



Northwest Trails

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

Volume 26, No. 4

Fall 2011

NWOCTA Fall Annual Picnic September 10, 2011 Borst Park, Centralia, Washington

The Northwest Chapter's annual fall meeting was held at Borst Park in Centralia, Washington. Attendance was disappointing—less than twenty were there to attend the business meeting and enjoy the exceptional program by John Salicco, living history reenactor, writer, and musician.

Salicco performed popular 1850s music on an antique 19th-century guitar and replica 19th-century banjos that he made. He played the earliest version of “Yellow Rose of Texas” that he could find. Two of the most popular songs in the 1850s were “Oh, Susanna” and “Camptown Races.” His fascinating presentation included talking about how he made his banjos and the distinguishing characteristics of his 1846 model harmonica.



John Salicco explaining how he plays his banjo and tambourine at the same time.



Suzanne Hornbuckle: “Raffle tickets, anyone!”



Our group was so small that we were sitting among stacked piles of extra chairs and tables. All photographs by Roger Blair.



John Salicco showing his gourd banjo to Sally and Jim Riehl.

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President's Message

There are many patterns in history—from the six degrees of separation, to the circles of history that repeat themselves, and several others. One of the themes that I emphasize in my Oregon History classes at Clackamas Community College is the connectivity of people involved in the events of history.

For example, on an April day in 1792 a small group of ships stopped off the coast of what is today Washington state. One ship was an American merchant ship under Robert Gray, and the rest were British navy ships under Captain George Vancouver. The men on the ships were born in several countries on two continents. Several had been to Oregon before. Vancouver had been there 15 years earlier as a young officer with Captain Cook. A second mate on the American ship, the *Columbia Rediviva* (which was about to give its name to the great river of the West), had also been with Cook. Two of the Americans, and at least one of the British, would later write reports that would be read by Thomas Jefferson and would convince him to send Lewis and Clark to Oregon. They would disperse across the globe. One would be arrested in Siberia and later die along the Nile River in Egypt.

In the 1980s, I was part of a similar circle of history. I was part of a team of teachers who represented Oregon City in Independence, Missouri. Four of us participated for each of the five years of the teacher-exchange program, along with a couple of others for one year only, including my 7th grade daughter. The teachers came from three school districts, taught grades 6 through 9, social studies, and art. We dressed the part (I was the overweight, retired French fur trapper). Recently we came together for a brief reunion. We are all retired. Two had once or are currently fighting cancer, two represent heritage organizations in Oregon, one works for the National Park Service, one was putting on a conference for the State of Oregon, and one is putting on a national convention for OCTA. Who knows where we will be in 20 years.

The 2013 OCTA convention in Oregon City will be a similar circle of history. Four to five hundred people of all walks of life will convene to listen and learn, watch and participate, contribute and take away. They will come from a dozen or more states and several countries, and for four days will share meals, bus tours, stories, and adventures. Then they will return from whence they came to go on with their lives. How will we impact that one shared moment of their lives? Be part of the team that makes sure it is a positive impact.

—Jim Tompkins



NW OCTA's Challenge Cost Share Program

By Henry Pittock

NWOCTA's Challenge Cost Share Program with the National Park Service for mapping the Oregon Trail expired in June. With an extreme amount of diligence and persistence, Marley Shurtleff, working with Lee Kreutzer in the NPS Salt Lake City office, was able to get authorization for additional maps and equipment for NWOCTA. I was able to get over \$2,700 worth of USGS 1:24,000 quads and 1:100,000 maps, more than 500 maps in total. We now have three full sets of coverage for the Main Oregon Trail, Cutoff to the Barlow Road, Barlow Road, Applegate Trail, Free Emigrant Road, Whitman Route, Upper Columbia River Route, and cutoffs from Echo to the Columbia River. We also got two complete sets of coverage for Meek's Cutoff. In addition, we got a Garmin E-Trex Legend H GPS, the Garmin 1:24,000 Topo West update for it, and a Canon A490 camera with a 4Gb card.

Use of Metal Detectors

By Henry Pittock

Basically the federal rules are that no artifact can be removed from public lands unless under the supervision of a registered archaeologist who has the appropriate permissions. Dave Welch and I had numerous email exchanges late last fall with Dennis Griffin, the State Archaeologist at SHPO. If we are working on private land on a "known site or historic trail," basically the State of Oregon rule is that "nothing may be excavated unless under the supervision of a licensed archaeologist" holding a state archaeological permit. "Excavated" can be taken to mean even simply digging a small hole to see what an object is – we can't do that. I'll be checking again shortly with the SHPO to explain what we would like to do.

Montague Marking and Mapping

The Montague Marking and Mapping work has been rescheduled to November 8-9. There is no room for any more participants. But if anyone wants to be on a "waiting list," in case of a last-minute cancellation, contact Henry Pittock at: hpittock3@mac.com, 541-752-6139 Home, 541-619-0906 Cell.

NWOCTA Officer News

Joyce Bolerjack resigned as longtime chapter treasurer, and Glenn Harrison has agreed to serve. His name will be on the ballot, which you should receive soon. Joyce wrote Glenn, "It has been a great run—from the start of the chapter until now—but certainly more than time for me to leave it in your good hands. My many thanks again." Joyce will continue as membership chair and with newsletter printing and mailing. Our thanks to Joyce for her long and capable service.

Treasures from the Trunk Quilt Exhibit

Mary Bywater Cross's quilt exhibit opened on September 23 and will run until December 24 at the Willamette Heritage Center, 1313 Mill Street SE, Salem. Most of the quilts have been rarely, if ever, shown in Oregon.



*For information, call 503-585-7012,
or visit www.missionmill.org.*

2013 OCTA Convention Planning Committee

NWOCTA is hosting the 2013 OCTA annual meeting and convention in Oregon City. The theme of the convention is “The End of the Trail and Beyond.” It is scheduled for the week of July 22, 2013, and will be headquartered at the Monarch Motor Hotel on Interstate 205, Exit 14, in Clackamas (the End of the Trail Museum is Exit 10).

The convention planning committee met on October 15 in Oregon City and discussed the convention dates and schedule, bus tours, entertainment, and other activities. The meeting was led by Jim Tompkins, Convention Chair. Seventeen people were present, including Travis Boley, OCTA’s Association Manager.



Jim Tompkins and Travis Boley.



The committee will meet again in February at the Monarch. If you have input, wish to be heard, or just want to be kept in the loop, get on the email list by sending a note to Jim Tompkins at tompkins@bctonline.com.

Photographs by Roger Blair.

It's Time to Report Your Volunteer Time and Expenses!

In order to provide an accurate accounting of our trail related activities please report your hours, miles driven, and other non-reimbursed expenses by January 1, 2012, to Chuck Hornbuckle, Chapter Volunteerism Coordinator.

Volunteer activities include attending or participating in any historic trail function, program, or other activity in which you were an active participant or which you attended to learn about any historic trail—for example, attending the OCTA Convention, NWOCTA Chapter functions, or Convention Planning Meeting.

These are important reports that are compiled and submitted to the Partnership for the National Trails System, which are used as the basis for arguing to Congress for trails funding.

NOTE: Time and personal expenses should be reported “home-to-home.”

Email or mail to: Chuck Hornbuckle
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Elizabeth Markham on the Oregon Trail and Beyond

By Susan Badger Doyle, with contributions from Jim Tompkins

One of the most dramatic and shocking Oregon Trail stories was recorded by Elizabeth Dixon Smith in 1847. After fording the Snake River, Elizabeth Dixon Smith's train traveled nine miles and camped at a spring. The next day, September 15, she wrote:

layed by this morning one company moved on except one family the woman got mad and would not budge nor let the children he had his cattle hitched on for 3 hours and coaxing her to go but she would not stir I told my husband the circumstance and him and Adam Polk and Mr Kimble went and took each one a young one and cramed them in the wagon and her husband drove off and left her siting she got up took the back track traveled out of sight cut a cross [and] overtook her husband meantime he sent his boy back to camp after a horse that he had left and when she came up her husband says did you meet John

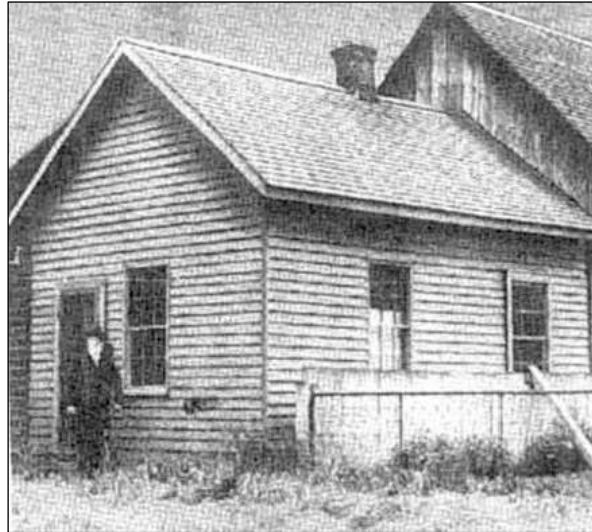
yes was the reply and I picked up a stone and nocked out his brains her husband went back to ascertain the truth and while he was gone she set one of his waggons on fire which was loaded with store goods the cover burnt off and some valueable artikles he saw the flame and came running and put it out and then mustered enough spunk to give her a good flogging her name is Marcum¹

The woman was Elizabeth Winchell Markham. She was born February 22, 1805, in Owego, New York. She was the second wife of Samuel Barzillai Markham. Markham was the captain of a wagon train that left from Cass County, Michigan, in 1847. Six children traveled with them, three of their own and three from his first marriage. Another incident on the trail that also reveals Elizabeth's strong personality was later recorded by their son Edwin Markham:

My father and mother, with their family, came across the plains to Oregon by ox team in 1847. . . . The party camped one night not far from a stream and drew their wagons into a circle to be prepared in case of an attack by Indians. My mother, taking two pails, went to the spring nearby to get some water. Hearing a noise like subdued thunder, she looked up and saw a herd of buffaloes, which had been alarmed and were charging toward the river. She started to run toward the river, but, seeing she would be cut off, she turned and ran toward the wagons. Before she could reach the circle of wagons the buffaloes were upon her. She was knocked down and the buffaloes at the edge of the herd ran over her.

Father and the other men ran down to where she lay. Her clothes were almost torn from her. She was unconscious. Her right shoulder blade and a number of ribs were broken. They fixed up a mattress in one of the wagons, and for the next six or eight weeks, my mother directed the household and camping activities from her bed in the wagon.²

In spite of their ordeals on the trail, Elizabeth and son John survived the journey. The family settled in Oregon City. Samuel worked on a ranch in the mountains, and Elizabeth ran a store on Main Street in Oregon City. She also planted apple seeds she brought from Michigan and operated a tree nursery. The 1850 census for Clackamus County, Oregon, lists Samuel and Elizabeth with six children: Daniel, 26; John, 18; Warden, 15; [William] Henry, 9; [Louise] Mary, 6; and Columbia, 3. Columbia was born in Oregon city, which means Elizabeth must have been pregnant on the trail. He contracted scarlet fever as an infant and became deaf. A seventh child was born in Oregon City on April 23, 1852. They named him Charles Edward Anson Markham. He went by Charles, or Charlie, until about 1895, when he started using the name Edwin.



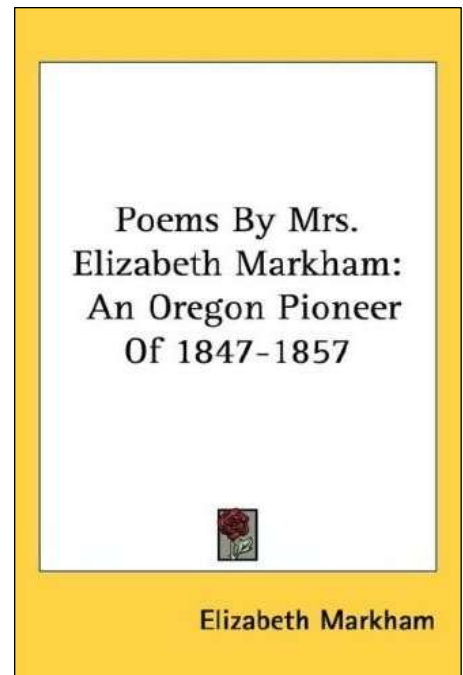
Edwin Markham in Oregon City in 1921. The cabin where he was born was at the corner of Water and 5th Streets. It was destroyed by the flood of 1861 and the site was covered over when McLoughlin Blvd. was built in 1922.

Elizabeth became an accomplished poet and was known for her poems that were often published in the *Oregon Spectator*. By the mid-1850s, Samuel and Elizabeth’s marriage was troubled. In 1856 Elizabeth left Samuel and moved to California with Louise, Columbia, and Charlie. She purchased a farm at Suisun, southwest of Sacramento. Three years later she and Samuel were divorced. While Louise and Columbia had some contact with their father and older siblings in Oregon City, and some of the older children occasionally visited their mother, Charlie (later Edwin) never saw his father again. In 1859 Elizabeth married John Whitcraft. He left her a few years later and they were divorced in 1872.

Perhaps Elizabeth’s greatest legacy is being the mother of renowned poet Edwin Markham. Although she first opposed her son’s pursuing higher education, he studied literature at the California College in Vacaville and received his teacher’s certificate in 1870. In 1872 he graduated from San Jose State Normal School, and in 1873 finished his studies at Christian College in Santa Rosa. After teaching for several years, he became superintendent of schools at Placerville.

Edwin gained a world-wide reputation after his most famous poem, “The Man With the Hoe,” was published in 1899.³ He was the Poet Laureate of Oregon, 1923 to 1931, and California Poet Laureate in 1929. Five schools in California are named in honor of Edwin Markham.

Elizabeth died December 9, 1891, in Oakland, California, and never knew of her son’s fame and achievements. Yet, she also left a lasting mark on the literary landscape of Oregon.⁴



¹Elizabeth Dixon Smith, “Diary of Elizabeth Dixon Smith,” in *Covered Wagon Women*, ed. Kenneth L. Holmes (Glendale, CA: Arthur H. Clark, 1983): 1:134.

²Fred Lockley, *Voices of the Oregon territory: Conversations with Bullwhackers & Muleskinners*, ed. Mike Helm (Eugene, OR: Rainy Day Press, 1981).

³Edwin Markham, *The Man With the Hoe and Other Poems* (New York: Doubleday & McClure, 1899).

⁴A brief biography of Elizabeth Markham is by Eloise Hamilton, “Elizabeth Markham,” in *With Her Own Wings*, ed. Helen Krebs Smith (Portland, OR: Beattie & CO., 1948): 192–93.

Elizabeth's poem "Road to Oregon" is a memoir of her journey over the Oregon Trail. It was published in the *Oregon Spectator* in 1851 and reprinted in *Covered Wagon Women* (1: 153–55). Note there is no mention of her own difficulties along the trail.

Road to Oregon

We left our friends in foreign lands -
Our native country dear;
In sorrow, took the parting hand
And shed the falling tear.

For Oregon, three cheers they gave,
From us to disengage -
Fearing that we might find our graves
Amidst the sand and sage;

Or met by cruel savage bands,
And slaughtered on the way -
Their spectred visions, hand in hand,
Would round our pathway play.

To the Pacific's temperate clime
Our journey soon began -
Traversing through the desert sands
Towards the setting sun.

On Platte the rocks like battlements,
Were towering tall and high;
The frightened elk and antelope
Before our trains would fly.

And herds of buffalo appear -
On either side they stand;
Far as our telescope could reach,
One thick and clustering band.

O'er sinking sands and barren plains,
Our frantic teams would bound -
While some were wounded, others slain,
Mid wild terrific sound.

And in these lone and silent dells
The winds were whispering low,
And moaning to the Pilgrims, tell
Their by-gone tales of woe.

Deserted on those mountains wild,
No ear to hear his cry -
Near by a spring, on a rude bluff,
They laid poor Scott to die.

Unaided grief and blighted hope,
Midst savage beasts of prey -
The fate of poor deserted Scott
Is wrapped in mystery!*

Our toils are done, our perils o'er -
The weary pilgrims' band
Have reached Columbia's fertile shore -
That far-famed happy land.

O'er mountains high and burning plains,
Three thousand miles or more -
We are here; but who can e'er explain
Or count the trials o'er?

Such clouds of mist hang round the scene,
O'er which we have no control;
It's like a half-remembered dream,
Or tale that's long been told.

E.M.

Oregon City, December 1850
Oregon Spectator, January 9, 1851

*"Poor deserted Scott" was Hiram Scott, a fur trapper who became ill and presumably died after he was abandoned by his comrades near Scotts Bluff, Nebraska. Elizabeth Markham's train camped at Scotts Bluff on July 9, 1847.

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**PUBLISHED QUARTERLY, SUBMISSIONS DUE
January 1, April 1, July 1, October 1**

Material may be submitted via email, on disk, or as email attachment in Word or Text format. Pictures may be sent via email, on disk (JPG format), or originals for scanning. Please send pictures separately from text document.

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

MARK YOUR CALENDARS



NW OCTA Annual Meeting

**Saturday, March 10, 2012
Oregon City, OR**

**Election Ballot
Coming Soon**

Northwest Trails

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