTHEAD: Replica of *The Old Oregon Trail* bronze relief sculpture created in 1924 by Avarð Fairbanks for Oregon Trail monuments.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS



2011 NW OCTA Annual Meeting

**Saturday, March 5
at the
United Methodist Church
Oregon City, Oregon**

*A registration flyer will be sent out
in February*

Northwest Trails

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