



Northwest Trails

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

Volume 37, No. 3

Summer 2022

Clackamas County Lavender Festival, June 25–26

By Robin Baker

NW OCTA once again had a booth at the Clackamas County Lavender Festival at the Liberty Natural Products Lavender Farm off Springwater Road, just west of Milo McIver State Park. Overall attendance was not as high as it was the last time we were there in 2019, before the Covid-19 pandemic, but there were still many vendor booths and lavender pickers. Next to us was a face-painting booth that was very popular, and across the way was a Kettle Corn booth some of us couldn't seem to resist.

We were there both days of the festival, and the word for both days was HOT, with temperatures in the mid-90s. Luckily, there was a breeze both days to help keep us cool. We spoke with a number of people about the Oregon Trail and the Barlow Road and passed out numerous Oregon Trail brochures, as well as the OCTA Membership Brochure. We even posed for a few pictures! All in all, a relaxing day despite the heat. We got a few people educated about the Oregon Trail, and possibly a few new members!



Jim and Sallie Riehl at the Lavender Festival booth. Photo by Rich Herman.

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Northwest OCTA

President's Message

I hope all of you are taking advantage of our summer weather right now. The rain was welcome, but now we must mow our yards.

My thanks to Rich Herman, Robin Baker, and Jim Riehl to helping us with the Lavender Festival this past month. The weather was nice (if a little hot), but we did manage to visit with a number of people over the two days.

I attended a Zoom meeting this last week that was hosted by SHPO to gather information about the connections that various historical groups use to present their concerns about preserving our state and local history. The meetings are to be held throughout the state, and we hope some new ideas will come from the meetings. I did let the members in our group know about the stories that OCTA is making for YouTube. We hope to reach a wider audience. I will let you know the results of these meetings later this year.

Jim and I plan to attend the Annual OCTA convention in Casper, Wyoming, in late August, and we hope to see you there.

Sallie Riehl, President

Lorna Waltz Reception

Longtime NW OCTA member Lorna Waltz moved from Pendleton to McMinnville. When she came back to Pendleton for a farewell reception, she was greeted by chapter members.



Seated: Lorna Waltz, Roger Blair. Standing: Susan Doyle, Jenny Miller.

Paul Claiburn Massey Jr. (1932–2022)

Paul C. Massey Jr. of Gig Harbor, Washington, died May 10, 2022, at the age of 89. His health had been deteriorating for several years. He was surrounded by his children in his final days and will be greatly missed.

Paul “Skip” Massey was born on September 9, 1932, in Portland, Oregon, to Paul and Stella Massey. He spent much of his youth and adolescence in his parents’ cabin on Mount Hood, where he enjoyed skiing in the winter and fishing and hiking in the summer. He attended Central Catholic High School in Portland, and after graduating in 1950 he studied business at Oregon State University. He graduated in 1954 with a bachelor’s degree in business administration and then entered the Air Force and was stationed in Japan. While in Japan, he spent his free time on the golf course or exploring the countryside to take pictures. He was proud that he could tell the time in Japanese, something his family remembered forever. He retired from the Air Force in 1957 with the rank of Captain.

After leaving the military, he moved to Seattle, Washington, to work for the J C Penney Company. It was in Seattle that he met his future wife, Margaret VanDruff. They married in February 1959 and had five children: Ken, Mike, Anne, Jim, and Paul. In 1971, the family moved to Gig Harbor, purchasing an 11-acre farm in the Ray Nash Valley. Shortly afterwards the J C Penney Company wanted to relocate him to Los Angeles, California, so he decided to leave the company. In the 1980s he went into the real estate profession, which he did until retirement.

He was always involved in the community and was the first to volunteer where help was needed. This included coaching youth sports, Boy Scouts and Indian guides as well as various community events. He was very active in St. Nicholas Church and served on several committees as well as a Le Eucharistic minister. His faith was an important part of his life, even when he could no longer physically volunteer or attend church.

His hobbies included skiing, gardening, and Oregon history. He was an avid skier and skied for most of his life. He was a member of his high school ski team that won a series of Oregon state championships in the late 40s and early 50s. He originally competed in slalom, but after breaking his leg in a fall he took up ski jumping. He continued to compete in skiing in college at OSU on the ski club team. He pursued his love of skiing into his early 70s and volunteered with Ski Patrol and Gig Harbor Ski School over the years.

Paul also spent time traveling and fishing. He has enjoyed traveling with his daughter over the years. Time spent in Greece, Italy, and France were some of his favorites. He was an avid fly fisherman in his youth and later in life made an annual trip to Alaska to fish for salmon. His sons continue the journey he began in the Ketchikan region every year on or near his birthday.

Paul was very active in the Oregon-California Trails Association, holding various positions, including vice president of the Northwest Chapter. He documented much of the trail and walked most or all of it through Oregon. He was still active in planning volunteer trips to document the trail until his death.

He was preceded in death by his wife Margaret, his parents and sister Natalie Thompson, and his grandson Alex Massey. He is survived by his five children: daughter Anne Garnas, and sons Ken Massey, Mike Massey, Jim Massey, and Paul Massey, 13 grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

His funeral was held on 26 May at 10:00 a.m. at St. Nicholas Church, followed by interment at Haven of Rest and later a celebration of life at “The Club at the Boatyard” in the city of Gig Harbor.



Charles Dale “Chuck” Hornbuckle (1939–2022)

Charles Dale “Chuck” Hornbuckle was born to Fred and Noreen Larson Hornbuckle January 30, 1939, at the family home at Donald, Yakima County, Washington. He passed away peacefully in his sleep on May 16, 2022, at Lawrenceburg, TN. Chuck attended elementary schools at Omak, Washington until 1949 when the family moved to Potlatch, Idaho. During his senior year he met Suzanne Spencer at Palouse, Washington, and they were married three years later, on December 26, 1959.

Chuck attended the University of Idaho and in 1962 graduated with an Associate Degree in Highway Technology from Oregon Technical Institute at Klamath Falls, Oregon. He later achieved his Professional Engineers License. While Chuck attended school Suzanne taught fifth grade at Twyla Ferguson Elementary School at Klamath Falls, Oregon.

They moved to Yakima, Washington where their two sons were born, Nick in 1962 and Jon in 1963. In 1967 the family moved to Thurston County, and he resided there until 2021 when ill health caused him to move to Tennessee. Chuck worked for the Washington State Department of Transportation for nearly 34 years, retiring in 1995 as the Olympic Region Traffic Engineer.

Together he and Suzanne valued family history. They especially enjoyed learning that they shared common ancestors in Mayflower settlers Governor William and Dorothy May Bradford and John and Elizabeth Tilley Howland. As an avid genealogist, Chuck traced his Hornbuckle (English) and Larson (Swedish and Norwegian) lines back several generations. During his research, he and his wife Suzanne traveled extensively meeting distant relatives around the world. He recognized the importance of his Cherokee heritage, through his grandmother Rebecca Fleetwood. In 2018 he commissioned a headstone for her grave at Yakima, Washington. Along with Suzanne, Chuck was a Life Member of the Tumwater Historical Association, Oregon-California Trails Association (NW and Colorado Chapters), and Benefactor Life Member of the National Rifle Association.

Chuck and Suzanne built two houses near Littlerock, the second of which was the first in the county to utilize the passive solar envelope house concept. Suzanne passed away unexpectedly in September 2015. Chuck was devastated, but his strong faith, love of family, and desire to contribute to his community helped him with the loss of his life partner, and he redoubled his volunteering efforts. One of his proudest achievements was his work with the DAR and the reclamation and rededication of several Oregon Trail markers in Washington state. His work on the project spurred the DAR to award Chuck the “State DAR Historic Preservation Certificate of Appreciation” in April 2018. In August 2020 Chuck was presented with a national award and medal by the Daughters of the American Colonists for his contributions to a project at Littlerock, WA.

Later in life Jane VanderBrook became Chuck’s companion. Germany, Mexico, and the Midwest US were among the many places Chuck and Jane visited.

Chuck was preceded in death by his wife Suzanne, his parents, brother David and wife Evi, and granddaughter Ruby Lee Hornbuckle. He is survived by two sons Nick and Jon and their families and his sisters Carla Almaraz, Hillsboro OR, and Debbie Hornbuckle, Moscow Idaho. Chuck’s ashes will be placed in the family plot at the Rock Creek Cemetery, Potlatch, Idaho in fall 2022.



Ezra Meeker's Time Capsule

By Dennis Larsen

On June 23 about 150 to 200 people, some of them Oregon Trail enthusiasts and others, whose curiosity was piqued by a story that appeared in the local paper just two days previous, gathered at the corner of B and Walnut Streets in La Grande, Oregon, in front of the stone marker that Ezra Meeker dedicated in a rather impressive ceremony on April 10, 1906. A surprise attendee was 90-year-old Joe De Marsh whose mother was just five months old when brought along by her parents, Herman and Tillie Goebel. They worked as Meeker's hired crew on the first leg of his 1906 journey from Puyallup to The Dalles. A small contingent of NW OCTA members was also present.

A few years back local historian Ronnie Allen of La Grande located the long missing lower Ladd Hill Meeker marker (also placed in 1906), purchased it, and donated it to the Oregon Trail Interpretive Center in Baker City. Working with local resident Dale Counsell, he then erected a rather impressive exhibit where the marker originally stood. Ronnie was intrigued by the following entry in Meeker's 1906 journal for April 10, especially the last line.

At three O' clock this afternoon [10th] we dedicated a monument situate a little way up the Blue Mountains in what is known here locally "Old Town". . . About 800 persons were present including the school children of whom there were about 600. Great interest was manifested. One interesting feature of this monument is there has been a space 6 inches square prepared in which historical matter will be deposited and sealed up for future generations to ponder over.

In other words, this would make it the only marker of all those Meeker erected that included a time capsule. Ronnie went to work. The monument sits today on private property, in a corner of the front yard of Jennifer and Jack Boyd who were excited to be a part of the unveiling process. Ronnie next brought on board La Grande Parks and Recreation, and as we all waited for their backhoe to get into position to pull the stone, old-timers in attendance debated whether the stone had ever in the past been moved from its original location. If it had, the likelihood of a capsule remaining was low. Others speculated on how well or poorly a "capsule," most likely a small metal box, might have been sealed to withstand 116 years of moisture and potential water leakage.

Alas, when the stone was overturned, a perfectly carved six by six-inch space was revealed in the bottom just as Meeker described, but the space was empty. The time capsule was missing, confirming that the marker had been previously moved sometime in its 116 year-history. The capsule was gone but, rest assured Ezra, much "pondering" was done that day.



NW OCTA members Roger Blair, Pat Ziobron, Dennis Larsen, Susan Doyle, Muriel and Gail Carbiener.



The empty cavity underneath the Meeker monument.

Union County, Oregon, Pioneers

by Dennis M. Larsen, aided by research from Ronnie Allen of La Grande and Glenn Harrison of Albany

As a historian I find cemeteries an invaluable resource. Besides being the final resting place of family and loved ones, they often hold the final chapter of some amazing and at times tragic stories. In the Island City Cemetery just outside of La Grande an inquisitive soul will find the tombstone of Florence Childers Irwin (1888-1955). One would not know when standing in front of that marker that Florence's mother became a widow at age seventeen in 1869 while living in the west side of the state in Linn County with a daughter (Anna) not yet two years old, and that her father became a widower in 1871 while living on the east side of the state near La Grande with two children age six and age three (Mary and James). One would also not know that both of Florence's parents had untold Oregon Trail stories in their backgrounds. A quick glance at the family tree will identify eleven family members or in-laws as Oregon Trail pioneers.

With a couple of exceptions, the details of the Oregon Trail journeys of Florence's ancestors are unknown. If Florence left accounts with descendants, they have remained hidden. Perhaps this article might bring them forth. One puzzle that remains unanswered is how her parents, coming from opposite sides of the state, connected prior to their marriage in 1874.

The Hyde Family

I begin with Florence's mother. Fifteen-year-old Mary Hyde and twenty-eight-year-old Francis Koontz were married on January 9, 1868, in Linn County, Oregon. Their daughter Anna Koontz was born on November 20, 1868. The marriage ended as follows:

Albany Register January 8, 1870, Deceased. —The body of Francis M. Koontz arrived in this city by boat on Wednesday [Jan 5]. The corpse was accompanied by the widow and one child, and by Riley Koontz, father of the deceased. Mr. F. M. Koontz was formerly engaged in the furniture business in Harrisburg but had left for California in the hopes of benefiting his health. He was afflicted with that feli [*sic*] disease, consumption, to which he succumbed, in the prime of manhood, shortly after his arrival in California. His father and mother, being informed that all hope of life with him was ended, hastened to his bedside, but arrived two days after his death.

Francis was the third of eight children that Riley and his wife Matilda had buried since arriving in Oregon in 1852. They lived in Harrisburg. A Koontz uncle, Martin, lived nearby. Mary's parents and several siblings who had come west in 1851 also lived in Harrisburg. All these extended family members were potentially available to help the young widow.

Mary's parents, Perry and Elizabeth Hyde, were both born in Kentucky, and their families eventually moved to Green County in the southwest corner of Missouri. On July 19, 1849, Perry Hyde age twenty-four married fifteen-year-old Elizabeth Ann Tyler in Ash Grove, Missouri. This was twenty miles northwest of Springfield. A son, Francis Marion, was born in Greene County in 1850, no city listed in the record. In spring 1851 the Hydes, mother, father and child, started west over the Oregon Trail. No diaries or letters describing their journey have been found. Just a few newspaper stories, government documents and general trail histories are available to help at least create a skeleton of a story. Their starting place was most likely Independence as that was the closest of the various trail jump-offs to Ash Grove. Their ending was the Barlow Road going south around Mt. Hood and arriving in the Willamette Valley on September 10, 1851. In October the Hydes took out a 317.26-acre Donation Land Claim in Linn County that encompassed a section of the future town of Harrisburg. The Hydes had six children. Mary Elizabeth was the second, born in December 1852.

Perry was first in the cattle business, then in general merchandise, and last in hardware. His start was disastrous. He went to The Dalles in October 1852 where he purchased cattle and horses from emigrants who were building rafts to float down the Columbia. Before he could get over the Cascade Mountains with his stock, an early snow hit and Perry lost 115 head of oxen and ten horses. It was a setback but not the end of his cattle business. Perry grew the business over the years. He and his son Francis drove cattle to the Applegate country in Jackson County, where they sold beef to the miners in the 1850s and 1860s. By 1909 Perry was running six farms. Sometime before his death Perry turned over the operation of his ranches and stock to Francis.

Perry died in 1909, leaving an estate valued at a remarkable one million dollars in today's currency. Perry's will left everything to his wife until her death, then the remainder was to be divided equally among their children. Perry's wife Eliza died seventeen months later. By this date, their daughter, Mary Hyde Koontz Childers, had become a widow for the second time. She was listed as living in Island City in both her father's 1909 and mother's 1911 obituaries.

Interestingly (and confusingly) Mary's older brother and her first husband were both named Francis Marion. Another brother John Hyde (1854-1927) grew to manhood in Harrisburg and was also in the cattle business. At one time he was recognized as the "Cattle King" of Eastern Oregon. He lived in that part of the state about twenty years and then returned to Harrisburg and made his home there until just before his death.

The Koontz Family

Francis Koontz's Oregon Trail story is well documented and the events surrounding it may give a hint as to how Mary Koontz and Robert Childers met. (Full disclosure: I am the co-author of the book *Our Faces Are Westward* published in 2012 by the Oregon-California Trails Association that tells the story of Francis' wagon train in detail.) Francis was born in 1840 in Gallia County, Ohio, and was brought to Iowa as a child in 1843.

The Koontz family stayed in Iowa just nine years before the grandfather led the clan west over the Oregon Trail. Francis was then twelve years old. Early in the trek Pawnee Indians pilfered some of the horses forcing one uncle to walk the entire distance. Another uncle died near Echo, Oregon, when his horse threw him. His grave south of Echo has an OCTA marker.

The local newspaper announced the family's arrival in Portland, Oregon, from the head of Columbia River navigation on the steamer *Multnomah*. "Per Multnomah Monday October 4 R. Koontz, lady and five children." Riley and Matilda took out a Donation Land Claim near today's Harrisburg, Linn County, Oregon. They had three more daughters after they settled in Linn County. Riley's brother Martin with whom he crossed the plains took out a claim nearby. According to various census records Riley made his living as a carpenter and cabinetmaker.

The Childers and Myers Families

We now turn to Florence's father's history. The 1860 Census placed the families of James P. and Mary Ann Childers and Henry and Louisa Myers in Jefferson Township (in the northeast corner of the state), Scotland County, Missouri. They were neighbors. (A Myers daughter would become Florence's father's first wife.)

Much of what is known about the Childers family comes from a history posted by a granddaughter on *familysearch.org*. According to that history, James P. Childers left his family in Missouri in 1849 to chase gold in California, and he did not return until 1853. In fall 1863 Childers and his extended family joined a wagon train bound for Oregon. It took them three days to cross the Platte River. Three-year-old Charles Childers died along the Platte. Due to the late start the wagon train reached the east slope of the

Rocky Mountains just as the first snows of the season fell. They decided to winter there. There were more deaths that winter including a second son.

On February 14, 1864, Robert Childers (Florence's father), who had remained in Missouri, married Elizabeth F. Myers. In spring 1864 the extended Myers family, including Robert and Elizabeth, started west over the Oregon Trail. (Apparently Robert went by his middle name Thomas, and that is how he is referred to in the family history.)

What prompted the move west for these two families? The Civil War, according to the family history. The war came to Missouri and Scotland County in 1861 when Union forces drove the Confederate forces out of the county in a brief battle and went on to assume control over the state after the Battle of Wilson Creek. Over the next three years Confederate sympathizers waged guerilla warfare against irregulars from Kansas and the Union military. The fighting engulfed all parts of the state but was especially brutal in the northern counties where ambushes of individuals or farm families in rural areas became the norm. Raiding, looting, burning, and other depredations overwhelmed the civilian population of these counties.

On July 13, 1862, Confederate raiders captured Memphis, the county seat. Five days later Union forces and a Confederate force clashed ten miles southwest of Memphis. After inflicting heavy casualties on their opponent, the Confederates withdrew, and guerilla raiding resumed. From 1861 to 1865 around 150,000 Missourians served in the two armies and a large number joined the various guerrilla outfits. In 1863 the Childers family farm was basically destroyed by the conflict. The risk of remaining in Missouri far outweighed the risk of the Oregon Trail. The question was what jump-off point to use. On August 21, 1863, Lawrence, Kansas, was attacked by Quantrill's raiders. The town was burned, and 150 to 200 men and boys were murdered, leaving 60 widows and 250 orphans. That event alone foreclosed on anything south of St. Joseph for a jump-off. Just getting to the trail was hazardous. The Childers family left in fall 1863 and the Meyers family in spring 1864, probably from St. Joseph, Missouri. By October 1864 the Independence-Westport jump-offs were engulfed in a battle involving over 30,000 men.

The Myers family settled in Summerville in fall 1864 and took up farming. According to the *Elgin Recorder*, March 3, 1905, Henry Meyers farmed, raised stock, and operated a livery stable. At Henry's death he owned 650 acres of land. The newlyweds Robert and Elizabeth Childers settled near Island City where Robert raised hogs. Upon arriving in the Grande Ronde Valley, also in 1864, Robert's parents and siblings wintered in Hilgard, took out a homestead claim near Summerville, and started building a house. They did not get fully moved in until two years later. Elizabeth Myers Childers died on June 17, 1871, leaving the widower Robert with two children. According to family history, Robert's parents took in their two grandchildren until Robert's remarriage to Mary Hyde Koontz in 1874.

Theories

As mentioned earlier, three of Riley and Matilda's children died between 1852 and 1869. In 1866 seventeen-year-old Catherine died of consumption (TB) and her elder brother Francis soon after died of the same disease. A suggested treatment at that time was to move to a dry climate. In 1874 the family packed-up and made the move to the newly platted village of Milton, north of Pendleton. Here Riley opened a store and blacksmith shop. It is not known if this was an attempt to escape the disease that took their children. What is known is that at least three of the four living daughters made the move with their parents. Did the widow Mary Hyde Koontz and her daughter Anna come along? Again, we do not know. If Mary joined her in-laws there, she was living just fifty-two miles from Summerville. Somehow, Mary and Robert bridged that distance. On August 3, 1874, Mary Koontz married Robert Childers and lived out her life in Island City. On January 26, 1888, in Union County Mary gave birth to Florence Childers, her second child and Robert's third. Interestingly, Mary was married both times in Harrisburg and was buried there.

Two lines in John Hyde’s obituary suggest another possibility, “At one time he was recognized as the ‘Cattle King’ of Eastern Oregon. He lived there about twenty years and then returned to Harrisburg and made his home there until just before his death.” However, those twenty years in eastern Oregon appear to begin around 1880. Nonetheless, the Myers and Childers families were ranching the Summerville area, thus raising and selling stock. John was in the business of buying and selling stock. It is conceivable they had a business acquaintance that might possibly have presented a social occasion for Mary and Robert to meet.

For those wishing to visit the graves of these intrepid pioneers, you can find the following in the Summerville Cemetery: James P. Childers, Mary Jane McDowell Childers, and their son Robert Thomas Childers; Henry A. Myers, Maria Louisa Speakes Meyers, and their daughter Elizabeth F. Myers Childers; and Anna Koontz Colt. In the Island City Cemetery, you will find Florence Childers Irwin. In the Dixie Cemetery in Walla Walla County, Washington, you will find Riley and Matilda Koontz. On the other side of Oregon in the Harrisburg Masonic Cemetery you will find Perry Hyde, Eliza Ann Tyler Hyde, their son John Hyde, and their daughter Mary Elizabeth Hyde Koontz Childers, and her first husband Francis Marion Koontz.

Any further information would be appreciated.
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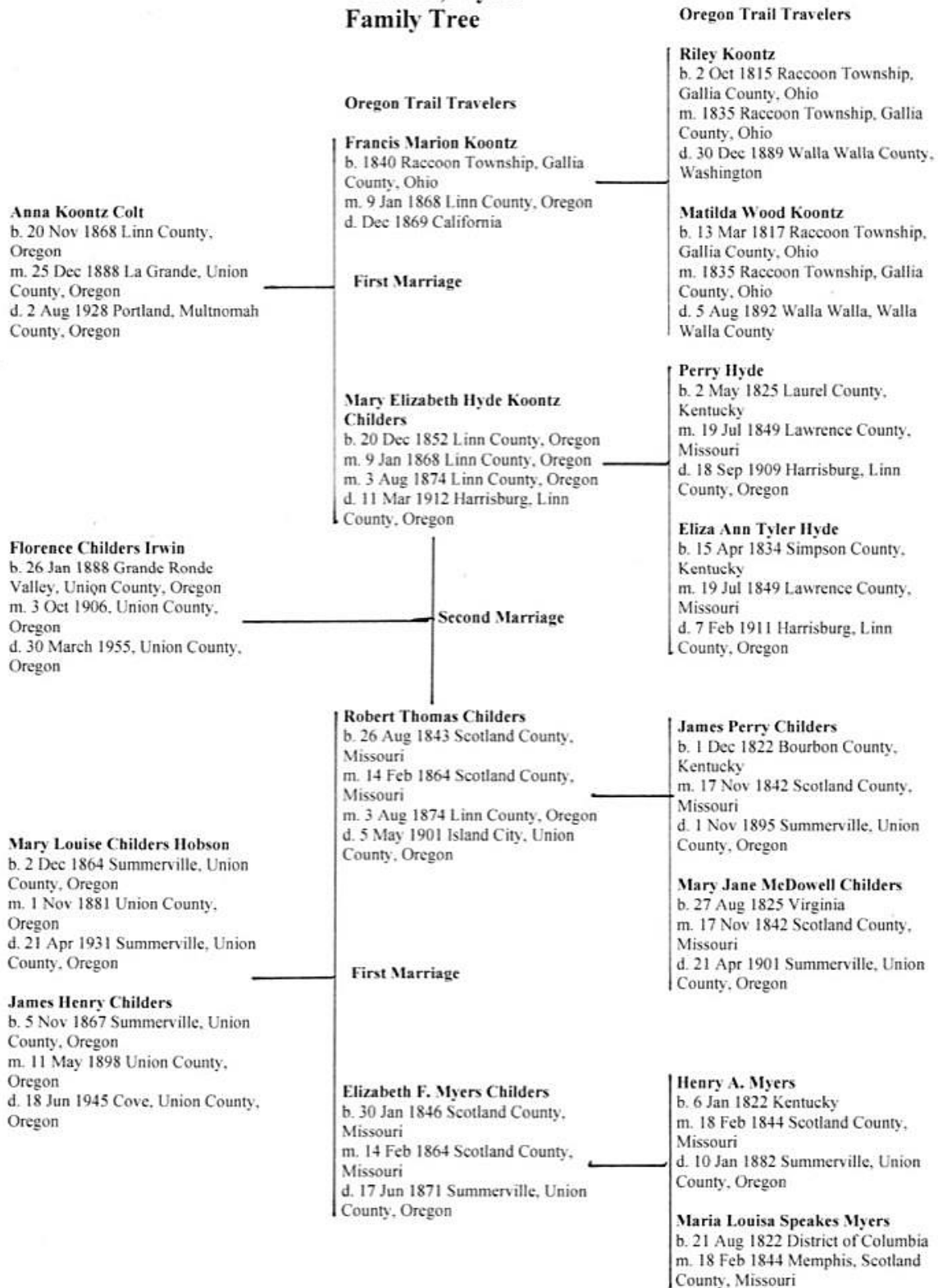


Florence Childers Irwin.



Perry Hyde family. Front row: Francis Marion, Mary, Perry, Eliza. Back row: John, America, Oliver, Caroline.

Koontz, Hyde, Childers, Myers Family Tree



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**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.



40th OCTA Convention
Leaving the Platte
**August 28–September 3
2022
Casper, Wyoming**

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