

# Mid-Valley Genealogical Society

PO BOX 1511  
CORVALLIS OR 97339

NEWSLETTER

VOL IX NO.10  
DECEMBER 1994

**PRESIDENT: KEN BIELMAN**

**EDITOR: ED STRATTON**

## TODAYS MEETING

Today is our annual December Auction and Tea. Members are to bring goodies to share and items to be sold at the auction. Hope you brought your checkbook.

We will be going to the Fireside room of the Church next door at 12:30 for the business meeting and festivities.

Next month Danel will be giving a program on Archival Supplies. Remember the time changes for the meeting and program.

## CANADIAN INTEREST GROUP

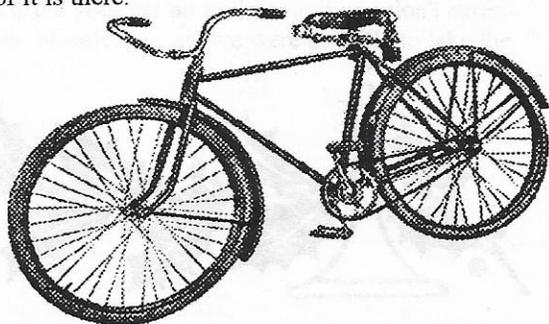
The Canadian Interest Group is for those searching for their roots in Canada. This group meets the third Tuesday of each month, from 12:30 to 3:30 pm at the Albany Public Library. If you have a specific area of Canada you are interested in, please let me know so we can have books and printed materials there for you to look at. We have resources available for Manitoba, Ontario, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and some Quebec, plus Canada in general. Car pooling can be arranged.

Call Pat Rawlinson, 752-2243, for further info.

## LABELS

Please keep saving the Santiam and Flav-R-Pak labels, and bring them into the library. There is a plastic box in the library to store them in.

NOTE: All you need to bring in is the UPC Symbol. Be careful to cut a little extra package around the Symbol so that all of it is there.

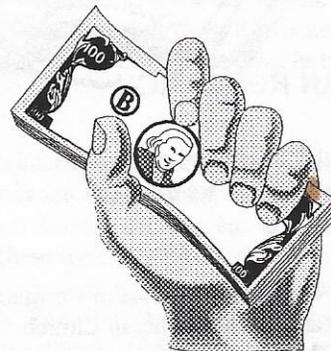


## ODDS AND ENDS

The Library is open every Tuesday afternoon from 12:30 until 3:00 pm. Librarians are on hand to help you with your questions. You may check out and return books on Tuesday. We need volunteers for Tuesdays.

Remember our number at the OSU thriftshop is 492.

If you don't already belong to the Benton County Historical Society, why not consider joining? Contact a board member to find out what it is about.



## DUES

It is that time again. Your annual dues may be paid starting with the September meeting. The membership chair and Treasurer would like to get this job done before the first of the year.

Again this year the dues are \$9.00 for a family and \$6.00 for a single membership. Make checks payable to Mid-Valley Genealogical Society (MVGS). Give them to the treasurer at the meeting or mail them to PO Box 1511, Corvallis OR 97339

Please get your dues paid early this year.

## MONTHLY SHARING

Each month we have a table to bring books or other artifacts to share with the other members, from the area we are specializing in. The items are used for that one day only, you take them home that night. Following is the listing for the ten months that we have meetings. If you have books or items to share, please bring them as shown below.

If we do not have your area of interest, please contact a board member and let's see if we can update the listing to satisfy your needs.

Jan	PA, OH, ENGLAND
Feb	OR, WA, ID, MT
Mar	VA, WV, SCANDINAVIA
Apr	NC, SC, KY, TN, and Germany
May	IL, MI, WI, Ireland and Scotland
Jun	IN, IA, KS
Sep	NY, NJ, MD, DC
Oct	NH, VT, MA, ME
Nov	CT, RI, DE
Dec	Auction and Christmas Tea



## GERMAN RESEARCH

I received the following letter from Sandy Ihrig and it seems to be something that we all might use if we do German research.

"We had a distant Ihrig cousin in Germany who did his/our family research in the Lutheran Church. Here is what he said about the condition of the church books, 'The church books are in good condition with respect to the writing (German: I can read and write German, however not as fluently as Latin; thus, reading is a bit tedious for me) from 1810 on, but the older ones are terrible to read because the ministers have written into these books everything, e.g. birth, marriage, confirmation and death, of everyone successively as it happened.'

The church records where our family data was taken from are microfilmed and put in the center of the Lutheran Church in Darmstadt. Inquiries can be addressed to: Evangelische Kirchenverwaltung, 6100 Darmstadt, Postfach 4447. We thought we would share this address with anyone who may be interested."

## MEETING CHANGE

At the last meeting, the following schedule was voted on and passed by a majority of those present.

Business meeting	10:00 am
Program	11:00 am
Study time	12:00 to 3:00 pm

This schedule will begin with the January meeting. The library will not be open until 12:00 noon.

The coffee and snacks will not be made until after the meeting and program are complete, in the Church, and we adjourn to the Library for research time.

## CENSUS ON THE NET

from the Oregonian

### Census information attracts 1 million computer inquiries

More than 1 million computer users accessed U.S. Census Bureau information via the Internet between February and September.

The census sites may be reached by either gopher or World Wide Web, two popular ways of retrieving information on the Internet.

About 476,000 of the 1 million information requests were made by gopher and 394,000 by World Wide Web, the hypertext link that supports the popular Mosaic program for navigating the Internet.

The census information is easily reachable by gopher from the Multnomah County Library or other servers. Or e-mail message to [pio@census.gov](mailto:pio@census.gov) for instructions.

*I have not checked out the stated paths, yet. Ed*



## OREGON TRAIL JOURNEY

Bill and Moira Valenzuela have been members of our society for several years. This summer they were here in Oregon for quite some time. During that time I talked to Bill and they came to visit Mabelle. I asked Bill if I could reprint part of their year end letter to their families that pertained to their trek along the Oregon Trail. He said of course, so here is part three of their journey.

Thanks folks, this will be enjoyed by a lot of people. It was written by Moira.

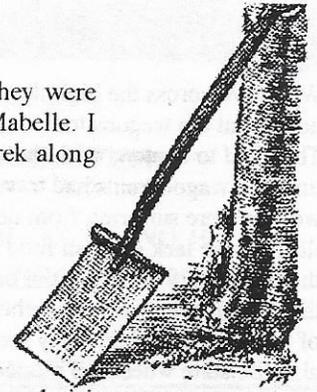
*continued from last month*

Also in Nebraska, we stopped in Gothenberg, to see a sod house. It had been built by a rancher, after he retired, to honor his grandparents, who had lived in one, when they first lived in Nebraska in the 1860's. The ceiling was covered with white muslin, to keep the creepy crawlers from falling down on the inhabitants of the house, and showed water marks, where the roof had leaked, a normal occurrence for sod houses. He even had the bird cage hanging outside the door. The prairie had only the sound of the wind back then, and the silence was too much for the womenfolk, who were left by home, by themselves, all day long, so they would keep a canary in a cage, to have cheerful sound to keep them company.

We saw where the wagon ruts were still visible at numerous places along The Trail, on the prairie. At Windlass Hill, we read where it was not known how the name had come into being, because, although the wagons had descended that steep hill, no windlass had ever been found. Neither were there any trees, that could have been used to winch the wagons down the hill. It was decided that the wagons must have been double-teamed to get them down.

A footnote to that story. We were showing the snapshots we had taken, to one of Willie's aunts, and her husband noticed the picture of Windlass Hill, and overheard us telling the story. He was born near there, and told us his father had found the windlass years ago, when Forrest was a boy, and had taken it home, before The Oregon Trail was fashionable, then years later gave it to a small museum, (which seemingly is still not aware of the historical significance of one of its artifacts).

We also left our own footprints, in the dust of the trail, at Scotts Bluff, Nebraska. That is a gigantic sandstone rock formation that rises out of the prairie. One of the Park rangers told us about the ruts. We had to walk about a half mile to get to them, but it was worth the walk. There is a road goes up around the rock and tunnels have been cut into the rock so you can drive your car up to the top, if you don't suffer from vertigo. Needless to say we were not able to take the RV up there.



Most of the State and National visitors centers on The Trail had a short film they showed throughout the day, that covered the story of the whole Trail, but concentrated strongly on their own region. Made it easier to absorb the facts when you got them in small doses. If we had been returning to a house eventually, we would have had such a library on The Oregon Trail. I found books at every stop that I would have loved to buy, but space is definitely limited when you live in an RV.

I think the most dramatic ruts we saw, and believe me, we saw lots of them, was at Guernsey, Nebraska. They were worn into limestone rocks above the Platte river. Those ruts you almost have to see to believe!!! You could STAND in the wheel ruts and lean against the side of the rocks. The iron rimmed wheels wore ruts so deeply into the rocks, that eventually the BOTTOMS of the wagons started to wear down the center of the rocks. We saw about three different sets of ruts up there amongst the rocks. When we went back into the town, we found a small historical society, and Willie went in to ask why the wagons had left the banks of the river, to take such a difficult path up the hill and through the rocks. Simple answer ... the wagons were bogging down in the soggy river bank.

In Wyoming we saw several massive signature rocks, where the pioneers left their names, and sometimes the dates, they passed through the area, carved into the rocks. It was sad that these rocks have had to be protected, behind fences, because of modern graffiti, vandalism and souvenir hunters. The wind is also wearing these rocks down, and no one, state, historical or service organization is cataloging the names that are still there. We saw one young girl running along the top of one of the rocks and down the face of it, while her father caught it all on his videocam.

Brigham Young stationed some of his people, who could write, at these rocks, and they would carve people's names on them, for a fee. The Mormon leader was a shrewd businessman. He built a rope ferry, at one river crossing, left a couple of men there, who charged for each wagon, person and head of livestock they transported across the river, for miles in either direction, on the trail. Of course some people would balk at the fees and try to cross at other areas, sometimes with fatal results.

*continued next page*

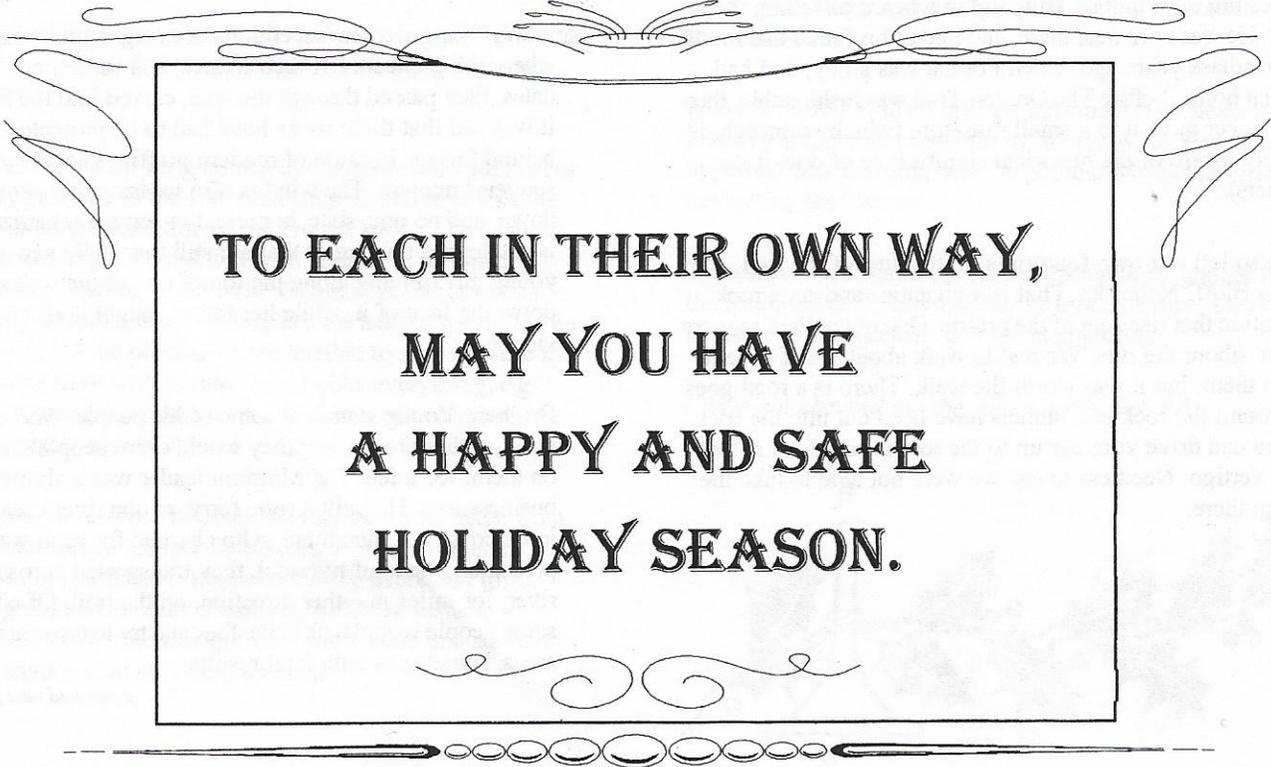
We drove across the high desert in Wyoming in a matter of hours, but the wagons took days to cover the same distance. They had to contend with the wind, and alkali water. By the time the wagon trains had traveled to that point, some of the women were suffering from depression. Others were falling ill from the lack of fresh food. They were fighting to keep the livestock away from the bad water, and watch it die of thirst. Wyoming was also where they got their first glimpse of the high mountains they would have to cross. This was also the state where the pioneers saw the rivers flow west, instead of east. They would watch their navigational landmarks for days, either ahead of them, or behind, when they were on the plains. All they had for scenery, usually, was sagebrush, which is what the pronghorn antelope loves. We finally learned to spot them, as we drove through miles and miles and miles of sagebrush. Luckily hunting season had not yet started.

We spent ten days at Mountain Home, Idaho, at the campground on the Air Force base there. We needed to take a break from being on the road and we still had to get our wiring problem corrected. We pulled in to the base, just before the annual war games started. We had front row seats to a free air show. Of course, we were not real thrilled when the alert siren would start screaming in the middle of the night, but certainly that WAS when we saw the most spectacular sights. The campground was real close to the flight line, so five minutes after the alert started, we'd watch the night sky, and hear the jets screaming as they rose off the runways. You could see a long flame shooting out from behind the planes, then when they got to a certain height and speed, the flame would suddenly disappear, and all you had left was the red and white navigational lights. A few minutes later you would hear the "bombs" being dropped on the

bombing range out on the desert. It was a lovely time, though I have to admit, the one main claim to fame, people in that part of Idaho can make, is that the wind blows almost constantly. We pulled in to a dealership there in Mountain Home, without an appointment, and they took care of us. Took almost three hours, and four mechanics, to troubleshoot, but after the wiring was put back the way it had been, so they could find the real problem. It turned out there was another box of fuses outside the cab, under the hood, that also went to the lights, and one of them had blown. By now we were almost two hundred miles out of warranty, but the dealer said he was still going to bill back to the manufacturer. Didn't cost us a penny!

Instead of taking the branch up to Washington, from Idaho, we stayed with the Oregon side. We pulled into Baker City, Oregon early, found ourselves a campground and went off to explore more Oregon Trail History. We drove up Flagstaff Hill, to a really great Interpretive Center. We were there until it closed. Could have spent more time there, but we managed to see and hear everything there. Having just traveled The Trail, we really did get a tremendous enjoyment out of the center. The next day we drove up Blue Mountain to see the last of the ruts, and the old Stage road. Some of the ruts there had just recently been discovered. Because that part of the mountain sees very little use, the ruts were well protected. They were also in a forest, so were protected from the weather.

*The rest of the Christmas letter is mainly about family matters, so it will not be reproduced here. I again wish to thank Bill and Moira Valenzuela for letting me print their Oregon Trail Adventure in our newsletter. Ed*



**TO EACH IN THEIR OWN WAY,  
MAY YOU HAVE  
A HAPPY AND SAFE  
HOLIDAY SEASON.**