



Northwest Trails

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

Volume 30, No. 1

Winter 2015

NWOCTA 2015 Annual Meeting Saturday, March 14 Puyallup, Washington

Please mark Saturday, March 14, at 9:00 a.m. on your calendars. NWOCTA will hold its annual meeting in the Puyallup Peace Lutheran Church across the street from the Meeker Mansion. (In its earlier lives, Ezra attended Unitarian services in the building and it housed the Circulating Free Library, which the Meekers established and first housed in their cabin.)

In addition to the Meeker Mansion, many antique shops and interesting street art in Puyallup, nearby Tacoma (9 miles and 15 minutes from the Meeker Mansion and Lutheran Church) offers several major attractions, including the Museum of Glass; the world-class LeMay Car Museum; the Washington State History Museum, which houses Ezra's wagon and stuffed oxen, Dave and Dandy; and the Tacoma Art Museum, which has just opened a new wing housing an extraordinary collection of Western Art.

Andy Anderson of the Puyallup Historical Society in the Meeker Mansion has arranged a special rate with the Puyallup Best Western Hotel and Conference Center of \$109 per night plus taxes (\$124.72 per night including taxes) for Friday March 13 and Saturday March 14, meeting day. If enough NWOCTA members intend to book reservations for Friday the 13th, Andy will arrange a special evening get-together at the Meeker Mansion. As planning takes time and lots of coordination with volunteers, please let Andy know ASAP that you would attend this special evening event, even if you're staying with friends, your camper van, or whatever. His email is historyandy@comcast.net. (Don't let the inauspicious date of Friday the 13th deter you from arriving the day before the convention.)



Meeker Mansion

A registration flyer will be sent in February

NW Chapter Directory

President

Jim Tompkins
503-880-8507
tompkins@bctonline.com

Vice President

Rich Herman
360-576-5139
buddy359@comcast.net

Secretary

Polly Jackson
pnjocta@yahoo.com

Treasurer

Glenn Harrison
541-926-4680
gr.harrison@comcast.net

Past President

Roger Blair
541-966-8854
rblair@oregontrail.net

Preservation Officer

Billy Symms
541-547-4489
wsymms@peak.org

Directors

Paul Masee
253-858-0255
pcmassee@comcast.net

Ray Egan
253-584-1528
eganrandm@aol.com

Lynne Alvord
509-697-6818
lalvord@msn.com

Chapter Web Editor

Polly Jackson
pnjocta@yahoo.com

Marking and Mapping

Henry Pittock
541-752-6139
hpittock3@mac.com

Annual Meeting Hotel and Museums

Best Western Premiere Hotel and Conference Center
620 South Hill Park Drive
Puyallup, Washington 98373
253-848-1500
<http://www.bestwesternpremierplaza.com/>

Tacoma Art Museum
253-272-4258
1701 Pacific Ave.
Tacoma, Washington
<http://www.tacomaartmuseum.org/exhibit/art-american-west-2/>

Museum of Glass
1801 Dock St.
Tacoma, Washington
253-777-3953
<http://www.museumofglass.org>

LeMay—America's Car Museum
2702 E D St
Tacoma, Washington
253-779-8490
<http://www.lemaymuseum.org>

Meeker Mansion
312 Spring St., Puyallup, Washington
253-848-1770
www.meekermansion.org

Chapter Election Results

By Roger Blair

Lynne Alford has been re-elected to a second two-year term on the NWOCTA Board of Directors. Lynne's term will run from 2015 to 2017. A total of 121 ballots were returned, with unanimous approval for the board candidate. Thanks is extended to all NWOCTA members who took an active part in chapter business by voting.

President's Message

I try to monitor all major issues that affect the Oregon Trail in the Northwest. I ask to be copied into email discussions among members on issues that affect NWOCTA. I do not always get involved in these discussions, but I still monitor them closely. This leadership (or lack of leadership) style is sometimes criticized. I do not claim to be an expert on all facets of NWOCTA and the Oregon Trail. That is why I try to find the best people to get involved and keep me informed. Then, when necessary, I get the remainder of the membership involved. This is one of those times. (Much of what follows is from a report I asked Gail Carbiener to write.)

Oregon creates far more electricity than its meager population requires. Most exported electricity in Oregon is hydroelectricity generated as water passes over mighty dams. Most is sent to California. The second most exported electricity is wind generated, with many wind farms located along the Oregon Trail. Other energy related processes include the burning of biomass (wood waste) to create electricity, thermal electricity from geysers in Southern Oregon along the Applegate Trail, pipelines carrying natural gas to Oregon ports (some of which might cross various historic trails), and the increasingly long lines of railroad cars carrying Wyoming coal or North Dakota shale oil to Oregon ports. The last two energy sources are being exported to China to create electricity there.

Seven and a half years ago, Idaho Power suggested a 500 kilovolt transmission line to carry electricity from the coal fired Boardman, Oregon, generating plant to a hub in Hemingway, Idaho, where it would pass on around Idaho and beyond, including states such as Wyoming. I mention Wyoming because Oregon does not have large coal deposits within its boundaries and Boardman must import its coal from Wyoming. [I remember waiting over half an hour to get into Fort Laramie once so a coal train could pass.] There is talk of converting Boardman to a natural gas burning plant. There is also talk of shutting Boardman down, which would not happen if it was exporting electricity.

The Boardman to Hemingway (or B2H) line proposal has been quietly building steam in the background since 2007. NWOCTA members have been involved since it went public. One meeting was held in Clackamas during our 2013 convention. Now, the project has moved to the forefront. Why is NWOCTA concerned? Because the route of its transmission line, with up to 200 foot tall towers and 250 foot swath, braids its way along the Oregon Trail, crossing it eleven times from Boardman to the Blues to Flagstaff Hill to Vale to the Idaho border to Hemingway, near Boise.

Around Christmas, BLM issued a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for review (<http://www.boardmantoemingway.com>). Interested parties have 90 days, until March 19, 2015, to respond. And respond we must. You will be hearing more soon. An email blast will be sent out to the NWOCTA mailing list asking for letters to BLM. The letters will be counted both for the total number of responses, as well as by topic, so it is best that we send many letters and not be exact duplicates. Express your best reasons. We will also discuss and hopefully pass a resolution at our annual meeting March 14th in Puyallup, Washington. Other organizations should also show their support of the historic emigrant trail system that would be impacted by this project.

As I said, I try to monitor many sources. As such I overhear many statements. A couple of sentiments that I found particularly grating are paraphrased here: "Along the Oregon Trail we are having a hard time getting sight-lines included as part of the heritage experience, while in Europe heritage sites must include both sight-lines as well as sound intrusions." And, "There are some other places where the Oregon Trail can still be seen, who will miss this one?"

—*Jim Tompkins*

Friends of the Trail Award to Eagle Creek Golf Course

By Jim Tompkins

On Thursday, November 6, the OCTA Friends of the Trail Award presented to the Eagle Creek Golf Course owners in July 2013 finally made it into their hands.

Frank Bastasch, his wife Joyce, and son James attended a brief ceremony at the Clackamas County Historical Society museum. Frank and Joyce have just recently returned to Oregon after 55 years out of state. They own about 5 miles of the Barlow Road between Eagle Creek and Feldheimers Crossing of the Clackamas River. James operates the golf course on what used to be Boy Scout Camp Millard. Ruts of the old road have been marked on the second fairway.

The Bastasches have given NWOCTA permission to survey and mark known and assumed ruts on their adjacent property.



Jim Tompkins presenting the OCTA Friends of the Trail award to Joyce and Frank Bastasch.

Mental Fodder From the *Overland Journal*

By Roger Blair

Randy Brown's article in a recent issue of the *Overland Journal* describes a coincidence of death on the Oregon Trail in Nebraska in 1852 ("Nebraska, June 1852: Death and Coincidence on the Trail," *Overland Journal* 32, no. 3 (Fall 2014): 96–116). For me there was a further coincidence. In his article, Brown mentions the names "Whiteside" and "Ninian Edwards."

According to Brown, Caroline Vineyard was married to Ninian Edwards Whiteside, who was already in California. Ninian Edwards, for whom Ninian Edwards Whiteside was presumably named, was the first and only (three terms) territorial governor of Illinois. He was selected by the new state legislature as one of the first two Illinois senators following statehood in 1818. He also served a term as the third governor. During the War of 1812 he led a militia organized as the 17th Illinois Infantry to put down Indian troubles stirred up by the British. Two of his militia captains were brothers Samuel and William Whiteside. There appears to me to be much coincidence in the name Ninian Edwards Whiteside. Timing-wise, we likely are not speaking of the same generation as the governor, though. There are 40 years between 1812 and the Wagner-Vineyard trek of which Brown writes.

But, Governor Ninian Edwards had three sons, Benjamin, Albert Gallatin, and Ninian Wirt Edwards. Ninian Wirt was a politician in his own right, serving as Illinois Attorney General in 1834–1835, then terms in the Illinois House and Senate. He served in the Illinois Constitutional Convention in 1847, eventually becoming Superintendent of Public Instruction in the 1850s. He, along with Lincoln, was a member of the "Long Nines," nine Illinois legislators who sought to move the capital from Vandalia to Springfield. They were "long" because of the height of all nine members. Wirt married a sister to Mary Todd Lincoln, so he and Abraham Lincoln were brothers-in-law. Abe and Mary Todd were, in fact, married in the Ninian Wirt Edwards home in Springfield. When Lincoln became president, Edwards lobbied Lincoln for a political job, which he received. However, there was much criticism of his performance as Commissary supplying Union troops and Lincoln came under pressure to fire him. If I remember correctly, he was merely given a new function after Lincoln resisted the move for some time. As an interesting aside, Gov. Edwards's son and Wirt's brother, Albert Gallatin, opened a brokerage firm in St. Louis under the name of A. G. Edwards.

The names, Ninian Edwards and Whiteside, caught my attention from my research for my Turner family article ("A Family Tragedy and an OCTA Success Story: The 1852 Death of Israel Turner on the Council Bluffs Road," *Overland Journal* 32, no. 1 (Spring 2014): 30–45). My grandfather Andrew Turner was a Revolutionary War soldier, and his grave is marked with a DAR marker by the Ninian Edwards Chapter. The small DAR marker can be seen in the picture of Andrew's grave accompanying my article. My visit to his grave was the first time I had heard the name Ninian Edwards, which was unusual enough to remember it. Edwards County, the City of Edwardsville, and at least one other Illinois name place (that I have forgotten) were named for the governor. I recognized the Whiteside name from my digging into Israel Turner's brother John's service in the War of 1812. Turns out, the Whitesides settled where Columbia, Monroe County, Illinois, now is. Columbia lies across the



Ninian Edwards

Mississippi River from the historic Jefferson Barracks, located in South St. Louis County, Missouri. The Whitesides later moved a few miles south to where Waterloo, Illinois, is located.

Two weeks after graduating from high school in 1964, my family moved to Columbia. My first inkling of the area's importance in early Illinois history came as I dug into Israel Turner's background. Governor Ninian Edwards did not live in Columbia, but did settle where Belleville is now situated, only 12 miles from Columbia. Edwards owned the entire area where Belleville is, eventually selling off much of the property. He died and was buried in Belleville, although eventually reburied in the same cemetery in Springfield where Lincoln reposes.

The long stretch along the Mississippi River from Alton, Illinois, to Kaskaskia where the early settlements were established was called the American Bottom. I am speculating here, but I suspect the use of "American" was to differentiate the area from the French influence concentrated in St. Louis and along the Mississippi River. The French were in this section of river below St. Louis, though, as evidenced by the town of Ste. Genevieve on the Missouri side and Prairie du Rocher, Fort de Chartres, and Cahokia on the Illinois side. The concentrations of American settlers along this lengthy strip of bottomland explain why the first Illinois capital was located in Kaskaskia. The first Illinois governor, Shadrach Bond, lived about 10 miles south of Columbia, the one historic tidbit I did know before delving into this history recently. There is still a marker bearing witness to Bond's presence there.

NWOCTA Call for Awards Nominations

Each year at its general membership meeting in March, NWOCTA recognizes deserving candidates for their efforts in protecting and promoting historic trails, as well as involvement in making NWOCTA a successful chapter. This is your chance to place in nomination some person or organization you know who is deserving of recognition. There are award categories for deserving individuals, organizations, landowners, and agencies. The candidates do not necessarily have to be OCTA members.

Do you know a landowner who has been particularly helpful in providing access to trails or preserving ruts? Is there a reporter who has promoted trail preservation through print? An elected official or government employee (federal, state, or local) who has taken on the cause of historic trails? Is there a teacher or scout group that has taken up a trail project? We especially wish to recognize our members who have devoted their time, effort, and money to trails and to making NWOCTA the great chapter that it is.

The nomination process is not onerous. You merely have to give some thought to whom you recognize as deserving of an award and contact Roger Blair, Awards Committee, to place his/her/their name in consideration. Please send your nomination(s) to Roger Blair, 524 NW 3rd Street, Pendleton, Or 97801, or email rblair@oregontrail.net.

Stafford Hazelett suggests this quote, which crystallizes the nature of our concern and expresses it eloquently:

Those who travel the West sometimes find its vast dry expanse of plain and mountain monotonous and depressing, but not those who are familiar with its trails. Hardly a square mile lacks its personal eloquence, or ghosts of the past to take on flesh and blood and walk beside us.

Introduction to the first edition of J. Roderic Korns and Dale L. Morgan, eds., *West From Fort Bridger* (1951, revised and edited by Will Bagley and Harold Schindler, 1994).



Wagon at sunset, 2007 OCTA Convention, Scottsbluff, Nebraska.

Roger Blair

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Editor

Susan Badger Doyle
524 NW 3rd St
Pendleton, OR 97801
541-966-8854
sdoyle@oregontrail.net

**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 (JPG format) may be sent via email, on disk, 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 Avard Fairbanks for Oregon Trail monuments.



A Bonanza of Trails

**2015 OCTA Convention
South Lake Tahoe, California
September 20–26**

Northwest Trails

Joyce Bolerjack
10813 NE 20th St
Bellevue, WA 98004