



Northwest Trails

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

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Tuck Forsythe and the Meek Cutoff

Tuck Forsythe's 1845 ancestors said they came on the Oregon Trail, led by Sol Tetherow. Tuck learned that the Tetherow train arrived via the Meek Cutoff in Stafford Hazelett's recent article, "'To the World!!' The Story Behind the Vitriol" in the *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 116, no. 2 (Summer 2015): 196–219.

On page 210, Hazelett writes that the March 18, 1847, issue of the *Oregon Spectator* printed a letter from Solomon Tetherow, who was the leader of the Savannah Oregon Emigrating Society in 1845. He led 66 wagons, 292 people, 624 loose cattle, 398 oxen, and 74 mules and horses, which were organized into smaller companies. The source for the letter is James H. and Theona J. Hambleton, *Wood, Water & Grass: Meek Cutoff of 1845*. Tuck immediately ordered copies of the book.

Meek Cutoff Book

Hambleton, James H. and Theona J. *Wood, Water & Grass: Meek Cutoff of 1845*. Caldwell, Idaho: Caxton Press, 2014.

The Meek Cutoff is perhaps the most infamous of all Oregon Trail branches. In 1845, following mountain man Stephen Meek, settlers in over 200 wagons took a more direct route across Oregon's High Desert in an attempt to reach The Dalles. Twenty-three died during the attempt. Researchers James H. and Theona J. Hambleton relate the history of the Meek Cutoff through the words of the diarists that lived through the ordeal. Correlation of diaries written in 1845 by Cooley, Harritt, Field, Herron, and Parker, and the McClure diary written in 1853, reveal the actual location of the Meek Cutoff Trail. Included in the book are 53 USGS Quadrangle maps showing the actual trail location and many color photos of the remains of the trail itself. Bibliography and index are also included. The culmination of nine years of extensive research by the Hambletons, *Wood, Water & Grass: Meek Cutoff of 1845* gives a clearer picture and better understanding of the 1845 Meek Cutoff, while helping to dispel many controversies that have been created in previous writings of the trail.

Upcoming Event: Oregon Trail Symposium

Red Lion Hotel, Pendleton, OR, July 25–26

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President's Message

I spent the last weekend of June in Upper Logan, Oregon, at a lavender festival talking to any interested party about the Oregon Trail and our organization. What was the connection that brought Henry Pittock, Rich Herman and Phyllis McGarry, Gail and Muriel Carbiener, Polly Jackson, Paul Masee, and myself (as well as Dr. Mike Norris and past Oregon City mayor Alice Norris of the Clackamas County Historical Society) to this fragrant part of Oregon? The previous fall, while working on the Trail Inventory Project, it was apparent that the Barlow Road crossed somewhere near the Oregon Lavender Farm. The owner of the farm and his farm manager were very pleased to hear that the Oregon Trail may have crossed their property and were eager to have it marked and interpreted. They showed us where they thought it crossed and invited us to come back as their guests at the next Oregon Lavender Festival.

We sat on a very hot Saturday and Sunday at a booth, next to a Carsonite post talking Oregon Trail, using old surveys and other maps to make our point. Henry and I had come out two days earlier and pounded two posts in the neighboring nursery, exactly where the 1855 surveyor said the road crossed a section line. (That same surveyor would cloud the issue by missing the same road crossing an intersecting section line.)

I learned a lot about some of the people who serve NW chapter. Henry is a stickler for detail. Gail bemoans the lack of Eastern Oregon OCTA members. Polly wishes her new apartment was a condo so she could buy it. Rich's tongue is loosened by mentioning South Dakota or Czechoslovakia. Paul and Henry extended the weekend by going back over the TIP route and retaking photos that were out of focus the first trip. (At one stop, the closest to Oregon City, they discovered traces of the road being bulldozed to build a new structure.) In my case I learned that I am enjoying my new-found energy to walk the trail.

Back to Henry being a stickler for detail and that pesky 1855 survey. Lafayette Cartee's surveyor field notes (not the pretty map drawn by a cartographer back in his office) state specifically where a road crossed the north-south section line he walked and at what angle it crossed. For some reason he failed to register the crossing of the adjacent east-west section line by the original Barlow Road. Henry went back to crossings of the same road at other points and connected the dots, which placed the road within a 100 foot corridor. But without a definitive waypoint, he did not know exactly where to pound a post. (One end of the corridor was actually off the lavender farm property.) The stickers on the

Carsonite post do NOT say “approximate route.” It will take further research and possibly a metal detector to find the road.

At one point I went onto the neighboring property (with permission) and looked to see the lay of the land. It was a relatively undisturbed wooded area. My eye for ruts soon noticed a linear depression with harder soil and no trees growing out of it, exactly where the trail should have been. It appeared to lead me through the corridor Henry identified and onto a corner of the lavender farm property. I brought it to Henry’s attention. He agreed it looked promising, but it also connected with an old farm road. This is where a metal detector might bear fruit. The owner of the lavender farm and his manager would very much like a Carsonite post on their property and are considering buying an interpretive panel for their patio overlooking the purple fields. Although we did not pound a post on his property, at least not yet, we did make contacts with several neighboring property owners who are thrilled to learn the Barlow Road went on or near their land.

—Jim Tompkins



Henry Pittock and Jim Dierking, the owner of Liberty Naturals/Oregon Lavender Farm. Some maps show the Barlow Road crossing through the southwest corner of the lavender farm.



The NWOCTA booth (to the right of the bridge) at the Oregon Lavender Festival. Barlow Road crosses at the tree line above the tents.



Kiosk on patio of Oregon Lavender Farm where property owner Jim Dierking wants to place a Novoalloy interpretive sign about the Barlow Road.



Rita Snyder is the owner of Upper Logan Nursery, just to the west of the lavender farm. Her property is where we put in two Carsonite markers.

B2H Quiet but Festering

By Gail Carbiener

First of all, a big thank you to all who wrote letters in response to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) against the Boardman to Hemingway Transmission line project (B2H). All 380 comment letters have been posted for all of us to read at:

<http://www.boardmantohemingway.com/deiscomments.aspx>

There is not much we can do until the Final EIS is published, they say in early 2016. The objections to the B2H are numerous and go far beyond the protection of the Oregon Trail. Frankly, other than our friends at National Park Service and Oregon State Preservation Office, no one commented on saving the Trail. Several were concerned about the Baker Interpretive Center. There may be a message here!

Can we stop the B2H completely, maybe; can we move it off the Trail, also maybe. Can we do it alone, probably remote. We need the help of many of the others who are against the project for their special reasons. The vast majority of others are landowners – farmers and ranchers. Many of these multi-generational, longtime landowners also have the Trail on or near their property. They are our friends.

If you read the letters, you can see that the counties have a strong interest in protecting farm land for their residents. The Navy is concerned about pilots and ground squirrels. The US Fish & Wildlife is concerned about sage-grouse, migratory birds and unacceptable mitigation. Eastern Oregon University does not support either route over the Glass Hill segment. And Baker City is concerned about their view and the Interpretive Center, just to name a few.

I had the opportunity to meet with two attorneys from our friends at Western Environmental Law Center (WELC) at the end of June, where I was able to give John Mellgren and Susan Jane Brown an update on OCTA's continued opposition to the B2H while soliciting their support for further involvement. WELC's webpage: <http://www.westernlaw.org/news/newsletters>,

WELC operates the University of Oregon Law School's environmental law clinic and provides students the practical, hands-on learning needed for an environmental law career. This term, the students' assignment focused on Oregon's proposed Boardman-to-Hemingway Transmission Line Project, where individuals focused on our lynx trapping case, Southwest oil and gas projects, stopping the Oregon LNG pipeline, and Oregon forest planning issues. Over the years we've trained more than 500 students.

This is from a letter to the BLM from a rancher who has the Oregon Trail on his property:

My family has made a living ranching here for six generations, and find it hard to see how someone with a marker pen can change our lives forever.

At the recent annual meeting of Idaho Power, the question was asked: "What would happen if the B2H line is further delayed or even if it is not built?" The answer: "New generation plants such as a natural gas generator would likely take its place."

Keep posted everyone.

In Memoriam

Zacharias Edward Buob, Nov 29, 1975 – May 28, 2015, Resident of San Jose, CA

Kathy Buob has worked with Marley Shurtleff over the past years on the OCTA website. Kathy extends her gratitude for the outpouring of kindness from OCTA members following the tragic death of her son, Zach.

Trail Wanderings – April 24–26 2015

OHTAC Outing, Grants Pass, Oregon

Article and Photos by Billy Symms, Preservation Officer

I was on an OHTAC outing April 24–26 in Grants Pass, Oregon. Our focus was the Applegate Trail, established in 1846, which is considered part of both the Oregon Trail and the California Trail. Also on the trip were Wendell Baskins, Joe and Leta Neiderheiser, Jim and Rene Ford, Loren Irving, Dick Seymour, Lindon Hilton, Bob Black, Erica Risberg, and Stephen Spain.

In 1846, the Oregon Provisional Legislature allowed the Applegates and others to attempt to find a more southerly route to Oregon. The group began the task on June 25, 1846, with Jesse Applegate, Lindsay Applegate, David Goff, John Owen, B. F. Burch, W. Sportsman, Robert Smith, a Mr. Goodhue, J. Jones, B. Ausbuan, and Levi Scott starting the survey. The party spent three and a half months surveying a route to Fort Hall in present Idaho. At Rapid River the Applegate Trail departed the main branch of the Oregon Trail and turned south by City of Rocks, through Granite Pass to the Humboldt River. On the return trip, the group brought approximately 150 emigrants along this southern route, also known as the South Road, South Emigrant Trail, or the Scott-Applegate Trail.

For the uninitiated, here is a quick version of the Applegate Trail. From Fort Hall, the route headed south, then followed the Humboldt River as far as present Imlay, Nevada, before passing through the Black Rock Desert in present Nevada. The trail then entered northern California and passed Goose and Tule Lakes. After crossing the Lost River, the route then crossed the Klamath Basin and the Cascade Range into Southern Oregon. The trail then followed Keene Creek to the Siskiyou Mountains, where it followed the south branch of the Rogue River. Heading northerly, the route followed the Umpqua River before crossing the Calapooya Mountains into the southern Willamette Valley.

Our weekend started Friday afternoon when we met at the Hugo exit on I-5 to make the short drive to the 1,060 foot section of the trail that is preserved above the freeway. You are literally a stone's throw from the freeway at Sexton Pass, only about 75 feet or less above it. It is quite a sensation to have all that traffic roaring by while you are taking a step back in time. At the Hugo exit you turn east and take the frontage road for a short distance and turn onto the old Hwy 99 going north. You are on a macadam road for part of the drive and eventually you come to a gate and can go no further. The swales are on the left side of the road and a short walk down the fence line to the site. The segment is marked and is quite interesting. There is some speculation that this is really part of the old wagon road over Sexton Pass, but whether it is or not, it deserves to be preserved and is officially now part of the Applegate Trail. We retired for a nice dinner at the Tap Rock Restaurant.

On Saturday we caravanned to several sites in the Siskiyou Mountains. At Tub Springs we walked up the loop trail and found the Applegate Trail and walked back down that short section. It is below the more identifiable wagon road. Members cleaned the kiosk. The water still flows clear and pure from the springs. It is a beautiful location here in the Siskiyou Mountains, and I can see why so many of the emigrants mentioned these particular springs.



Wendell Baskins at Tub Springs.



Round Prairie.

We were escorted to the Box R Ranch section of the Applegate Trail on private property by Cheryl Foster-Curley, District Archaeologist for the Medford District Office of the BLM. Cheryl pointed out a section of some 100 to 200 yards of the Applegate Trail that are involved in a land swap that will preserve this section of the trail forever. Round Prairie, which was a favorite stop for the emigrants on the Applegate Trail, is located on this property as well. It is a beautiful segment. The property is owned by a Mr. Rowlett and Jesse and Jeanne Randall. In addition to seeing this section, we visited the building that Jeanne Randall refers to as a “museum” of the ranch.

We drove to Jenny's Slide section of the Applegate Trail on Jenny Creek and took a walk led by Bob Black. We started at the gravel pit and followed it down to Jenny Creek, then went back up to the top and saw a short section of the trail.

We visited the Emigrant Lake location where the three signs will be located. This is the Hill property adjacent to the Hill Cemetery that is involved in the land swap.

Our last stop before dinner at Wild River Restaurant was a quick visit to the boat ramp at Chinook Park, where just downstream the Applegate Trail crossed the Rogue River.

On Sunday after the meeting, we visited the Myrtle Creek section of the Applegate Trail moving out of the canyon at Myrtle Creek. There are some nice swales in this section as they headed north up a steep hill, which is being purchased by the City of Myrtle Creek. It will be protected and maintained by the City and, according to Joe and Leta Nederheiser, will have a parking area and three interpretive signs.

It was a wonderful two days out on the Applegate Trail. It seems we have a tendency to ignore the Applegate Trail because it is thought by many that there are no visible signs of passage, but there are many signs and we need to make sure we preserve and protect them where possible.



Myrtle Creek trail segment.

OHTAC was established in 1998 to oversee and provided advice on Oregon's 16 emigrant trails. The website is www.oregon.gov/OPRD/HCDD/pages/ohtac.aspx OHTAC meetings are open to the public and they are on Sunday of the weekend outing. We visit various areas around the state where the 16 trails are located.

Trail Wanderings – June 18–22, 2015

Keeney Pass to Farewell Bend, Sarah Chambers Gravesite, and the Pioneer Cemetery

Article and photos by Billy Symms, Preservation Officer

Members of the group were Billy Symms (official flag placer and wrench holder to tighten bolts), Gail Carbiener (leader), Muriel Carbiener, Chuck Hornbuckle (drill master and bolt tightener), Suzanne Hornbuckle (nuts, bolts, and washers lady), Joe (post hole digger) and Leta Neiderheiser, Jim (porta-potty driver and more) and Sally Riehl (photographer), Jenny Miller (cement mixing lady), Rich Herman (general handyman), Kim Boddie (photographer, digger, tamper, you name it), Randy Brown (shoveler, cement mixer, tamper, post hole digger, you name it, what a work horse), and Drew Harvey (fill where needed guy). As you can see we had a wide variety of people and talents in this group. It was a great outing and the results have greatly enhanced the trail experience in this section of the trail.

Friday June 19. Jennifer Theisen from Vale and Nicole Lohman from Baker City, both BLM archaeologists, joined our group as we made our way from east of Keeney Pass to Tub Springs, placing signs and Carsonite markers where needed. We dug holes, mixed cement, bolted on new signs—both informational and directional as well as distance signs. A new Novacolor sign marks the Henderson gravesite, and we installed a post asking folks to respect private property as well. We stopped for a nice picnic lunch in Vale on the way back from Keeney Pass and before heading out to Alkali and Tub Springs.

At the intersection of 5th Ave. East and Old Emigrant Road, or Old Oregon Trail Road depending on the map you use, we installed a directional sign sending people on the road north to the Oregon Trail original route. The next sign was put in about ¼ mile up the road directing folks to the right-hand road to the Oregon Trail original route. The next sign was put in about 3 miles up the road, and it was a directional sign telling people to continue up the road to the original route. We stopped at Alkali and Tub Springs and put in new informational signs as well as informational signs that told folks they are on the original route for the next 14 miles. We returned to Vale, dropped off the porta-potty, and then returned to Ontario and met at Ogawa's at 6 p.m. for dinner.

Saturday June 20. It was almost the same crew with the exception of the two BLM ladies and Muriel. We went back out to Tub Springs and started there with the signage. We put up signs at the protected swales at Tub Mountain (the sign says they are on the original route for the Oregon Trail and gives mileage to Oregon City and Independence, MO), at Moore's Hollow Road (one sign directs people back to I-84, 6.7 miles east, and the other tells them to continue on the trail for 4 miles), and at the end of the segment about ¼ mile from the cattle lot where you turn NE to go to Love Reservoir. The sign at the end of the segment has a U-turn sign on one post and a sign for the end of the original Oregon Trail segment on another post. We had lunch sitting in our chairs on the trail at Moore's Hollow Road Junction watching some badgers up the road. They were quite entertaining.



New marker at Henderson gravesite.



Badger guests for lunch on the trail. Photo by Gail Carbiener.

We returned to Ontario by way of Moore's Hollow Road and stopped along the way to dig two post holes and prepare the signs to finish the next day. We ate dinner at Country Kitchen Cafe at 7 p.m.

Sunday June 21. Same crew as yesterday, only Muriel was back with us. We started out finishing the two signs on Moore's Hollow Road. We cemented the posts in place, as we had everything prepared yesterday on the way out. Just before we got to the first sign to install, we met several young men with high-powered rifles who said they were out ground squirrel hunting. We asked them if they had shot the new sign, and one responded "not yet." I fear for the safety of those signs, as they do make wonderful targets and are much more visible than the old signs, and there are a lot more of them. After completing that



Moore's Hollow Junction.

project, we went on to Farewell Bend State Park for a quick stop, as we no longer have the porta-potty. We went up the road to the Birch Creek site and put in a directional sign at the first fork in the road directing people to the right fork. We had to be creative on the replacement of these signs as we used the original post, but Joe had to back up his truck to the sign so Chuck could stand in the back of it to drill holes and put in bolts. It was pretty much a one person project.

Then it was up to the Birch Creek site where we put in one directional sign at the parking lot and another informational sign up by the Novacolor sign with mileage from Independence to Oregon City. We returned to Farewell Bend State Park, where some of the group departed for home after we all had a picnic lunch. The rest returned to Ontario, and I cleaned up and went to visit my family in Caldwell for Father's Day.

Monday June 22. We were supposed to all meet at Juntura at 9:00 a.m., but some were late. Finally, Gail, Muriel, Jenny, Kim, Jim and Sally, and me all convoyed up past Beulah Reservoir to the site of the Sarah King Chambers grave. After walking up to the gravesite and looking it over, we decided how we were going to cement two of the posts in the ground. They were the loose ones on the north end of the enclosure. The sight of Gail, Jenny, and Jim running up the hill with the wheelbarrow full of tools and cement would have been a great video for You Tube. They were magnificent. Jenny mixed the cement while the rest of us enlarged the holes and cleaned them out, and then we set them. It will really enhance the gravesite for future generations.

After saying goodbye to Sarah, we drove over to the Pioneer Cemetery where many of the Levi Scott family is buried as well as others. As you wander around that graveyard sitting up on the hill and read the tombstones, you almost want to cry for some of them. They were so young and never had a chance to enjoy life, if you could in those days, because life was hard.

The rest of the group went to Chukar Park for lunch, and I headed for home as I had a seven hour drive.

I think we often forget with all of our modern toys and gadgets that it was not always like this and life was often hard. We need to be reminded every now and then. It has been a fast and furious five days for me but it has been a wonderful experience. I look forward to the next outing.

In closing, here is a quote from an email I received yesterday from Jennifer Theisen at the Vale BLM office: "Thank you so much for the work that you and the OCTA team does for the Trail. The BLM appreciates (more than you can imagine), the work OCTA has done and continues to do. It will certainly make the trail experience more enjoyable for future groups and individuals."



The group at Henderson grave.



Jenny Miller and Randy Brown.



Installing signs at the end of the trail segment.

We call these Diane's Swales because this segment of class one ruts was preserved by Diane Pritchard who was the BLM archaeologist at Vale. The swales are at Tub Mountain between Vale and Farewell Bend. She had a fence built around them to preserve them. Diane passed away last year from cancer. She was a real steward of the trail, and we do miss her.



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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**