

**Benton County Genealogical Society Newsletter**  
**P.O. Box 1646, Philomath, OR 97370**

<http://www.bcgs-oregon.org>

**Volume 35 Issue 7**

**September 2017**

**From the Desk of the President**, by George Davidson

I hope everyone had a fun and safe summer break and we hope to see you back in Philomath and share your experience with us. See you September 9th.



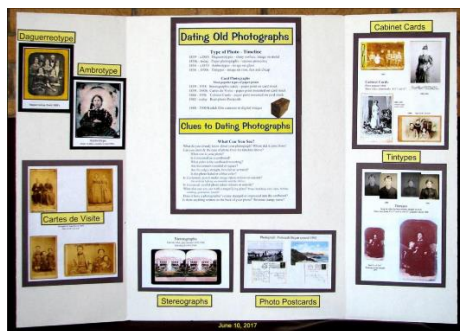
**“Dating Old Photographs”** June Program Review, Linda Olsen

“Hands-On Dating Old Photographs” presented by Linda Olsen stimulated ideas, stories, and helpful suggestions. Plus it was just a lot of fun. Two display boards highlighted the processes of dating photographs.

According to author, Maureen Taylor, there are four ways to date photographs. First, identify the type of photograph. Is the photo a tintype, cabinet card or some other type?



Use fashions to determine an approximate date. When were bustles popular? Find the photographer’s stamp or imprint. With a little research, you may narrow down a range of dates. Look for internal details to reveal clues. Do you see distinctive pieces of furniture, tools of trade or signage in the background? Special occasion decor for weddings or graduations may surround the subject in the photo. Are children in the photo? Putting all these clues together may help in the identification of the subjects in the photo by selecting the individuals from your genealogy that match the profile you have developed about your undated photograph.



Characteristics of older photographs can be dated. Square corners, round corners, straight edges vs. serrated edges and also different sizes and colors of card stock were all popular during specific time periods. Each early, photo-image type and how it was mounted was popular until another quicker-to-produce type of photo came along to replace it. When Kodak began to manufacture cameras that anyone could use, a family

no longer needed to dress up and pose in front of a photographer’s backdrop. Candid photos became the norm.

Members brought magnifying glasses, rulers, and a few of their own photographs or used some photos Linda brought to practice their photo dating skills. Judging from the activity generated in our room, members completely involved themselves in the process and thoroughly enjoyed learning valuable techniques for dating old photographs..

Posting unknown photographs online may also result in a successful identification. See our BCGS Photo web page [www.bcgs-oregon.org/](http://www.bcgs-oregon.org/) for BCGS members to post their unknown photos. Another useful, free web site to post unknown photos is [www.deadfred.com](http://www.deadfred.com) .



**Why Didn't People Smile in Old Photos?**, from Old Photos Archive, submitted by Margaret Fox

"Why didn't people smile in old photographs?" Indeed, it's something we ask ourselves as we work through the thousands of photos in our archives. We noticed that every photo until 1900 is devoid of emotion; however, soon after people began exhibiting wide, full smiles in both portraits and candid shots. So we just had to know why.

### Debunking the Myths

The top reasons people assume are these, but we found none of them is true!

**Life was hard.** It is indeed true that people lacked the creature comforts we had today, and beyond this, they had limited health care and died much, much younger than we do today. That said, we see in their letters and writings that they had no less happiness or joy in life than we do today (and perhaps more!). So the winters may have been harsher for them and the daily grind more taxing, but it wasn't the source of their lack of smiling.

**People had bad teeth.** We are spoiled by having easy access to dentists and orthodontists these days, but people in the late 1800s certainly did not. So many of them did indeed have "bad" teeth in terms of how they looked. That said, because no one actually had "good" teeth then, there would have been no stigma associated with craggly, dingy teeth. So that's not it.

**Long exposure times.** We ourselves had always simply assumed that the lack of smiling was due to the long exposure times for cameras of the day. It would have been VERY painful to sit for an hour or more, but our research shows that exposure times were no more than 4-5 seconds even for the early photos. So that's not it either...

### Uncovering the Real Reason

After some research, we uncovered the real reason: People thought smiling made them look silly. This is a carry-over from early portraiture in oil paintings of the 17th and 18th centuries. At that time, people viewed their portrait as being the one thing that would truly capture who they were for centuries to come; as such, they wanted to convey a sense of moral certainty. The smile thus became unfashionable in portraiture and was thought to be used only for those filled with wine -- or the entertainment.

This carried over in to photography in in the U.S. in the 1860s-1890s as studios popped up in small towns across the nation. These portraits were expensive, once-in-a-lifetime experiences, and so the subjects

approached them as if they were having a full-scale oil painting completed. Even Mark Twain, the popular writer and humorist, encouraged this. He shares in a letter to the Sacramento Daily Union:

*“A photograph is a most important document, and there is nothing more damning to go down to posterity than a silly, foolish smile caught and fixed forever.”*

So what changed around 1900?



### Here Come the Smiles!

By 1877 the photographic pioneer Eadweard Muybridge had solved an ongoing problem of a one-shot camera with his series of photographs entitled The Horse In Motion.

This technique paved the way for cheaper, more efficient cameras that photographers could use in-studio and people could take with them wherever they went. No longer would people have just once chance to get the perfect photo -- now they could take an entire series, often for cheaper than with the old technique.

By the early 1900s, we began to see smiles pop up in studio portraits and candid of all forms. While these didn't ever reach the level of the silly, posed selfie that we take today, people certainly stopped being self-conscious about sharing their happiness! And we're very happy for that!



### Around Benton County

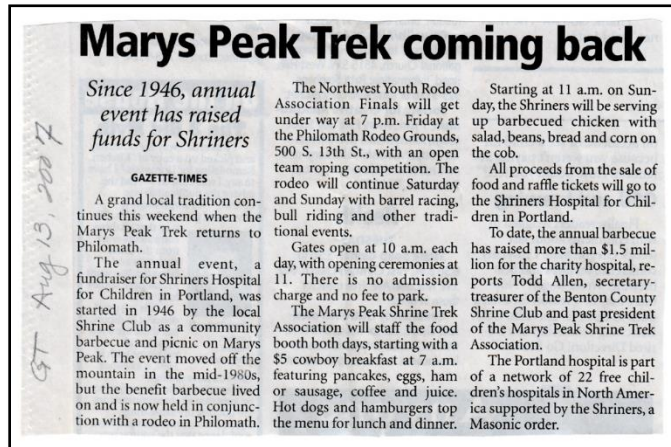
#### The Marys Peak Trek, by Linda Olsen

A few Marys Peak Trek buttons appeared in a drawer among treasures of long ago and reminded me of the many Marys Peak Trek gatherings my family attended in the 1950s and beyond. I looked forward to the long, slow car ride up the road to the top of the peak in August every year. The excitement began with whether or not we would make it all the way to the top of the peak without having to stop the car to let the engine cool off or if we would be one of the lucky ones who passed the other families stuck on the side of the road waiting for their cars to cool off. I remember cars parked along the side of the road near each of the small water falls trickling down the peak hillside. The open hoods on the cars let the steam billow up from the radiators. The narrow road was choked with cars not only to get an early start but the road was closed to downhill traffic in the morning and uphill traffic in the afternoon. Unless it was an emergency, you would just have to wait if you were late.



Being the first arrivals on top of the peak meant securing the best parking spots and the best places to spread out blankets and claim the best places to sit and watch the entertainment and, best of all, be at the head of the line for the BBQ beef sandwiches. My family looked forward to the Marys Peak Trek and enjoyed the BBQ beef sandwiches, the programs and meeting other family members and friends not

seen since the last trek. Looking over the crowd already spreading out blankets, we searched for familiar faces sometimes rearranging our seating to sit next to someone we knew and enjoyed visiting and catching up with the latest happenings in our lives.



I remember the tough, sharp bear grass all over the top of the peak and wore long pants no matter how hot it was, and it did get very hot some summers, to keep the grass from making little cuts on my legs. The sheriff's posse rode horses and guided the cars into fairly straight rows for parking which stirred up the grasshoppers. Little grasshoppers were everywhere and keeping them out of our picnic lunches became an annoying game. Each year tickets were sold before and during the Marys Peak Trek. The

Sheriff's posse usually had tickets for sale that you could buy as soon as you exited the car. If you bought a raffle ticket, you also received a Marys Peak Trek button with a stick pin on the back. A car was always the grand prize in the raffle. We couldn't leave until the raffle drawing was over. We never won anything but enjoyed ourselves immensely anyway. Maybe if we had bought just one more ticket we could have won that car. Oh well, maybe next year. These sentiments were repeated over and over every year.

My mother enjoyed visiting with everyone whether she knew them or not. For my dad, attending the Marys Peak Trek was all about the BBQ beef sandwiches. You could smell the meat cooking over an open pit the moment you stepped out of the car and even before if you had rolled down the windows. Yes, car windows were rolled down by hand back then. Anyway, someone had dug a deep, long, narrow pit, above the viewing area and started a fire and kept the coals at just the right temperature to cook the large chunks of beef skewered with long rods and placed over the hot coals. The meat was covered with large tarps and cooked for a long time, over several days, I think. Whoever was in charge of cooking the meat must have camped on the Peak for several days to cook the meat just right and to have it ready to be thickly sliced and plopped on paper plates at just the right time. Most of the BBQ beef sandwiches needed to be sold in time for the crowd to be settled down on blankets and ready to view the program by about 1:00pm. People stood in long lines waiting for their turn to finally experience holding their paper plate heavy with the juicy tender meat, slathered with a rich BBQ sauce. Usually there were several lines roped off to guide people to each side of several long tables. A Shriner wearing the typical hat called a fez, would be stationed at the head of each long table as you entered the BBQ line. He collected the money for the number of plates you wanted and placed the money in pockets in an apron and also made change at the same time. Ladies handed out paper plates then the buns, then the pickles and relishes. The thick slices of beef with or without the addition of more BBQ sauce were the last items added to your plate making it noticeably heavier. If you wanted another slice of beef, the Shriner carving the large chunk of beef slid it onto your plate. Any meat left over was sold by the pound later in the afternoon.

It was always advantageous to take my grandmother with us because the elderly and disabled could drive or be driven up close enough for them to view the program performed on the stage while sitting in



the car at the top of the naturally sloped viewing area. She would be quite happy sitting in the front seat of our car with the car doors open, watching the program, visiting with folks that came by and eating while the rest of us sat on blankets on the ground with the rest of the picnic lunch we had brought. In later years the concession stands sold cold beverages and other food items although at a high price. My folks always brought plenty of food and their own beverages. There was no water source on top of the Peak and we were accustomed to taking drinking water anyway.

Everything on the Peak had to be hauled up the mountain, built or specifically placed, and then taken down and carried back down the mountain before night fall. Once in awhile we would arrive early enough to see them still hammering the stage together. Some of the larger pieces of lumber may have been left on the peak and wrapped in tarps ready to reassemble the stage next year. The contour of the ground made a natural amphitheater with the stage at the lowest level just in front of a stand of trees. The rest of the meadow at the top of the peak was treeless and covered with people sitting or laying on the ground on blankets in a random fashion. Spreading blankets on top of the stiff Bear grass was a challenge to flatten it enough to sit on. If the sun was really hot, some folks used umbrellas for shade which meant the folks behind them couldn't see. Usually, though, everyone was more thoughtful. After the program started there was no room to move around. If you just had to get up and leave your spot, you needed to make up a signal with someone in your group or else you probably would not be able to find your way back to your original place. Once your place was staked out, that was it. Someone had to be on the blanket at all times or else you might return to find your designated space had shrunk. Most often folks wore hats or made paper shades to protect them from the intense sun. Later, paper hats and paper fans were sold by hawkers walking around the crowd.

The program began with a prayer, I believe, from more than one pastor and representing different religions. Then the entertainment followed consisting of vocalists, comedians, magicians, dancers or animal acts performing circus tricks. I remember a bear with a chain around its neck doing tricks and a chimpanzee riding on a small bicycle and little dogs jumping through hoops. The high wire trapeze act was quite exciting and the crowd really loved it; however, it became too dangerous when the wind was blowing. The high wire apparatus could not be secured well enough to make it safe. Between the performances, someone would usually tell the history of the trek and praise the excellent work the Shriners performed and mentioned that donations were always welcome and proceeds from the Trek were donated to the Shriner's Children's Hospital in Portland.

Hiking to the top of the Peak was the best treat on a hot, clear day in August. If you drove up the mountain early enough, there was time to hike to the top of the Peak before the festivities began. Most people hiked after their huge lunch had settled and after the program ended. My dad used to point out the Noble fir trees with the cones that grew straight up from the tree branches as we walked up the narrow dirt road to the highest point of the Peak. On the way, he would also point out his family's homestead on the southwest side of the peak. All I could see were trees, but he knew exactly where he was born and where his family and grandparents had lived long ago and where he had hiked and hunted in the surrounding area with his many siblings. The top of the Peak doesn't look the same anymore. The wooden, three-story fire lookout is gone and the transmitters are an ugly blemish on the natural area. Only a few people at a time were allowed to climb up the stairs, three stories high, to see where the lookout ranger lived and worked. A huge telescope rested on the railing at the top level of the lookout. If you were patient enough to wait your turn, you could take a look through the telescope. Large maps covered the top of a table, as I remember. Looking east with or without using the telescope you could

see Philomath, Corvallis and the Cascades. The houses resembled tiny dots scattered around on the ground. The spectacular view to the west rewarded us with a panorama of the ocean. When the air was clear, you could see a bit of blue color as a level line against the sky. Whether or not the weather was clear enough to actually see the ocean, just the thought of seeing it was good enough because you knew it was really there even if you couldn't quite see it that day.

After a full day of traveling, visiting, hiking, eating and enjoying the entertainment, everyone in our car was quiet, thoughtful and feeling satisfied on the trip back home. Grandma usually slept most of the way. by Linda Olsen August 15, 2017



### **A Genealogical Eclipse, Sue Van Laere, BCGS Librarian**

Happy beginning of another Benton County Genealogical Society year. I hope you were awed by the solar eclipse. Seeing the corona like a beautiful circle of molten silver around the blackness of the moon was inspiring and made me wish to be a poet or an artist who could capture its beauty.

Our writing class will start up again on Tuesday, September 19 at 1:00 in the Annex Library. Linda O. has suggested we write about our eclipse encounter right here in our own back yard. It's a great idea and, if you have ever witnessed another eclipse, you might want to include that as well. Or you could make a scrapbook page of your own photos or those you can cut and paste from other sources to inspire you to write about your experience.



Are you a secret poet, write a poem. If you aspire to be an artist, make a painting or collage. Anything you do will be uniquely you, and isn't that what we always want to find out about our ancestors? What a genealogical way to leave ourselves to future generations who didn't get to experience this celestial event.

Please join us if you want to start writing using your research and your own story. We're a good group!

Sue Van Laere, BCGS Librarian



### **How to Find Genealogy, Family History, and Local History Books in the Internet Archive, Dick Eastman, July 2017 (thanks to Mary Dean Snelling)**

Would you like to electronically search through 129,577 genealogy books? You can do that on the Internet Archives' online service at: <https://archive.org/details/genealogy> Not only can you search these books, but you can do so electronically. A search for a name might require a few seconds, not hours or days in the manner of a manual search through printed books in a library.

The Internet Archive (also known as The Internet WayBack Machine Archive) is a San Francisco-based nonprofit digital library with the stated mission of "universal access to all knowledge." It provides free

public access to collections of digitized materials, including websites, software applications/games, music, movies/videos, moving images, and nearly three million public-domain books.

The Internet Archive has always collected genealogy, family history, and local history books. However, searching through the huge collection used to require imaginative search terms to find specific references. For instance, searching all of the Internet Archive for references to my last name of Eastman used to find a few genealogy books buried in a listing of hundreds of book related to photography. In addition, a search for family names often also produced listings of book authors who shared that name, even if the book had nothing to do with genealogy. A search for a family name that is also a common English word, such as Black or Street was almost hopeless. Luckily, a change made some time ago has now reduced the search problems.

The Internet Archive now has a dedicated section just for genealogy, family history, and local history books at <https://archive.org/details/genealogy> You might want to go to that address first and then conduct a search there.

You can read the whole article here: <https://blog.eogn.com/2017/07/06/how-to-find-genealogy-family-history-and-local-history-books-in-the-internet-archive/>



**Writer's Corner #9, Speculation**, submitted by Mary Dean Snelling

You can never know for sure how an ancestor felt, so you can only give the illusion that you know. When you place them within the context of social history you are speculating on what their life might have been like and what they thought. All history involves some speculation.

Use qualifiers to indicate the probability of some event or detail:

appears to . . . . suggests that . . . .  
would seem to . . . . indicates that . . . .  
The results shown in Figure 1 suggest that . . . .  
The contents of her inventory suggest that . . . .  
The evidence appears to support . . . .

perhaps, possibly, probably, presumably, likely, possible, probable, unlikely

It is possible that . . . . It is probable that . . . .  
It is likely that . . . . It is presumed that . . . .  
He probably left Oklahoma during dust bowl years.

may or maybe  
might, might be or might have been  
could be, could have been  
would, would have been.

She might have gone with other women to the bake house.  
... general circumstances of their life can be imagined.  
Judging from the grain in the chamber ...  
The house must have looked much like surviving buildings from the 18th century.

It is not enough to say that John was probably the son of William. How did you arrive at that conclusion? Sources should not be placed in the narrative. Place your evidence in the footnotes/endnotes. Use superscript numbers in the narrative which point to the endnotes.

#### Dialogue

Dialogue is generally not used. If used it must be made clear that it is remembered conversation. Readers need to know that what you are writing is factual. Otherwise the validity of your entire work may be questioned. Give the reader the signal that it is being used to capture the essence of the conversation that happened. Document in endnotes.

[ Carmack, Sharon DeBartolo, You Can Write Your Family History, (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 2008) p. 149 - 151]

[Jones, Thomas W. Write It Up! A Workshop for Family Historians, Western Institute of Genealogy July 2016, Eugene, Oregon,p.21]



It is the First of the Month, *Back Up Your Files!!*



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Connie Patterson, Membership

**BCGS General Meetings** are held on the 2nd Saturday of the month, September through June.

**The September meeting** will be on **Saturday, September 9<sup>th</sup> at 10 am** in the Social Hall of the College United Methodist Church, Philomath, everyone is welcome! **At 11 am** we will have our **program**, followed by refreshments at the Annex.



**Board Meetings** are held the Wednesday before the general meeting; the **Board meeting** will be on **Wednesday, September 6<sup>th</sup> at 12:30 pm- 2:00 pm** in the Philomath Public Library meeting room, all members are invited.



**BCGS Programs 2017**

- September: Show and Tell, share what we have found, written or photographed over the summer
- October: Don Anderson "The Journey to find my first parents", It all started in Corvallis!" His book is now available. He will bring books for sale and be available for book signing.
- November: TBA
- December: Holiday auction and potluck

