



Northwest Trails

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

Volume 27, No.4

Fall 2012

NWOCTA Annual Fall Picnic September 15, 2012 Clark County Genealogical Society Annex Vancouver, Washington



Dr. Steven Fountain, assistant professor at WSU-Vancouver, talked about teaching westward expansion to today's students.



Rich Herman conducting the raffle.



Visiting time before the meeting.



Lethene Parks led the tour at Old City Cemetery.

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President's Message

Emigrants came to the Oregon Country not to seek a quick profit then return home. They came here to live out the rest of their lives with their families and to produce the necessary comforts to make this as liveable as possible.

The day their covered wagons reached the end of the marked trail, whether it was on the River Route in Portland, on the Barlow Road at Oregon City, on the Naches Pass or Cowlitz Trails at Puget Sound, or on the Free Emigrant Road, or Applegate Trail in the Willamette Valley, that day was not just the end of the trail to the emigrants but it was also the beginning of the rest of their lives.

They needed to move forward and establish a farm or a business, build a house or a store, and start or continue a family. They also started communities and cities. They established governments. They began what is today our heritage.

All of this is the theme of next summer's convention in Oregon City—"The End of the Trail – And Beyond."

—Jim Tompkins

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, 2013, 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. Time and personal expenses should be reported "home-to-home."

To date volunteers have reported 2060.5 hours, \$9,703.71 non-reimbursed expenses, and 19,117 miles. The total for 2011 was 4871.0 hours, \$17,420.31 expenses, and 45,424 miles, so we are about at the halfway point.

These are important reports that are compiled and submitted to the Partnership for the National Trails System. They use the figures as a basis for arguing to Congress for trails funding.

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Oregon Trail Work Party Outing

On Saturday, September 22, several OCTA members joined with OHTAC members to help clear out the ruts in the Oregon Trail Interpretive Park at Blue Mountain Crossing. The park is located off I-84 at Exit 248, just west of La Grande, OR. It contains some of the best preserved traces of the Oregon Trail that are easily accessible to the public.

We worked under the direction of Erik Harvey, an archaeologist with the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest. The project consisted of clearing the small evergreen seedlings that have grown up in the ruts, as well as removing tree limbs and tree debris. In effect, we harvested hundreds of Christmas tree sized evergreens. The work was necessary to make the ruts safer for the general public and to restore them to their original condition and make them more visible.

We enjoyed a lot of camaraderie with fellow rut nuts and had a great day in perfect weather in the Blue Mountains. We met on both Friday and Saturday evening for an excellent dinner, stimulating conversation, and sharing of trail experiences. If you have not been to Blue Mountain Crossing, it would be worth the effort to make a special trip and enjoy a walk with the emigrants on well-interpreted walkways on relatively gentle slopes.



BEFORE: Showing the swales with a wall of Christmas trees obstructing their path.



AFTER: Showing nice clean and visible swales.

Naches Trail Tour

By Winona Jacobsen

The Bonney Lake Historical Society led a group of about twenty-five on a tour of the Naches Trail route in the Buckley and Bonney Lake, Washington, areas on September 29, 2012. We began our tour in the drizzle, but as the morning progressed, the weather improved. It was great to welcome people from Buckley, Wilkeson, Graham, Puyallup, Edgewood, Renton, Seattle, Longview, and Lacey in Washington and Bend, Oregon.

Many thanks to the Foothills Museum in Buckley and Martha Olsen for opening up and allowing us to meet and use the facilities. We will all have to make it a point to return and spend more time in the wonderful museum that she runs. Greater Bonney Lake Historical Society President, Dennis Dhaese, gave a warm welcome to everyone and sent us on our trek along the Naches Trail. We also were very pleased with Ben and the people of Golden Valley for allowing access to their private trail to the White River, and Fred Jacobsen for giving us the story of George Himes and his family's treacherous crossing of the river. Charles Byers, a descendent of George Himes of the Longmire wagon train, gave us a few previously unknown anecdotes from his family's early diaries. In western Washington, it is rare to find areas that are still pristine and give us a glimpse of what our country looked like at the time the early pioneers came across the Naches Pass.

We are grateful to the City of Bonney Lake for allowing us to visit the Reed/Imhof farm on the very historic Connell's Prairie and the Grainger (Milotte) Springs along Elhi Rim Road. This provided us an opportunity to walk in the footsteps of those early pioneers and perhaps gave all of us a greater appreciation for the wealth of history that exists around us. City Councilman Mark Hamilton pointed out the importance of Connell's Prairie during the Indian conflict of 1855-56. Prior to that time, the prairie had no name, but it was a stop on an early trade route for the Native Americans as well as the Hudson's Bay Company. Lt. Robert Johnson with the United States Exploring Expedition rode along this route in 1841, and author Theodore Winthrop stopped to chat with Michael Connell and James Williamson as they worked their land in August 1853.

We were able to look at two different historic monuments along the Naches Trail; the Connell's Prairie marker erected by the Washington State Historical Society in 1924, and the Naches Trail Marker in Bonney Lake erected in 2009. Let's hope that these markers will continue to educate future travelers who take the time to stop and read about our colorful past.

Teacher and city planning commissioner Brandon Frederick spoke to us at Grainger (Milotte) Springs and imparted a lot of information that I found new and fascinating. Possibly one of the few places that may still show the physical evidence of the Longmire wagon train passing through, it certainly gives us a place to explore in more depth in the future.

GIS Analyst Al Catanzaro, with the City of Bonney Lake, has been a valuable resource in providing his mapping expertise. Although he was unable to join on the tour, his interest in the early history has been piqued, and he has volunteered to work with OCTA for trail mapping purposes. Thank you, Al, for the fabulous maps!

I told of the importance of Finnell's Prairie (Kelley Farm) and the role it played along the Naches Trail. In 2006 I submitted the Kelley Farm as one of the ten most endangered historic sites in the state. The Washington Trust for Historic Preservation not only placed it on their list, but further stated that the entire acreage of the farm and the historic prairie area should be declared a "heritage site" because of its importance to the history of early Washington History. Unfortunately this has not been done. The present owner submitted plans for a development named "Osceola Ridge" a few years ago, which would obliterate any remnant of the current historic farmhouse and ice house and cover the wetlands along Fennel Creek.

Our finale at the Puyallup River was adjacent to the early Van Ogle farm and near the crossing by the Longmire wagon train and the Military Road. We will all look forward to a future segment of the Naches Trail that will complete the trail to Fort Steilacoom.



White River near Naches Trail crossing, near Porter's Farm. Photo by Dave Welch.



On the Naches Trail from the White River. Photo by Dave Welch.



ERRATUM: In his Naches Trail Report in the Summer issue of *Northwest Trails*, Dave Welch erroneously referred to the Naches Trail across the western half of the Army's Yakima Training Center as being undisturbed. It is the **eastern half** that is relatively undisturbed.

Heroic Sewing for the Oregon Trail

By *Susie Linford*

As a volunteer Interpreter at the High Desert Museum, where I try to make the past come alive for visitors, it helps to dress the part. So in a rash moment, I decided to make an Oregon Trail dress. “Easy,” I thought. It should take a few weeks. I dismissed any suggestion that historical sewing would be harder from sewing the many clothes I had made over the years. I was as wrong as those emigrants who took Meek’s cutoff and wandered around in the Harney Basin.

The women who walked the 2,000 plus miles from Missouri to the Willamette Valley had hand sewn dresses using eight yards of fabric, each which were then worn over corsets, layers of petticoats, sleeved chemises, and other hand sewn undergarments. This was their attire for walking across prairies, river valleys, low deserts, the sagebrush steppes of the high desert, and through the ravines and mountains of eastern Oregon, before rafting down the Columbia River en route to the Willamette Valley. Once there, most got a cabin in place of the house and farm they had left behind, and they needed to replace their worn out clothing.

The majority of women who took to the trails followed their husbands. It was an adventure for the men who hoped – in a popular saying of the day – “to see the elephant.” Initially this was a positive expectation of seeing something wonderful, but later it came to mean a feat of endurance and trials. The diaries of trail women are filled with references to seeing elephants. After sewing an Oregon Trail dress and undergarments, I thought about elephants too.

Many women today consider sewing clothing a morose activity, and it isn’t farfetched to assume that this was as true 160 years ago when sewing was done by hand, without electric lights or sewing machines. At that time it was a heroic endeavor because women’s dresses were made from a pattern with a tight fitting bodice, sloping shoulders, and wide skirts that were precisely gathered into a narrow waist – laced even smaller by a tight corset. Every detail of the pattern design had to be constructed in a certain order, requiring frequent fittings over the corset and petticoats. This is chilly work and hard to imagine doing in a cabin without central heating and without full length mirrors.

The post-trail photos of these women, dressed in their best dresses made of silk or wool or brocade (the remnants of their trail dresses presumably left long ago on some thorn bush), do not flatter. The trip was over, but they appear to be beyond melancholy. They stare out at us with hollow eyes, sharply etched cheekbones, and compressed lips. Their look is exacerbated by spectacularly unflattering hairstyles: long hair with a center part, no bangs, and the sides wound around their ears like hair earmuffs. If they looked happy, their appearances wouldn’t matter, but they look stunned as if they had just seen herds of elephants.

I enjoy wearing my trail outfit in the Oregon Trail scene and occasionally scaring someone by my Mother Superior looking sunbonnet, or by moving when they’ve thought I was a manikin. Given a choice however, I think I’d rather walk the Trail than make another dress for it. I’m not a heroic seamstress.



Susie Linford in her 1852 outfit.

Breaking Down a Brick Wall to Confirm a Short-Bolon Connection, Part I

By Lethene Parks

This is a slightly modified version of an article that appeared in the Clark County (Washington) Genealogical Society publication Trail Breakers, vol. 37 (July 2010-June 2011): 4-9. Jane Germann, editor of Trail Breakers, provided the "Map of Short-Bolon Land" and provided information about Bolon's land claim and his election as sheriff of Clark County. The article and map are used with permission of Clark County Genealogical Society.

The Problem

I am always interested in the stories of the pioneer settlers of Vancouver, especially the many who got here by traveling west via the Oregon Trail. Many of these early pioneers and their descendants are buried in the Old City Cemetery and other area cemeteries. Many have descendants who are members of the Clark County Genealogical Society.

When I learned that the late Vic Bolon (who was a member of Northwest and national OCTA) was a descendant of two of these early pioneers, both of whom arrived in the Vancouver area in 1845 via the Oregon Trail, I wanted to learn more. Vic said that Esther Short, the founding mother of Vancouver, was his third-great-grandmother and that Andrew J. Bolon, the Indian agent killed by Yakama Indians in 1855, was his great-grandfather. I decided to do a little research to see if I could confirm Vic's story.

There was a brief article about Esther Short elsewhere in the issue of *Trail Breakers*, so I decided to concentrate on learning more about Andrew J. Bolon and how he was connected to Esther Short. I made an assumption that Vic had descended from a son of Esther Short's daughter Jerusha and her husband Andrew J. Bolon. As I began my research this assumption was almost immediately proven wrong, and I was facing a brick wall. The other complication was that there were quite a few inconsistencies in information. Without more research, these could not be resolved, but are noted in this article.

The Short Family

I started with the book *Clark County Pioneers*, published by Clark County Genealogical Society (CCGS) in 1989. Amos Meade Short and his wife Esther Lucy Clark were both natives of Tioga County, Pennsylvania. They had twelve children, born at various places from Pennsylvania to Michigan to Illinois as they moved west in the early 1800s.

In 1845 they left St. Joseph, Missouri, and started across the Oregon Trail in a wagon train—the New London Emigrating Company, captained by Abner Hackleman. At that point they had seven living children with them, ranging from three to fifteen years of age. Two children had died young and were left behind in graves in Illinois.

When they started their journey Esther was pregnant. As their wagon train reached Fort Hall in southern Idaho, Esther gave birth to a son, Grant Hall Short. When they reached the Pacific Northwest, Amos and Esther settled briefly in Oregon, where another daughter was born. By 1847 they were in Vancouver, Washington Territory, where they took up a donation land claim in the area that later became downtown Vancouver. There the youngest child, a daughter Hannah, was born. She was the first white child born to American parents in Vancouver.

Although the United States had gained possession of the area north of the Columbia River in an 1846 treaty with Great Britain, the British Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) still occupied and controlled the area. They actively discouraged American settlers north of the Columbia. Twice, when Amos was away from home, the HBC authorities put Esther and her children into a boat and tried to force her to return to the area south of the river. Twice she persevered and returned to her home in Vancouver.

In January 1853 Amos, returning from a trip to San Francisco aboard the bark *Vandalia*, drowned when the ship was wrecked trying to cross the bar at the mouth of the Columbia River. His body was never recovered. Esther retained her land claim in Vancouver and became a businesswoman, platted the town site, and lived in Vancouver the rest of her life. She died in June 1862 and was buried in the cemetery on the Fort Vancouver Military Reservation and later moved to the Old City Cemetery. Her daughter Hannah is also buried at the Old City Cemetery.

Jerusha Short and Andrew J. Bolon

According to *Clark County Pioneers* and other sources, Andrew Jackson Bolon was born about 1826 in Luzerne County, Pennsylvania. He came to the Vancouver area in 1845, the same year as the Short family (some sources say he arrived in 1846). On 11 February 1849 (another source gives the date as November 1845) in Vancouver he married Jerusha Short, oldest daughter of Amos and Esther (Clark) Short. They had three children, all born in Vancouver:

1. William Clark Bolon, born 18 July 1850; died 15 March 1852.
2. Josephine Bolon, born 1 August 1852; died 13 November 1925 in Portland, Oregon. In 1866 she married Samuel Bowers.
3. Anna Elizabeth Bolon, born 7 August 1855 (some sources say she was born later, in September 1855, just three days after her father was killed). According to *Clark County Pioneers*, she married Daniel Woodman. All other sources I found give her husband's name as Riley (no first name indicated).

Here was my brick wall! If Jerusha and Andrew Bolon had only one son, and he died at age two, he obviously was not Vic's ancestor. My first thought was that there must have been another son, but further research did not bear that out. I decided to concentrate first on Andrew Bolon's life and death.

Andrew Bolon was apparently an up-and-coming young man. He was described as tall, not heavy, but strong, with red hair and a reddish beard. He is enumerated in the 1849 *Provisional and Territorial* census (page 3452), and in August 1846 he claimed land with the Champoeg Office in Oregon (vol. 3, page 61). Although Bolon was only in his mid-twenties, he began to involve himself in the affairs of his community.

At that time the Vancouver area was still part of Oregon. Andrew J. Bolon was the first elected sheriff of Clark County. In 1853, when the area north of the Columbia River was separated from Oregon and Washington Territory was established, Andrew Bolon was one of five representatives elected from Clark County to serve in the first territorial legislature. The others were John D. Biles, Francis A. Chenowith, Henry R. Crosbio, and A. Lee Lewis. Bolon served in the House in the first session of the Washington Territorial Legislature in 1854. Isaac I. Stevens was Washington's newly appointed Governor. During this time, Governor Stevens became acquainted with Bolon and was apparently impressed with the young man's integrity, honesty, and athletic prowess.

Stevens appointed Andrew Bolon as Indian agent for all the Indians in Washington Territory east of the Cascade Mountains. The area included present-day Idaho and parts of Montana and Wyoming. One of his first tasks was to get the Indians in his jurisdiction to attend the forthcoming treaty council to be held at what is now Walla Walla in June 1855. Isaac Stevens, who was Superintendent of Indian Affairs as well as Governor of Washington Territory, was to be in charge.

The Historical Context: Indian-White Relations in the 1850s

In order to understand why Andrew Bolon was killed by Indians, and why that triggered all-out war with the Indians, I needed some background information on Indian-white relations in the mid-1850s. I found many sources of information, both online and in books. Reading just a sampling of sources, I found quite a lot of conflicting information and differing interpretations about tensions between whites and Indians and the resulting Pacific Northwest Indians wars. One of the best summaries can be found in the book *Exploring Washington's Past: a Road Guide to History*, by Ruth Kirk and Carmela Alexander. There is also a good scholarly article, "The Life and Death of A. J. Bolon, 1826-1855," in the *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* (Winter 2005/2006): 31-38. It includes a photograph of Bolon with several members of his family. In this article I will simply summarize some of the major events that led to conflicts throughout Washington Territory between 1846 and 1858.

For many years prior to the 1846 treaty that gave the United States possession of the Oregon Country, the Indians of the area had established trading agreements with neighboring tribes and with the Hudson's Bay Company. When the U.S. took over, the Indians, as Ruth Kirk put it, "found themselves facing different attitudes and policies for dealing with aboriginal people," exacerbated by floods of incoming settlers and miners.

In 1847 missionaries Marcus and Narcissa Whitman and a number of others were killed by the Cayuse Indians at their mission near Walla Walla, triggering what is often called the Cayuse War. Peter Skene Ogden, HBC factor at Fort Vancouver, ransomed captives taken in the attack on the Whitman Mission, and the Indians deemed responsible for the killings were brought to Fort Vancouver for execution. For a few years things settled down, but by this time settlers were pouring into the Oregon Country across the Oregon and other trails, and white settlement was spilling over into the recently-acquired Washington Territory.

In June 1855 Washington Territory Governor and Superintendent of Indian Affairs Isaac I. Stevens called the Indian tribes together at a huge treaty council at what is now Walla Walla. Stevens coerced the Indians to sign three treaties, in which the Walla Walla, Umatilla, Cayuse, Yakama, Nez Perce, and a dozen other tribes gave up millions of acres of their tribal lands and moved onto reservations, which the Indians knew were not adequate to their needs. In return, the Indians were promised that white miners and settlers would not be allowed to trespass on their reservation lands. However, very soon after the signing of the treaties gold was discovered in the Colville country of northeast Washington and in the Fraser River area of British Columbia, and miners began to pour in, ignoring the no trespassing rules, sometimes stealing Indian horses and mistreating the Indians as they passed through. There were also misunderstandings about how much of eastern Washington was open to white settlement.

The Murder of Andrew J. Bolon

One of the routes used by miners headed to the gold fields further north was a long-established trail that went north from The Dalles, through the Simcoe Mountains of present-day Klickitat County, into the Yakima and Kittitas Valleys, and on north from there. Accounts of what happened next differ widely. Most accounts agree that when news of the possible murder of some miners by Yakama Indians reached The Dalles, where Indian agent Andrew J. Bolon was preparing to travel to eastern Washington to meet Governor Stevens for a treaty council with the Spokane Indians, Bolon went instead to investigate.

At a point some ten or fifteen miles north of present-day Goldendale, he encountered a small party of Yakama Indians and traveled on in their company. As they rode along the trail, the Indians, headed by an Indian named Mo-Sheel (or Moshele), talked together in their own language, which Bolon did not understand (he spoke fluent Chinook jargon, commonly used by both whites and Indians to communicate with each other).

Apparently Mo-sheel told the other Indians he wanted to kill the white man. There was discussion and some disagreement among the Indians, but as they all stood around the campfire warming their hands and eating food that Bolon had shared with them, Mo-sheel and two other warriors grabbed Bolon and threw him to the ground, while a fourth warrior slit his throat. The Indians also shot Bolon's horse. Bolon's body was never found. Many years later an Indian called Sul-el-lil, who was a young boy at the time, related to historian Lucullus McWhorter his eye-witness account of the murder. The exact date of Bolon's killing is variously given as September 23 or September 25, 1855. At the time of the killing, there were only vague rumors about what actually happened, and no official report was ever made.

In October 1918 a monument to the memory of Andrew J. Bolon was erected some miles north of Goldendale, but south of the spot where his actual murder took place. Lucullus McWhorter read Sul-el-lil's version of the story, and various dignitaries spoke. Bolon's two daughters may have attended the event.

Continued in the next issue



L to R: George H. Himes, Gen. Hazard Stevens, Mrs. George Garner, monument, Mrs. Frank Garner, W. P. Bonney, L. V. McWhorter, William Charley. KCHS Archives.

Northwest Trails

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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.



OCTA's 31st Annual Convention

**July 22–26, 2013
Oregon City, OR**

Next planning meeting is December 1

Northwest Trails

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