



Northwest Trails

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

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Spring 2015



Base O' Blue Mountains Oregon Trail Symposium

**Red Lion Hotel
Pendleton, Oregon
July 25–26, 2015**

You are invited to attend NWOCTA's Base O' Blue Mountains Oregon Trail Symposium July 25–26 at the Red Lion Hotel, Pendleton, Oregon. The Symposium will feature the history of exploration and migration out of the Blue Mountains. Events will include a day of presentations on Saturday, culminating with a bus tour of Frenchtown and Whitman Mission National Historic Site on Sunday.

The full two-day registration fee of \$100 per person includes a buffet lunch on Saturday and the Sunday bus tour and box lunch. (See the registration form for partial registration rates.) The Red Lion is offering the special rate of \$89 per night for Friday, July 24, and Saturday July 25. Be sure to make your registrations with the Red Lion by July 3 to take advantage of the reduced rate.

Presentations

Dennis Larsen and Karen Johnson, "*Edward Jay Allen and the Opening of Naches Pass*"

Ray Egan, "*On the Trail of a Legend*"

David J. Welch, "*Trail Routes from the Blues to the Whitman Mission and the Columbia River*"

Sam Pambrun, "*Frenchtown and Its Inhabitants*"

Bonnie Sager, "*Marie Dorion*"

Roger Blair, "*Walter Meacham, President Harding, and the 1923 Oregon Trail Pageant*"

Registration Form is on page 9

NW Chapter Directory

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Pioneer Mothers Memorial Cabin



Pioneer Mothers Memorial Cabin. Photo by Jim Tomkins.

The Pioneer Mothers Memorial Cabin at Champoeg has been moved to its new location at the Robert Newell House Museum complex. The cabin is dedicated to all pioneer mothers who made so many sacrifices to establish their new homes in the Northwest. To see it gives one a feeling of life in the early days of Oregon. It contains articles contributed by descendants of as many as 40 pioneer families who carried the items across the plains by covered wagon and by boat down the Columbia and Willamette rivers.

Occasionally Roger Blair will contribute items of interest from his research files. This is his first:

Mr. and Mrs. Bill Johnston of The Dalles and Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Johnston of the same place, drove to Portland in a gas wagon yesterday. They plan on taking four days to reach San Francisco, ambling along about 20 miles an hour so that Bill, who is driving, can talk and see the country. He intends stopping at Cottage Grove to point out where he was engineer of a span of oxen in the good old days when mud and not pavement was a distinguishing feature of southern Oregon.

—*Morning Oregonian*, June 8, 1922, p. 8, c. 6.

President's Message

Two all-day meetings in the last month have brought out the best of NWOCTA. At the Annual Meeting in March in Puyallup, Washington, the topic of most interest to the more than fifty attendees was our response to the BLM draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) concerning the Boardman to Hemingway (B2H) electricity transmission line. At that meeting Gail Carbiener won an award for all of the time and effort he put in keeping the chapter aware of the BLM DEIS and B2H in general. At the same meeting it was announced that the recipient of the Richard and Trudy Ackerman Award, our chapter's highest, for years of service to the Oregon Trail, would be presented to mapping and marking official Henry Pittock.

In April, seventeen members met all day in Oregon City at the Museum of the Oregon Territory (MOOT) to discuss the Oregon Trail inventory project (TIP) supervised by Dave Welch. In addition to the TIP wrap-up the group discussed several preservation issues, especially B2H and the Lost Meeks Trail. I am a firm believer that much is accomplished in face-to-face meetings and that electronic meetings will never have the same effect. Following that meeting a member complimented me on my leadership style. I took exception, saying that what defines my leadership is the people who step up and take charge of the different areas - like Gail with B2H, Henry with mapping and marking, Billy Symms with preservation, and Jim Hambleton with the Lost Meeks Trail.

In another comment, following a conversation with a long time friend and NWOCTAn, about decreasing membership in the national organization, I made the comment that our peak in members as well as the highest convention attendance was in 1993, when the Oregon Trail Sesquicentennial was being observed. I commented that we may need another special event on the Oregon Trail to attract more members. Jousting with windmills (and the transmission lines that connect them to the grid) is not the best way to increase membership. She accused me of being an optimist. I did not know how to take that. Although I don't get as pessimistic about things as some people, I never thought of myself as an optimist, just pragmatic.

The point of all this rambling is that although preservation of the trail brings out the best in us, maybe we need a special event to get the juices flowing. Until someone declares the next national Oregon Trail event, we will have to settle for smaller ones. Two such events are coming up in June and July. On **June 27–28, at the Oregon Lavender Farm near Oregon City**, during the statewide Lavender Festival, NWOCTA will be marking the Barlow Road with Carsonite markers across their purple fields. The farm owner and fair organizer is enthusiastic about getting the Barlow Road marked across his fields and by doing it during the festival as many as 20,000 people will bear witness. Then on **July 25–26, in Pendleton**, NWOCTA will sponsor an Oregon Trail Symposium, including speaker sessions, a field trip, and a chapter meeting (to replace this year's picnic meeting). Then there is the national convention in September this year along the banks of Lake Tahoe. I am optimistic that anyone attending any of these events will enjoy their experience.

—Jim Tompkins

NWOCTA 2015 Annual Meeting

Saturday, March 14

Puyallup, Washington

The NWOCTA Annual Meeting was held at the Puyallup Peace Lutheran Church, with associated events across the street at the Meeker Mansion. President Jim Tompkins opened the meeting on 3/14/15 at 9:26:53 a.m., or pi to the 10th place: 3.141592653.

Highlights of the meeting include:

- Suzanne Hornbuckle sang the song “To the Emigrant of 1845” that was published in *The Oregon Spectator*, October 29, 1846. She sang it to the tune of “The Girl I Left Behind Me.”
- Bob Minnick from the Puyallup Historical Society gave an overview of the Oregon Trail connection to the area. He noted that Ezra Meeker was the most important historic figure in Puyallup.
- John Knutsen, Mayor of Puyallup, welcomed us.
- A DVD featured the upcoming OCTA Convention in September.
- Billy Symms reported on the OCTA Mid-Year Meeting and the chapter preservation activities.
- Lethene Parks updated us on the status of OCTA’s four collections in California, National Frontier Trails Center (NFTC), Oregon State Library, and the American Heritage Center at the University of Wyoming. She reported that the national board passed a new policy on collections, and that the collections of Charlie Martin and Ruth Anderson are being donated to NFTC.
- Gail Carbiener spoke on the B2H issue and support for the Timber Canyon alternative route.
- Roger Blair presented a slide show teaser for the July symposium.
- Andy Anderson, historian for the Puyallup Historical Society at Meeker Mansion, gave an informative and interesting talk about Ezra Meeker, the history of the mansion, and the restoration project.
- Jerry Bates, with the South Hill Historical Society, talked about South Hill’s Heritage Corridor and distributed maps of the corridor.



Mayor John Knutsen



Andy Anderson



Billy Symms



Jerry Bates presenting South Hill's Heritage Corridor.



Glenn and Carol Harrison talking with Dennis Larsen.



Gail Carbiener received the Distinguished Volunteer Award.



Henry Pittock was not able to be at the annual meeting to receive the Ackerman Meritorious Achievement Award. Glenn Harrison presented it to him on March 16th at his home.

After the meeting everyone toured the Meeker Mansion, hosted by Andy Anderson.



Meeker Mansion.



Monument in front of the Meeker Mansion.



Statue of Ezra Meeker in front of the site of his original cabin. The ivy that covered the cabin has grown into a tree. Note the street light on the right in the form of a covered wagon.

1905 Meeker Wagon

By Andy Anderson

Jeannie Knutson (descendant of Darius Ross and Charlie) and Beth Bestrom, both of the Puyallup Historical Society, are viewing the Meeker wagon, which is in storage at the Washington State Historical Society. This is one of two wagons Meeker had built in 1905, and this is the actual one he took over the Trail in 1906–8, 1910, and to San Francisco in 1914.

The blue crates are Meeker's shipping crates he used to move material via rail. One bears a shipping label from his grandson Frank Templeton in Portland to Ezra in San Francisco.



Barely visible on the right is the stage coach Meeker discovered on the Trail in 1916 and caused to be brought to the Washington State History Museum. Dennis Larsen contributed the following snippet from the Meeker Papers:

Meeker purchased 18 gallons of gasoline, noted the odometer reading of 4,942 miles, and on August 15, 1916, headed for Independence Rock and Devils Gate. He wrote what happened at Devil's Gate:

As I drove into an open court with some vacant buildings on one side and a barn on the other to escape the fury of a dust storm in the Sweetwater valley although the atmosphere was clouded with dust and obscured the view like as in one of our heavy fogs, I spied an old time stage coach. After the storm had subsided and after a two hour search was made for the owner, the relict of antiquity was secured for the State Historical Society and arrangements made for shipment to Tacoma. This, Mr. Bonney tells me will be housed in the room alongside the ox team, Dave and Dandy.

Charles Fletcher, an old pioneer of Sweetwater valley, deserves credit for this generous gift. It is the real thing, the history of which dates back into pioneer days and links the old and the new ways. I send you a photograph of the find. Nearby, the Trail passes over a ledge of rock where four parallel wagon tracks ruts are worn sixteen inches deep—so deep the projecting king bolt in places also marked the ledge. It's a wonderful sight and one enduring witness of the vast throngs of pioneers passing in the last century.

The Lander newspaper reported the Pathfinder's arrival in their town on August 16. There were 5,156 miles on the register.

The stagecoach today rests in the basement of the Washington State Historical Society Research Center in Tacoma, Washington. The current curators do not seem to prize it as highly as did Meeker and Bonney. When viewing it, the curator asked the author if he knew anyone who was in need of a stagecoach.

2015 NW OCTA Outings and Activities

Rich Herman

Mark your calendars now and watch for details in *News from the Plains* and check the OCTA web site, www.octa-trails.org

March 13–14: NW OCTA Annual Meeting at Puyallup Peace Lutheran Church, 9-3. Andy Anderson will lead the program with emphasis on Ezra Meeker and his mansion as well as the Naches Trail.

April 20, Monday: Trail Inventory Project (TIP) meeting to review the project results and plans. In the afternoon we will discuss trail preservation issues. Meet at the Museum of the Oregon Territory at 9:00 am in Oregon City. For more information, contact Dave Welch at welchdj@comcast.net.

June 27–28, Sat.-Sun.: Trail marking event at the Clackamas County Lavender Festival. Install Carsonite markers in Barlow Road trail ruts and possibly run an information booth at festival. Contact Henry Pittock for more information at hpttock3@me.com.

July TBA: Locate and mark Barlow Rd. ruts in vicinity of Eagle Creek Golf Course.

July 25–26, Sat.-Sun.: Oregon Trail Symposium at the Red Lion Hotel. There will be several speakers presenting interesting local history on Saturday. A bus tour is planned through Frenchtown and Whitman Mission on Sunday. For more information, contact Roger Blair at rblair@oregontrail.net.

NOTE: Since the national OCTA convention is in September this year, the NWOCTA Fall Picnic chapter meeting will be held on Saturday night of the Symposium.

September 21–25: 2015 Annual National Convention at South Lake Tahoe, State Line, NV.

There are three additional opportunities for trail experience that are being led by the Oregon Historical Trails Advisory Council (OHTAC). For additional information contact Billy Symms at wsymms@gmail.com.

April 24–25 Fri.-Sat.: Applegate Trail outing at Grants Pass, OR.

June 26–27 Fri-Sat: Freemont/Whitman/Wyeth outing at LaGrande, OR.

September 11–12 Fri.-Sat.: Barlow Road outing based out of The Dalles, OR.

I am always looking for ideas for future meeting locations, historical outings, and trail related field trips. Please give me your input so we can discuss it. I am open to all suggestions. Contact Rich Herman at “buddy359@comcast.net”.

Base O' Blue Mountains Oregon Trail Symposium

Red Lion Hotel, Pendleton, Oregon

July 25–26, 2015

Please join us for the Base O' Blue Mountains Oregon Trail Symposium Saturday, July 25, and Sunday, July 26, at the Red Lion Hotel, Pendleton. Roger Blair is the Symposium Coordinator.

Program

Saturday: 9:00 am–4:00 pm, Presentations and buffet lunch, Dinner on your own, 7:00–9:00 pm, Chapter Meeting.

Sunday: 9:00 am–2:00 pm, bus tour of Frenchtown and a visit to Whitman Mission National Historic Site. A box lunch will be provided at Whitman Mission before returning to the Red Lion. Bus seating may be limited, so make your reservation early to ensure a spot.

Lodging

Red Lion Hotel
304 SE Nye Ave (I-84, Exit 210)
541-276-6111

The Red lion is offering the special rate of \$89 per night for Friday, July 24 and Saturday July 25. To reserve your room at the special rate, make your registration and ask for the OCTA rate **by July 3.**

To register, please clip this registration form and mail it with your check to Roger Blair **by July 3.**

Make checks payable to NWOCTA.

For questions or information, contact Roger Blair, 541-966-8854, rblair@oregontrail.net

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Email address _____

Full two-day registration \$100.00 x _____ = \$ _____
(includes Saturday buffet lunch & Sunday bus tour and box lunch)

Saturday Only w/ lunch \$75.00 x _____ = \$ _____

 " Without lunch \$50.00 x _____ = \$ _____

Sunday Only bus tour w/ box lunch \$50.00 x _____ = \$ _____

Total \$ _____

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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

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