



Northwest Trails

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

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Fall 2020

Membership at a Glance

By Chuck Hornbuckle

The pandemic has impacted all of us, especially nonprofit organizations that rely on income from memberships or have to limit or eliminate public gatherings.

While NW OCTA membership is in good shape due to several new members, we have twenty-nine existing members who have not renewed their membership. If you or someone you know has not renewed their membership, please consider updating your information with me, Kathy Conway at Headquarters, or Glenn Harrison. Their email information is included in the NW OCTA Officer list. Kathy's address is kconway@indepmo.org. She will be happy to assist you to renew or with any other OCTA questions.

Our NW OCTA membership rosters and members are: 1) General Public Roster (268), 2) Not for Publication on the Web Roster (33) and 3) Not for Web nor General Roster (19) resulting in 320 members. These numbers are not families but are individuals making up the same family. Note that we do not currently publish member names for public information.

I encourage all members who work or are members of other local heritage groups to write a short article on your experiences and submit to Susan Badger Doyle, our newsletter editor, at sdoyle@oregontrail.net. Not only would we spread the word about OCTA, but those groups and individuals will welcome and enjoy our trail heritage news.



Keep safe and stay well as we progress through this pandemic.
Hopefully, we will be back on the trail by summer 2021.

Meanwhile, you can stay in touch by visiting octa-trails.org
and the Northwest Chapter under "Regional Chapters."

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President's Message

Hello everyone. I hope you have all been busy and safe during the past few months. Now that we have all experienced what it is like to live in the threat of wildfires and the pandemic, it seems too soon to be experiencing the onset of fall. At least we can still get out to walk now.

I am finally allowed to come back to the local library to do book mending. I volunteer one day a week for three hours, and it really helps to be away from home for a little while. Jim and I walk with another friend about once a week, but just for an hour or so.

Kudos to Jenny Miller and her Eagle Scouts for their work in setting the T-Rail signs in Eastern Oregon at the end of July. We really appreciate their willingness to help mark the trail.

Also, Gail Carbiener has been working on protecting the trail in Echo Meadows. He is working with a company that is planning a new wind farm near the trail site to be sure that the existing ruts are not damaged. Dave Welch has provided a lot of information to help in the preservation efforts on this project. Thanks to both of you for your efforts.

I am not sure how many of you know that our Vice President Bernadette Hammelman lives in the Molalla area. She answered my email by stating they are fine and had to evacuate for four days. Their home is still intact, and they are now back. I hope that the fires are almost over now.

Susan Doyle and I have talked about starting a section in the *Northwest Trails* where members can present their favorite quotes from Oregon Trail diaries. I am starting the project with one of my favorites in this issue. We have all had the time to reread some diaries, and it will be fun to see which of them people like. I hope you will join us in future newsletters.

A couple of members have noted that sometimes new undiscovered sections of the trails can be seen after a fire. I know that happened near Boise several years ago. Now folks are looking for more traces of the Barlow Road on the eastern side of the mountains.

Stay safe,
Sallie K. Riehl, Chapter President



T-Rail Markers Installed in Eastern Oregon

By Jenny Miller

After a lot of groundwork laid by Gail Carbiener and Ronnie Allen, six T-rail markers were placed in the ground in La Grande and Pendleton July 31 and August 1. At the last NW OCTA meeting in March, the seeds were planted for turning the marker placement into a Boy Scouts of America (BSA) Eagle Scout project. Much work ensued in Hermiston when Taylor Ward of Hermiston-area Boy Scouts Troop 654 accepted the project and then the emails commenced to fly. In the end, despite COVID and extreme temperatures, the project was able to take off.

The first night, July 30, was spent at Emigrant Springs. There, the troop was treated to a hike on the Oregon Trail in and near the park. Brenda Garrick led us on a segment that was in the park, and then we drove to where Park Manager Mark Miller lives, and together, we went on some private property, including Westminster Woods. Mark led us to a site that he believes contains graves. Jenny had brought some copper wires and put them to the test. To the amazement of the boys, the rods crossed! They each took turns trying it out. Three of the four boys were able to get them to work. The fourth was sad that he couldn't.

The next morning had us meeting Ronnie Allen at Birnie Park where everyone received temperature checks. We were also met by some members of our troop who could only come for the first workday. We followed Ronnie straight up a steep hill that rapidly became the trail itself. We installed the first marker just below the road, right next to the trail. It was a good first T-rail to learn on, not too difficult or rocky. This was at the Spencer site. The next one up the road was a different story—lots of gravel and rock at the Horst site. There, Ronnie Allen brought reporter Dick Mason from *The La Grande Observer* to interview Taylor about the project. He got some good action shots and staged a few as well. This was a tough site to dig in the end.

For our third marker, we had to retrace our steps and then go up Morgan Lake Rd. We had a bit of trouble finding the Webster site. After two calls to Gail, and walking around a bit, we managed to find the correct location. All were impressed at the view of La Grande from above while we were in search. It impressed everyone just how high the emigrants had to climb out of the valley. This was an easy site to dig, and it was in the shade to boot. Very welcome! Then it was time for lunch. After leaving here, we all went to Ronnie's site on Hot Lake Lane to see the replica Meeker Marker and talk about how the trail descended into the La Grande Valley.

Then, we were off to the Smutz place on Foothill Road to place the fourth marker. Unfortunately, it was a very rocky location and in full sun. Mr. Smutz hooked up his water hose for us, and we all took turns spraying ourselves in attempts to cool off. We were all relieved when done and all went off in search of cold refreshment. Back in camp, we all were grateful to hit the showers. We discussed the day and what everyone learned.

The next morning after breaking camp, we headed for the Heritage Station museum in Pendleton, where we were joined by Susan Doyle, Roger Blair, and Lorna Waltz. The fifth marker was placed in front of Byrd Schoolhouse on the museum grounds and was the easiest of all to dig. Next, we headed to the Parks and Rec facility to install the sixth and last marker by the Meeker Marker site. After a false start, we found the correct place to dig and got it done.

The boys worked well together through the heat and hard work, and they learned a lot about the trail in the three days and two nights. Two nights of camping and working on the trail will allow the boys to earn a Historic Trails Award patch from the BSA. The boys worked together under the leadership of a peer, a lot was accomplished, and an Eagle will be earned.

T-Rail Markers Project Photos



Marker 1. Spencer site.



Marker 2. Horst site.



Marker 3. Webster site



Marker 4. Smutz site.



The whole group at Ronnie Allen's site om Hot Lake Lane.



Marker 5. Byrd School at Heritage Station museum, Pendleton.



Marker 6. Near Meeker Marker, east side of Olney Cemetery, Pendleton.



Front: Chris and Katrina Ward, Seth Reeve, Jenny Miller, Jase Richards. Back: Taylor Ward, Andrew Goller.

“They’re Voting, They’re Voting!”

By Chuck Hornbuckle

So it was in south Thurston County, Washington Territory, on June 6 during the 1870 general election. That election was noteworthy since it was 40 years before women could legally vote in Washington State, and 50 years before they gained that right under the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

What inspired the fifteen ladies from Black Lake (now Littlerock) and Grand Mound to test their citizenship by voting before they were legally permitted to do so? That is a fascinating and rewarding story, since women did not have the right to vote in virtually all states. But these were brave and determined pioneering ladies.

Just before the June Election, those ladies met to cultivate a plan to gain their just recognition. The six Grand Mound women set the stage with hopes they would be able to cast their vote since one of the husbands was an Election Judge. With a little persuasion such as a fine dinner the husband/judge would be willing to accept their ballots at the Black Lake grade school voting station. So it came to be.

The Grand Mound six said if they were successful, a fleet rider would be sent to Littlerock eight miles north to exclaim the good news. As the six ladies cast their ballots, a rider was immediately dispatched to the Black Lake grade school where only men had previously been able to vote. At the school the rider exclaimed, “They’re voting, they’re voting!” With that, the waiting nine ladies cast their ballots. Unfortunately, their votes were rejected several times before women finally gained the right to vote in Washington State in 1910 and nationally in 1920.

With this year being the 1920 Centennial of the 19th Amendment and the 1870 Sesquicentennial of the Women’s Right to Vote, the Washington State Daughters of the American Colonists proposed a dedication to honor those 15 Thurston County ladies. Diane Smith, President of WSDAC, took the lead to develop the program which included inscribing an appropriate message on a large granite boulder that was left by receding glaciers 13,000 years ago.

Her efforts quickly gained widespread and enthusiastic support with dignitaries participating in the dedication ceremonies. Funding for part of the work came from the Washington State Historical Society. The Tumwater School District was a major participant since the marker was on school property. Along with the school district, Thurston County and several contractors, as well as numerous volunteers supported the project.

The well-attended October 17th dedication was at the Littlerock Elementary School with Kim Wyman, Washington Secretary of State being the Keynote speaker. Other dignitaries included John Hughes, Washington State Chief Historian, Mary Armstrong, National President, NSDAC and Jean Albertson, WSSDAC Chairman of National Awards. The U.S. Army America’s First Corps Band provided resounding music, while the George Rogers Clark Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution presented colors.

The program included awarding prizes to grade school students who submitted historic essays and artwork. A short skit with a horse and rider appeared and exclaimed the Grand Mound ladies had voted. With that, nine Littlerock ladies in appropriate dress immediately crossed the stage to place their “ballots” in the box while shouting, “We voted, we voted.” I was asked to be a Co-Election Judge guarding the Ballot box in order to ensure security. Culminating the program, Glenn Spinnie, Littlerock School Principal accepted the marker on behalf of the Tumwater School District. In closing the dedication ceremony, I presented a miniature Ballot Box containing rock chips from the monument boulder to Diane Smith.



Continued on next page

At the conclusion of the Dedication program, Chuck Hornbuckle was awarded the DAC's "National Award Medal" for his two-year participation in the project to honor those Washington Territory women who voted in 1870. Chuck is on the left, as a judge.



National Park Service Research Project in Oregon

National Park Service announced a new research project focusing on the first year after arrival of emigrants to Oregon. This research project has been awarded to the same firm as the previous study on the Columbia River Gorge. The contract for the research project "First Year in Oregon" was awarded to Historical Research Associates, Inc. (HRA), one of the oldest history and archaeology consulting firms in the United States.

Excerpt from a letter from Angélica Sánchez-Clark, NPS National trails Office, Santa Fe:

Lee Kreutzer, Guy McClellan, and I held our kickoff conference call on Sept. 4 with the HRA project team: Dr. Jackie Gonzales, Dr. Emily Greenwald, Morgan Young, and Libby Provost. Although OCTA has met most of the HRA team before through their work on the Oregon Trail Columbia River project, we thought we would "reintroduce" everyone again. We have encouraged HRA to reach out to OCTA with any questions they might have regarding research sources, etc., on this topic.

Please let us know if you have any questions about the project. We look forward to working with everyone on this important study.

Sincerely,

Angelica

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The Oregon & Applegate Trail Diary of Welborn Beeson 1853

By Sallie K. Riehl

The Beeson family's route started from La Salle County, Illinois, proceeded overland along the Old Emigrant Trail (along the North Platte) to Soda Springs, Idaho, thence along the Hudspeth Cutoff until they met the California Trail near City of Rocks. They traveled on the California Trail to where the Applegate Trail/Southern Route to Oregon left it and headed northwest. The Beeson family turned onto the Applegate Trail and traveled to Oregon.

July 14, [1853.] Thursday. The morning guard came in to get their breakfast and the cattle not having any grass started in search of some. We had quite a job in getting them together. I found some three miles from camp. Started 3 o'clock, 5 miles through Pyramid Circle. It is a small valley surrounded by huge rocks about 3 miles wide and 5 long. It is studded throughout with pyramidal rocks from 50 to 100 feet in height. There are a great many names of visitors cut upon the rocks, 1 mile to California road, 7 miles to Flint Springs, here we nooned, 6 miles to branch of Goose Creek where we camped after dark. Excellent grass, water, sage for wood. Grasshoppers plenty.

July 22. [Friday.] I am 17 years old today. 2,000 miles away from my native place. We are now within 500 miles of our destination. We had had good luck thus far on our journey.

July 25. Monday. Started six o'clock, 1 mile to road, 3 miles to creek of good water, here we filled our canteens with water for it is 11 miles over the mountains to a spring of good water. Midling grass on the hills. There is a trading post here. We met a wagon going to Salt Lake. They have been buying up cattle on the Humboldt and are now going back home. They say the notorious Kit Carson is 4 or 5 days ahead with a drove of 7,000 sheep from Santa Fe. He has a Spaniard go before driving two or three goats and the sheep follow their trail in a trot. Kit brings up the rear, with three or four more Spaniards. They carry their provisions on pack mules.

August 7. Sunday. Had a good job getting the cattle, finally got started. 24 miles to Rabbit Hole Springs [on the Applegate Trail] over a dry, barren plain. Here are holes in the ground from 6 to 8 ft. deep, found water enough for the work oxen and the horses, but the loose cattle had to do without. We then started at 5 o'clock bound to run all night for there is no grass here. 28 miles to Black Rock Spring, arrived here just at sunrise. There is a large spring here but it is boiling hot, but cools off after running about a ¼ of mile, so that it is quite good water. Good grass, we laid by the balance of the day. We all laid down and had a good sleep. I made a powder horn, boiled quite soft in the boiling spring. Mr. Wells left 3 head and Maj. Tupton 4 head of cattle on the desert that gave out. Ours all got across safe. Old Prim and Rock seem rather sick but we gave them lard and they soon got better. I was on guard tonight.

August 9. Tuesday. As the guard was changing last night the Indians tried to stampede the cattle. The camp was soon awakened and everybody running out after the cattle, some in their shirttails

and others barefooted. Quite a confusion. Some crying “where are my shoes” others, “where is my gun” and others, “which way are the cattle,” “what is the matter,” etc., etc. Some of us soon got around the cattle and succeeded in stopping them after they had run a mile, and drove them all back, but on double guard, and went to sleep again all right. This morning, started 7 o’clock, traveled 13 miles to Lawson [Lassen] Meadows. Camped on Coffee Creek, midling grass, sage for wood, and the water is the color of coffee. Tasted very well, plenty of Indian sign.

Beeson and his family and friends entered southern Oregon on August 30, 1853 and negotiated for a farm in September. The Rogue and Modoc Indians fought against the settlers for a while until the army overwhelmed them. The family located on a donation land claim just south of the city of Talent. Beeson continued to keep a diary for most of his life.

July 21, 1891. Tuesday. Today ends my fortieth year that I have kept a diary. Forty years of life written down in books and on scraps, but it is all here in my desk. But what folly! It will never be read by anyone, and it makes me feel sad. It recalls so many of my departed friends. I almost feel like closing, forever, the book. But again, it has become such a habit, like using tobacco or drinking liquor, that I would be lost, at least for a while. So, I will close and see how I feel tomorrow.

July 22, 1891. Wednesday. Well, I guess I will continue to keep this diary. I am fifty-five today.

SOURCE: *The Oregon & Applegate Trail Diary of Welborn Beeson in 1853*. The unabridged diary with Introduction and Contemporary Comments by Bert Webber. (Medford, Oregon: Webb Research Group, 1987).



Mary Catherine (1849-1894) and Welborn (1836-1893) Beeson. Sothern Oregon Historical Society.



Welborn Beeson. Beeson Collection, Talent Historical Society.

AmazonSmile Rewards Program

If you buy books or other items from Amazon, you could help OCTA by being part of the AmazonSmile rewards program. Charities specified by the buyer get 5% of the purchase price. As of August 14, 2020, \$796.24 had been paid to the Oregon-California Trails Association, one of the nonprofits you can choose.

It's very easy to set up. Just go to your Amazon account, search for AmazonSmile, then select the nonprofit you want to support. Everything we buy (not just books) results in an automatic donation to OCTA. There's nothing else we have to set up. It's a great system and a great way to support OCTA.



NW OCTA Receives Grant

On 10/13/20, Oregon Community Foundation approved a Community fund grant to Oregon-California Trails Association Northwest Chapter totaling \$1,200.00. The grant purpose is to fund materials and expenses related to the installation of ten steel rail markers along the Oregon Trail, noting the trail's location and providing educational context on aluminum plates for the general population.



Example of a T-rail marker. This one was installed by the scouts on August 1 on the grounds of the Heritage Station museum in Pendleton.

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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.



38th OCTA Convention

*Through the Lens of History
- Preserving the Past -
Focusing on the Future*

September 13-16, 2021

Elko, Nevada