



Northwest Trails

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

Volume 33, No. 3

Summer 2018

NW OCTA Annual Fall Picnic

Saturday, September 29, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Clark County Genealogical Society Annex
715 Grand Blvd., Vancouver, Washington

The chapter's annual fall picnic meeting will again be held this year at the Clark County Genealogical Society Annex in Vancouver, WA. The event will begin at 9:00 a.m. with a coffee hour, and the meeting will begin at 10:00. We will include a chapter meeting, a recap of this year's events, and discussion of other important issues for the coming year.

Pre-registration is not necessary. Be prepared to pay \$10 at the door to cover space rental and other picnic expenses.

Bring your own picnic lunch. This is not a potluck, but please bring a dessert for the dessert table. The chapter will furnish coffee and tea. Soft drinks and bottled water will be available for a small donation.

Raffle and Silent Auction. Please bring items you think would make good raffle or silent auction contributions. Please bundle magazines into sets of at least a year.

Program: Speaker to be announced.

Questions? Email Lethene Parks at Lethene@comcast.net or Rich Herman at buddy259@comcast.net

*2018 is the 175th Anniversary
of the Oregon Trail
1843–2018
Celebrate!*

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President's Message

Plans are underway for an event-filled 2018 with several activities planned to provide our members with a variety of opportunities to get involved and participate.

We started off the spring activities with information booths at both the Philip Foster Farm Family History Day and the Clackamas County Lavender Festival. Henry Pittock again coordinated both activities and put together crews of chapter members who answered all the questions attendees had about the Barlow Road/Oregon Trail, handed out trail maps and brochures, and listened to their stories of their families Oregon history. We had several people who expressed an interest in our chapter activities and some had information about the Barlow Road on or near their property. They will be contacted, and their information will be investigated. Again, I want to thank Henry for coordinating both activities, which expose the public to the Barlow Road history and to the NW chapter of OCTA.

Gail Cabiener and his committee need to be congratulated for the very successful symposium titled "Artifacts and Tales from the Trail," which was held on May 5 at La Grande, OR. I also want to thank all the NW chapter members who participated in the program and also all those who volunteered to make the event successful. The program was well organized, interesting, and full of energy. We have several new members from the La Grande/Baker City area as a result of this event, and I want to welcome them to our chapter and invite them to participate in chapter activities. Again, I want to thank Gail for his organizational skills and for all the time and effort that went into making this event happen.

This fall our annual picnic will be held at the Clark County Genealogical Society in Vancouver because of its central location for all NW members. Please mark your calendars for the September 29th event, with more information coming.

This year the chapter will be participating in the celebration of the 175th Anniversary of the Oregon Trail/50th Anniversary of the National Trails Act. More details will be provided as they are worked out. Please review the "2018 NW OCTA Outings and Activities" schedule in this issue for a complete listing of chapter events and trail-related opportunities.

—Rich Herman



2018 NW OCTA Outings and Activities

By Rich Herman

Mark your calendars now and watch for details in *Northwest Trails* and check the OCTA website www.octa-trails.org for updated NW Chapter activity. The schedule below has been corrected since it was printed in the last issue of *Pioneer Trails*.

July 21–22: Burns to Bend, Oregon. “American Solar Challenge.” Competition finish line for solar cars will be at the High Desert Museum in Bend. Contact Travis Boley, tboley@indepmo.org.

July 27, Fri: The famous **Trail Band** will perform free of charge at End of the Oregon Trail Interpretive Center (EOTIC) Wagons.*

July 28–29: 175th Anniversary festivities at the EOTIC Wagons.*

August 6–11: OCTA National Convention at Ogden, Utah.

August 25–26: 175th Anniversary festivities at the EOTIC Wagons.* NW OCTA will have an information booth at this event. More information will be provided as plans come together.

September 29: NW OCTA Annual Picnic at Clark County Genealogical Center.

October 11–13: “Her Story in History,” 175th Anniversary festivities at the EOTIC Wagons.*

October 19–21: Oregon Trail Tour: Along the Barlow Road at the Balch Hotel located in Dufur, OR. Contact them directly at www.balchhotel.com for more details. This event is being offered by the hotel to their customers and is not a NW OCTA chapter event.

October 22–25: Partnership for the National Trails System Conference at the Hilton Conference Center, Vancouver, WA.

*For more information on EOTIC programs, check their website:

www.historicoregoncity.org



This is a work in progress, and several events have not yet been finalized. New updated versions will be sent out via email.

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.

Oregon Trail – Artifacts and Tales from the Trail

May 5, Eastern Oregon University, La Grande, Oregon

By Sharon Brown

Over 80 people spent their Saturday, May 5, with the OCTA NW Chapter in La Grande, Oregon at the “Oregon Trail - Artifacts and Tales from the Trail” event. Ezra Meeker made an appearance as did one of his trail markers recently recovered after being missing for decades. Attendees to the event held at Eastern Oregon University learned about the trail from a variety of speakers, listened to the music of "Blue Plate Special" during lunch, and enjoyed hearing Oregon Trail diary quotes read aloud by an EOU theater student. Kudos to Gail and Muriel Carbiener for organizing and promoting this successful gathering, which resulted in seven new OCTA memberships and an enjoyable celebration of the trail in eastern Oregon.



Ezra Meeker (AKA Ray Egan) was a delightful guest.



Trail ladies Annika Miller, Kay Forsythe, and Jennie Miller.



The stone monument that Ezra Meeker placed in upper Ladd Canyon in 1906 disappeared in the 1920s and was rediscovered in 2017 by Ron Allen.

This is the monument as it was displayed at the May 5 meeting. It is now on display at the National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center, Baker City.

Survey Party Finds Stone Marker

By Roger Blair

During his presentation at the May 5 La Grande meeting, Dennis Larsen showed a picture of a stone marker inscribed “Oregon Trail.” Dennis mentioned being taken to the marker near La Grande by Jack Evans, author of *Powerful Rocky*. While the following information does not answer the question, “Who put it there?” It does give some additional background history.

Have any other NW OCTA members seen this marker, located it in the field, or otherwise know anything about this find?

The September 20, 1963, *Oregonian* reported the discovery of this stone marker. The paper ran the following short article with a picture of the stone, detailing the circumstances of discovery, in an attempt to learn more about its origin.



Stone reads: “Oregon Trail 1859.”

Survey Party Finds Stone Marker Establishing Route of Oregon Trail

By Boyd Hagen

Staff Correspondent, *The Oregonian*

LA GRANDE (Special)—A stone marker, possibly marking a branch of the Old Oregon Trail, has been found about 10 miles east of La Grande on public domain land. Two Boise Cascade Corp. Forestry Department employees, Stowell Weimer and Ken Keeling, of La Grande, while surveying ownership boundaries and retracing some original survey work, discovered the stone in the middle of a field. “At first,” said Weimer, “we thought it was an old gravestone, but when we looked more closely, we saw that it was an Oregon Trail marker.”

For an area about a foot and a half long and six inches deep, the rock has been faced to a smooth surface inscribed on the surface are the words, “Oregon Trail,” and beneath is the date 1859. In the center is a chiseled-out inverted cone-shaped image, and inside that, what appears to be a horse’s head is outlined.

The men are divided in their opinion of the date of the carving’s origin. Keeling believes it was done by pioneers during the year 1859, as the rock is dated. Weimer said that it possibly could have been done by Ezra Meeker, a pioneer who re-traveled the Oregon Trail in his later years and marked it with such rocks.

The Oregon Historical Society has expressed interest in the marker and is endeavoring to determine its origin. It is approximately 300 feet from the State of Oregon’s official designation of the “Emigrant Trail.” Near the stone, two trails about the width of wagon tracks are grass-covered but clearly discernible. “There can be no doubt that the lettering on the rock was carved on the spot,” said Keeling. Only about one quarter of the rock’s area is above ground and the earth is packed solidly and is grass-covered all around it.

Oregon Historic Preservation Month Fair

On May 31, NW Chapter members participated in the State of Oregon Historic Preservation Month Fair in Salem. The event brought together area nonprofits and state agencies involved in the stewardship and preservation of historic documents, places, and buildings. The event was held outdoors adjacent to the State Capitol and attracted an audience of state employees and the general public.



Sharon Brown and Henry Pittock staffing the OCTA table.



In an empty storefront in Pendleton, Oregon, Travel Oregon sponsored a painting by a local artist celebrating the 175th anniversary of the Oregon Trail. The wagon train in the windows attracted attention for several weeks before it moved on.

Mt. Hood Barlow Road Hike, June 2, 2018

By Theresa Fisher

On Saturday, June 2, five of us went on an impromptu 3.5-mile hike near Mt Hood on parts of the Barlow Road. Robin Baker led the hike, with Henry Pittock, Alex Couch, and Steve and Theresa Fisher joining in. The day was started with the obligatory stop at Joe's Donuts in Sandy to get our apple/cherry/blueberry fritters. We drove two cars so that we could do a shuttle to avoid re-tracing our steps. One car was left at the gravel parking area off Hwy 26 at the start of Kiwanis Camp Road, and the other car was driven down Kiwanis Camp Road to the Little Zig Zag Falls trail head, where we started our hike.

We started on the Pioneer Bridle Trail (PBT) toward the west and through the pedestrian tunnel for approximately one mile until we came to a Barlow Road swale that branches up the hill and then runs along a flat area. As we descended the hill, we encountered a wooden Oregon Trail post. An interesting side note is that this post had a “gate” symbol carved in it, which we hadn't seen before. Ascending the next hill, we came across a wooden “Original Wagon Road” sign plaque mounted on a tree, and a little farther along we came to another wooden Oregon Trail marker post. Sadly, this post had deteriorated and was rotted out at ground level. We set it up behind a tree and hope to return to re-set it into place this summer.



We followed the Barlow Road down a fairly steep swale, with a good amount of downed brush to climb over, into a beautiful moss-covered area called Hunter's Camp. We enjoyed our lunch here and discussed land surveying in the 1800s, great-grandfather Pittock and his wagon travels, and tried to envision what the wagon camp configuration might have been in this location.

After lunch we continued west and met back up with the Pioneer Bridle Trail. We hiked a road trace that ran down Laurel Hill to the south and eventually met up with HWY 26. Walking a short distance, we were back at vehicle #1 and shuttled back to the car at the Zig Zag Falls trailhead. We made a stop at the Tollgate Campground in Rhododendron to view the picnic shelter, a stone/log watering trough, and stone fireplaces that were built by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s. The day concluded with a delicious meal, conversation, and laughter at the Zig Zag Inn.



Philip Foster Farm Opening Day

OCTA NW Chapter members were at the historic Philip Foster Farm in Eagle Creek, Oregon on Saturday, June 16. It was the first day of the farm's summer season and the observance featured "Fire Cooked Flavors" with foods cooked in Dutch ovens over open fires.

Chapter members talked all things trail with visitors and farm staff alike. Even though the event was cut short due to an incoming thunderstorm, chapter members enjoyed their day outdoors on the Oregon Trail.



NW OCTA at Lavender Farm

NW Chapter members staffed a booth for the fourth year at the Clackamas County Lavender Festival, held at the Oregon Lavender Farm on Saturday and Sunday, June 23rd and 24th. Within view of the Barlow Road, chapter members contacted over 200 people to talk about the Oregon Trail, hand out brochures and maps, and to obtain details of trail location from neighbors and land owners. Public knowledge of the trail ranged from "I've heard of it" to first-hand "the trail crosses my property."



Several attendees mentioned reading the OCTA plaque about the Barlow Road that was installed on the farm property last year, while others had traveled parts of the trail or had played the computer game and died of dysentery! It remains to be seen if any new memberships result from this two-day effort, but the NW Chapter's goal of educating the public about trail history and legacy was certainly met.



The NW OCTA booth at the Lavender Festival.



The lavender fields were in full bloom.

National Register of Historic Places – Maybe it Can be Done

By Gail Carbiener

Almost a year ago, with the support from the National Park Service, Northwest OCTA, National OCTA, and three landowners, we started the process of getting 3.66 miles of the Oregon Trail, above the City of La Grande listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Sounds pretty simple. Well, let me tell you!

The National Register is the nation's official list of buildings, structures, districts, sites, and objects significant in American history, architecture, archaeology, and culture, and is maintained by the National Park Service in Washington DC.

In the state of Oregon, the National Register is part of the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). SHPO, according to their website, assists property owners, governments, and interested citizens in identifying and listing Oregon's most historically important resources on the National Register of Historic Places. Certainly, the Oregon Trail qualifies – well maybe!

First, we find that the Oregon National Historic Trail has only three segments included on the register in Oregon, the most recent almost 30 years ago! They are:

1. Barlow Road, 30 miles over Mt. Hood, listed in 1989 & 1974, from Wasco to Hood River.
2. Vale District, 7 miles of Keeney Pass, the hot springs and Henderson gravesite, listed in 1975.
3. Well Springs, 7 miles on Boardman Bombing Range, listed in 1978.

Even more interesting is that from Missouri to Oregon, only seven Oregon Trail sites have been listed. All were done in the early 1970s.

We are getting closer. On June 22, SHPO had their meeting in Redmond, Oregon and I was allowed to present a brief outline of what we were doing to the full State Advisory Committee on Historic Preservation. Currently working with SHPO staff, we look forward to the February 2019 meeting for our first formal presentation. It was nice to hear the support from the committee. With the 175th Oregon Trail anniversary, they are committed to not waiting any longer, and so are we.



The NWOCTA banner was on the outside of the building at Eastern Oregon University for the May 5 event that Gail Carbiener coordinated. Thank you, Gail.

Northwest Trails

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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.



**2018 OCTA Convention
August 6–11
Ogden, Utah**

*Rails and Trails –
Confluence & Impact on the
Crossroads of the West*