



# Northwest Trails

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

Volume 40, No. 1

Winter 2025

## NW OCTA Annual Meeting End of the Oregon Trail Interpretive Center Oregon City, March 15, 2025

The annual meeting of NW OCTA will be held on Saturday, March 15, at the End of the Oregon Trail Interpretive Center (EOTIC). The EOTIC is located at 1726 Washington St., Oregon City, Oregon. 97045. The meeting place will be the Henderson Farm building located at the Center.

The focus of our program will be the changes being made to the site and program at the Center. Under the leadership of Executive Director Corrine Lowenthal, some of the changes are already in effect and more are being planned. To hold the costs down for NW OCTA, we will ask for a \$15.00 registration fee for each member attending. The registration fee will cover the costs of the full tour of the EOTIC to see firsthand what is happening.

Wendell Baskins,  
Northwest Chapter Vice President



**Save the Date!**

**Look for the flyer in February to sign up for the meeting.**

## NW Chapter Leaders

### President

Susan Doyle

### Vice President

Wendell Baskins

### Secretary-Treasurer

Jenny Miller

### Directors

Sherrill Beck

Polly Jackson

Dave Welch

### Chapter Website

Sharon Brown

### Communications Chair

Marley Shurtleff

### Mapping Chair

Robin Baker

### Membership Chair

Sallie Riehl

### Preservation Committee

Dave Welch, Wendell Baskins,  
Jenny Miller



## President's Message

*By Susan Doyle*

We begin the new year looking forward to the annual meeting of the Northwest Chapter on March 15 at the End of the Oregon Trail Interpretive Center (EOTIC) in Oregon City. In addition to the annual business meeting in the morning, Wendell Baskins is working with the center's staff on an exciting, informative program and tour of the updated museum. A flyer will be emailed to all chapter members in February with more information.

Plans are being made for outings this spring, summer, and fall as well as the annual fall meeting. As soon as plans are final they will be announced in emails. The Blue Mountains exploration hikes and an auto tour of the 1836 Whitman route will be the most rigorous, while all the other events should appeal to all our chapter members.

I hope to see many of you at our in-person meetings and outings this year. It's been good to get together and enjoy our shared trail interests.

## NW OCTA Election Results

Two positions were elected in the chapter election held in fall 2024. Jenny Miller was elected Treasurer and is now chapter Secretary-Treasurer. Sherrill Beck was elected Director to a term ending in December 2027. Congratulations Jenny and Sherrill.

## Chapter Membership Note

### For Members with OCTA Life Memberships

Chapter memberships are tied to OCTA memberships, and members of the chapter who are Life Members of OCTA do not receive reminders each year to renew their chapter memberships. The process requires you to remember to go online to the OCTA website [octa-trails.org](http://octa-trails.org) and renew. In the future, our membership chair will send reminders once a year in a month to be decided on.

This year we hope this article will remind you, but in three months a reminder will be emailed to those who haven't renewed. This applies to a very small number of chapter members, as many who have OCTA Life Memberships also have Northwest Chapter Life Memberships.

# NW OCTA Financial Report FY25 First Quarter October 1, 2024 – December 31, 2024

*By Jenny Miller  
Chapter Secretary- Treasurer*

<b>Beginning Balance (\$14, 031.41 cash plus \$5,000 mitigation funds)</b>	<b>\$19,031.41</b>
<b>First Quarter Report:</b>	
Cash on hand October 1, 2024	\$14,031.41
<b>Income First Quarter</b>	
Donations	\$270.00
From National (raffle/auction income)	<u>\$2,964.00</u>
	+\$3,234.00
<b>Expenses First Quarter</b>	
Reimbursement (mapping, supplies, fall meeting)	\$747.67
chapter expenses	<u>\$132.89</u>
	-\$880.56
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$16, 384.85</b>
<b>Nolin Hills Windfarm Mitigation Fund*</b>	
Unrestricted mitigation money	<u>+\$5,000.00</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$21,384.85</b>
 <b>Ending Balance December 31, 2024</b>	 <b>\$21,384.85</b>

\*The mitigation money from Nolin Hills Windfarm is for adverse impacts on the trails, which are mostly visual. This mitigation money is accounted and reported separately from the general account, making the actual chapter spending capital \$16,384.85. This is the first year that the mitigation fund is shown separately in the report.

## An 1862 Oregon Trail Experience

One experience that I recall vividly of those early times was riding behind a runaway yoke of oxen. Animals can smell water a long distance away and at one place where we were traveling through a dry country, our oxen suddenly lifted their heads, sniffed and started on a gallop. The cattle were not particular about keeping the road and sometimes the wagon was running on two wheels, bumping along through the ruts, threatening each moment to be overturned. I hung on to my baby and clung to the wagon bow and when at last they came to the river, they stopped, and I drew a long breath of relief. Thirsty as they were, they did not drink until they had cooled off.

*—Amada Van Dorn Sharon, 1862*

## **Future Northwest Chapter Zoom Meetings 2025**

*By Dave Welch*

**Feb 8, 2025 10:00 am** Dave Welch, “Ambrose Asher and the Plains Indian Wars”

**March 8, 2025 10:00 am** Richard Hunt, “Update on the Lewis and Clark Alliance”

**April 12, 2025 10:00 am** TBD

**May 10, 2025 10:00 am** TBD

**June 14, 2025 10:00 am** TBD

### **Dates and times negotiable**

Please consider making a presentation. Topics may include trail history, trail research, family history, local history, or preservation.

Contact Dave Welch at [welchdj@comcast.net](mailto:welchdj@comcast.net) for additional information. Each meeting will also include a short business meeting and an update on tours and explorations.

## **2025 Blue Mountains Oregon Trail Explorations**

*By Robin Baker*

Planning for the May 12-18, 2025, Blue Mountains hikes and explorations week continues to take shape. We will be exploring Pelican Creek, similar to the hike done by Chuck Hornbuckle, Gail Carbiener, and other OCTA members in July of 2016. We will do a GPS track this time and accurately document the locations of the various OCTA markers, as well as take GPS-enabled photos of various features along the trail. Later in the week, we will also be exploring the Oregon Trail west of La Grande, including the 1851 Cayuse Toll Road, up to the top of the plateau where we explored last October. This portion of the Oregon Trail has been documented previously by Gail Carbiener in a National Register of Historic Places report.

Please come join us for the week or any portion thereof. It promises to be a stimulating week of Oregon Trail exploration! Contact Robin Baker at [robinbaker1927@gmail.com](mailto:robinbaker1927@gmail.com) for more information about the 2025 explorations.

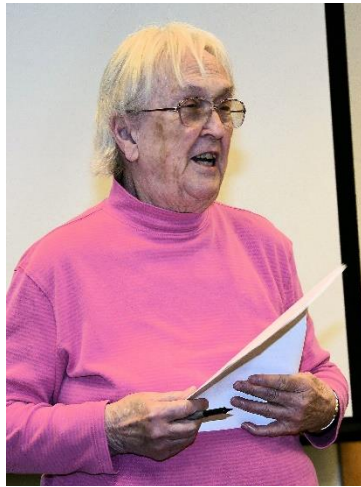
For an overview of NW OCTA explorations done in 2024, follow this link:

[youtube.com/watch?v=9eJz-6n5ug4](https://youtube.com/watch?v=9eJz-6n5ug4)

# In Memoriam

## Mary Lethene Parks

Mary Lethene Parks of Vancouver, Washington, aged 93, passed away peacefully on Sunday, December 29, 2024. She lived at different times in various Washington towns – Spokane, Monroe, Bremerton, Holly, Gig Harbor, and Cedonia.



*Lethene at the 2918 chapter annual meeting.*

She was pre-deceased by her husband of 51 years, Richard Allen Parks, whom she married on March 24, 1951. He died in 2002. She was also preceded in death by her parents, Ed and Mae Dennis, and her sister, Janet Parker. She is survived by four children, seven grandchildren and two step-grandchildren, and seven great grandchildren and two step-great-grandchildren.

Lethene was very active in a number of organizations focused on history, migration, and genealogy. She joined the Oregon-California Trails Association (OCTA) as a lifetime member in 1992. She served on the executive boards of both the national and northwest chapters. She also was president of the NE Washington and the Clark County Genealogy Societies. During her years of research on family history, she became a member of the Parkes and Blair Societies and Babb Family Association. She served two terms on the Washington State Advisory Council on Libraries from 2002-2006.

Always having a wicked sense of humor, one of Lethene's favorite activities for the Oregon-California Trail Association was to dress in her pioneer skirt and bonnet to talk to school kids about the life of children coming across the Oregon Trail. She developed a chocolate chip recipe that made cookies that resembled cowpies. Apparently, those were a big hit with the students. Among her belongings was a baggie with some real buffalo chips in it.

Another OCTA project was to help organize a documentary film *In Pursuit of a Dream*, with current-day students crossing the Oregon Trail. She wrote some supportive educational modules on the Oregon Trail for public schools to use in conjunction with the film.



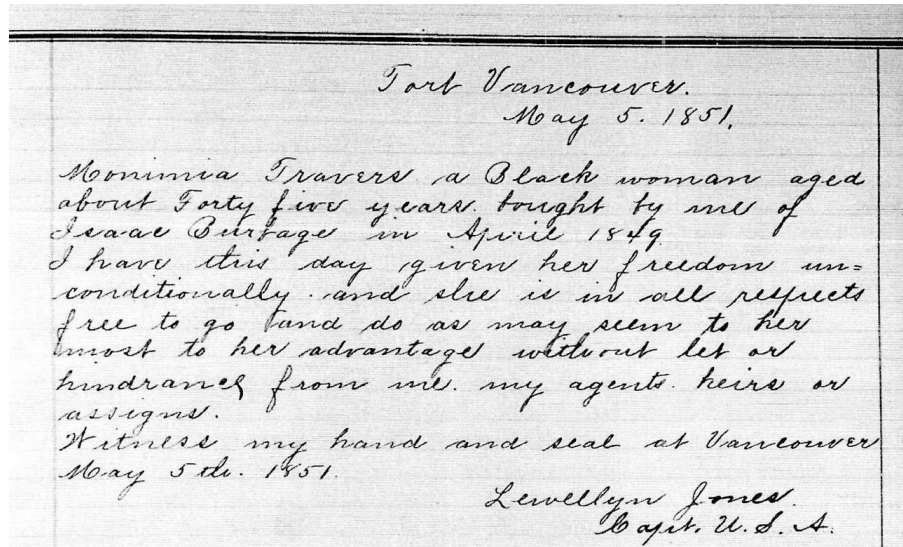
*Lethene led a tour at the Old City Cemetery in Vancouver, Washington, at the NW OCTA Annual Fall Picnic in 2012.*

# Recording Freedom

## The Manumission of Monimia Travers

By James Nicita

In 1849, Monimia Travers, an enslaved woman born in Virginia, traveled west from Missouri to Oregon City along the Oregon Trail with Capt. Llewellyn Jones and his family. They arrived in Oregon City in October 1849 and moved to Fort Vancouver. While at Fort Vancouver, Jones freed Travers, an act made official in a manumission document signed on May 5, 1851, and recorded on July 29, 1851.



*Capt. Llewellyn Jones freed Monimia Travers with this manumission document. Clackamas County Clerk, Recording Division.*

In a Primary Document article published in the Summer 2024 issue of the *Oregon Historical Quarterly*, author James Nicita examines Travers's manumission document and updates the recording date and unveils other information — alongside new questions — about the life and journey of one of the few Black women in the Oregon Territory at the time.

### Excerpts from the *Oregon Historical Quarterly* article:

Monimia Travers does not enter the historical record until she is nearly fifty years old. No account of her own, either of her travel to or time in the Oregon Territory, has been found. Historians rely on the accounts of others, particularly those of Jones and his family. Jones headed Company D of Brevet-Colonel W. W. Loring's Regiment of Mounted Riflemen, which Congress established in 1846 to open military posts along the Oregon Trail and to protect overland emigrants.

After its initial recruitment, however, the Army directed the regiment into Mexican War service. Following the November 1847 killings by Cayuses and Umatillas at the Whitman mission, the U.S. military sent the regiment to the Oregon Territory under Loring's command. The regiment departed Fort Leavenworth on May 10, 1849, and arrived in Oregon City on October 8–9, 1849. [Capt. Llewellyn Jones was one of the officers in the regiment.]

Jones's wife, Katherine Jones, and their two daughters, Frederica and Katherine, accompanied him on the journey along with Travers to Oregon. Frederica later memorialized the journey she had taken as a ten-year-old. Her account mentions Travers, but like her father's letter home to New York, not by name. Frederica Jones's notes on the 1849 march of the Mounted

Riflemen are contained in her sister Katherine's son-in-law Eben Swift's "Personal Memoranda of Major General Eben Swift, U.S. Army, Retired," undated typed manuscript, West Point, New York, United States Military Academy Library, [https://usma.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01USMA\\_INST/1fetnv1/alma99101465937870571](https://usma.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01USMA_INST/1fetnv1/alma99101465937870571) , 7–8.

Llewellyn Jones wrote in a letter dated October 12, 1850, from Columbia Barracks:

My family is quite contented here, for the reason, I suppose, that they find it so much better than they anticipated. It is a hard life for a "lady," from the impossibility of getting female servants. Most fortunately, I brought with my family an old negro woman from St. Louis, who is valuable to us almost above price. She is as happy as the best of us. (Letter published February 3, 1851, in the New York *Daily Albany Argus*, p. 2)

In May 1851 Jones left Fort Vancouver to go to his new assignment in New Mexico Territory. He left days later than his regiment, which departed the day before he freed Travers, suggesting the delay was linked with the manumission. He then sailed from Astoria with his fellow regimental officers on the USS Massachusetts, a government-owned, sail-rigged steamship, to his new assignment. By the time the manumission document was recorded in July, Jones and his family had been gone for nearly three months, with no record of Travers with them.

And what of the nearly three-month period between Jones's execution of the manumission document and its July 29, 1851, recording? That the Jones family had long departed the Oregon Territory by the recording date suggests that none of them were involved in recording the document. Perhaps, instead, Travers recorded the document as one of her first acts as a newly freed individual. If so, her path may have intersected with that of Jacob Vanderpool, owner of the Oregon Saloon and Boarding House.

Just weeks after Travers's manumission was recorded in Oregon City on July 29, 1851, Marshal Joseph Meek arrested Vanderpool on the complaint of his business competitor Theophilus Magruder, who was operating the Main Street House — the regiment's officers' former barracks — for violating the Black exclusion law. At the end of August, Judge Thomas Nelson found Vanderpool guilty and ordered him expelled from the territory. If Travers recorded her own manumission document and was still in Oregon City when the Vanderpool prosecution began, she was likely aware of her own noncompliance.

It is unclear whether the case informed her plans to stay in the Oregon Territory or whether it accelerated her decision to leave. On balance — particularly due to the lack of further evidence of Travers's presence locally — as facts continue to emerge regarding Travers's life, the answer to the key question of what she did with her freedom will, more likely than not, be found outside Oregon.

*Oregon Historical Quarterly* 125, no. 2 (Summer 2024): 164-79.

Capt. Llewellyn Jones, his family, and Monimia Travers are among the 1849 emigrants listed in the website *The Oregon Territory and its Pioneers* at [oregonpioneers.com/1849](http://oregonpioneers.com/1849):

- \*2: JONES, Llwelyn (1811- ): U.S. Mounted Riflemen, Capt from NY
- \*2: JONES, Katherine (1815- ): m'd JONES, Llwelyn, from NY
- \*2: JONES, Katherine (1836- ): d/o Llwelyn and Katherine Jones
- \*2: JONES, Fradonia [Frederica] B. (1839- ): d/o Llwelyn and Katherine Jones
- \*2: TRAVERS, Monimia (1801- ): black servant for Capt. Llwelyn Jones family, from VA

## *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 Avarad Fairbanks for Oregon Trail monuments.



## **42nd Annual OCTA Convention**

*Colorado's Historic Trails:  
A Journey Through Time*

**September 7-12, 2025  
Pueblo, Colorado**

## **Benjamin Franklin Bonney and Candy Hearts**

Benjamin Franklin Bonney came over the Oregon Trail at the age of seven with his family from Illinois to Oregon City. Later, he related a fond memory to Fred Lockley:

Among the pleasant memories of our stay in Oregon City are those of a playmate, a son of Colonel W. G. T'Vault, first editor of the Oregon Spectator, . . . One day young T'Vault and I were walking along the streets of Oregon City when we met Dr. [John] McLaughlin and Mr. Barlow. Barlow had a plane bit in his hand. Dr. McLaughlin put his hand upon my head and said, "Don't you boys want to earn some candy? If you will go with Mr. Barlow and turn the grindstone while he sharpens that plane bit I will give you each a handful of candy."

As soon as Mr. Barlow pronounced the bit sharp enough we hurried back to Dr. McLaughlin, and he gave us each a handful of plain candy hearts with mottoes on them. This was the first "store candy" I had ever seen, or, for that matter, had ever had in my hands.

Source: "Benjamin Franklin Bonney, Pioneer of 1845, Mulino, Oregon," in Fred Lockley, *Conversations with Pioneer Men*, compiled by Mike Helm (Eugene, OR: Rainy Day Press, 1996): 23.

In 1847 Boston pharmacist Oliver Chase invented the first American candy machine that cut out candy shapes.