

# Great Emigrant Trail Marked Out For Society Wishing To Erect Monuments

By C. H. STEWART

The Society known as the "Daughters of the Revolution" has for many years in the East been engaged in the work of erecting monuments to commemorate the old emigrant history of our country. In late years they have devoted a great deal of their time and money in suitably marking up monuments to the old emigrant trails leading from the Mississippi Valley to this Coast, and now the societies belonging to this organization in this State have taken up the work of re-locating the old emigrant trails leading south through the Willamette Valley to Southern Oregon and California. From a historical standpoint it certainly is very important that the location of these old thoroughfares should be determined and recorded at the earliest possible date, for it will not be long until they will be only a memory, and a faint one at that, unless some such movement as this is carried out successfully, and their exact location be permanently recorded.

A couple of years ago the local Chapter of this city thought of taking up this work, and the State Geographical Society was requested to furnish them with a description of the route taken by the old trail through this county, but it seems that they are not in possession of any records from which they can get the information needed, and they, in turn, are compelled to collect their data from the old settler, or any one else who may have knowledge in relation to the matter. In their dilemma the President of the State Geographical Society requested that I should make an effort to furnish the information desired. I accepted the invitation, but at the time had no idea of the size of the undertaking. To work the matter out successfully I was compelled to consult the public records of this county; the State records at Salem; the records of the State Historical Society at Portland; and to personally interview a great many of our old settlers. Even then I think I would have been only partially successful had I not gained a personal knowledge of our county road system many years ago, before so many of our old pioneers had passed away.

## First Trails Were Vague

I am now reasonably sure, in fact I am perfectly satisfied in my own mind, that this report, which is the result of my investigations, will describe faithfully and correctly the identical old trails traveled by almost all of the emigrants coming to the east side of the Willamette Valley from and after the spring of 1846.

tremely poor, for the reason that all the streams were more or less filled with driftwood, and the surplus water could not get away until very late in the season, so that it was almost impossible for a loaded team to make its way over the Valley country, and the emigrant was forced to work back into the edge of the foothills in order to make any progress.

## Present Timber Was Absent

It would also be very natural to suppose that the heavy growth of timber we usually see on our foothills in these days would have prevented the emigrant from taking the hill route, but such is not the case. The fact is that he saw nothing of the second-growth fir and oak which now so successfully cover the low hills and parts of the Valley, for the reason that it was not in existence at that time. It has all sprung into existence within the memory of some of our oldest pioneers. When the first emigration arrived, the whole country was covered with a luxuriant growth of grass, which was sometimes waist high, and every fall, when it became dry, the Indians burned it off, thus killing all the young growth of timber which may have sprung up during the previous season. For these reasons there was no difficulty whatever in driving the teams over and through the lower foothills and the drained ground, usually plowed by one or more men on horseback.

It is also a fact that the early settler in this county almost invariably located his claim either in the foothills or on the banks of some stream, and the information on this point, "Albany Prairie," and other of a similar character lying to the south of it, was the very last to be taken up, and in fact this was almost the same as governed the emigrant in his choice of routes of travel. On account of the lack of drainage on the prairie lands it would be impossible to put in crops until late in the season, and you must know that it was imperative that a crop should be produced at the very earliest date. This condition did not exist in the foothills—the land there was drained all ready for the plow, and the emigrants had no difficulty in getting in their seed. Besides this, the settler was compelled to have considerable timber with which to construct necessary buildings, and he could only get this along the streams and on the higher foothills.

## John Packwood Was First

It was the emigration of 1845 that made the first settlement in this coun-

try with split puncheons. Over the very crude ferry passed practically all of the first emigration into what are now Linn and Lane counties. The wagon trail, which was the one following years, the one on the Maricopa side being known as Santia City, and on the opposite side the name of Jefferson. Each village had a store, hotel, blacksmith shop

**THE OLD EMIGRANT TRAIL**, over which the first pioneers crossed with their prairie schooners and oxen into the Willamette Valley, has been re-located by Judge Stewart for the State Historical Society and the local chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution. In a paper read Tuesday evening before the D. A. R., Mr. Stewart gave his report, the result of long and painstaking labor. He tells of the first faint wagon-tracks, and of the trails which grew out of them, and brings in bits of history pertaining to the first—the very first—white settlers who located in the uninhabited, unknown region that is Linn County of today. The Democrat here presents Mr. Stewart's paper and report.

and several other buildings, but they are now both extinct—not a single building remaining at either side.

## State Larger Than Germany

Mr. Hale, the ferryman, lived on the south side of the river, at Syracuse, and it is at this point that would suggest the erection of the first monument, for it is an indisputable fact that this is the starting point of the old emigrant trail into what is now Linn county.

And now, having the beginning point, we shall have to decide as to how far south it is my duty to locate the old trail. The request was that I should locate it through Linn county, but whether it is to be the Linn county of today, or the one under which the old provisional government, when the trail was first traveled, I have no instructions.

When the settlement of this part of the Valley began, in the year 1825, Oregon was still a territory, and covered all that part of the Northwest now divided into the states of Oregon, Washington, Idaho and a part of Montana. Linn county of today, as it is now, was not then a part of Oregon.

In Linn county, they started from the ferry at Syracuse and came up from the river on the north side of Hale's Butte, crossed Meeker's Gap, and climbed the hills to the southeast. When they went from Jefferson on the Pacific Highway, Hale's Butte is the hill on the right hand, about one mile west of Jefferson, and the present crossroad at this point, from Mil-

ling to be too thickly settled, so they passed on southward through the Hill Gap at Gallagher's, reached through the land afterwards taken up by Gannahl Parrish, climbed the hill at what was afterwards known as the Robert Cochran place (now known as Calloways) and finally located permanently in the Calapooia Valley near where Brownsville is situated.

If you are acquainted with the geography of the county you will have already noticed that these locations I have mentioned have followed the foothills all the way around from Hale's Ferry, by way of Lebanon through the Rock Hill Gap to the Calapooia valley, which was the farthest journey to the south reached by the emigration of that year. There were only a few other families that came into the county that season, and they settled in what was then considered to be out-of-the-way places. James Crabtree prospected pretty thoroughly by the country between McKibbin and Lebanon, and like Courtney and his party, did not relish the idea of being crowded, so he found a ford on the Santiam, crossed to the other side and finally found John Packwood, to whom I have referred before as being the first man to erect a cabin in this county. Mr. Crabtree bought Mr. Packwood's cabin and his squatters' rights to the land adjacent, and afterwards took it up as a donation claim. Anderson Cox settled nine miles east of Albany, and Hiram Smead was holding down the Hacklemann claim at Albany, while the location Gaps. About five stockmen had gone back to Iowa for his family.

## Emigration Comes Steadily

In the fall of 1846 several more families arrived. John McCoy, Dr. W. B. Maley, and Rev. Thos. B. Kendall all came to the county in 1846, but remained down in Washington county long enough to harvest a crop before coming up into this county. McCoy located on the Willamette river just above the mouth of Muddy Creek—Dr. Maley took up a claim near Oakesville, and Rev. Kendall settled on the Calapooia at the place now known as Kendall's Bridge. The families of Fletcher Scabtree and Capt. Jonathan Jones came up in the next year (1847) and came on up the Valley to their destination the same season, the former locating on the upper end of the plain and not very far from the town of Albany, and the latter on the original claim which they held when the town of Lebanon was afterward laid out. George Morgan, Asa H. Peterson came next, and located on the eastern side of Knox Butte, but afterward changed his location to the eastern side of Peterson's Butte, which took its name from him. Then a party of five arrived and followed up the Santiam until they came to the vicinity of Lebanon. This party consisted of Wm. Hawks, Thomas Morgan, William Gore, and Morgan and Emira Coxes. The average of the original claim up the valley which the town of Lebanon was afterward laid out. George Morgan, Asa H. Peterson came next, and located on the eastern side of Knox Butte, but afterward changed his location to the eastern side of Peterson's Butte, which took its name from him. Then a party of five arrived and followed up the Santiam until they came to the vicinity of Lebanon. This party consisted of Wm. Hawks,

so they took a shortcut from the mouth of Knox creek across the prairie to Sand Ridge, one of the western spurs of Peterson's Butte. At that time fences were scarce, and the roads usually took the most direct and practical route. In this case it led from the crossroads near the Knox Butte grange hall along the creek in front of the Geisendorfer church and on south practically the same as the present county road until it reached the crossroads near the old Bodine farm and Isaac Froman's. From there it took almost a direct course to the crossing of Oak Creek at the Crawford farm, and from there to Sand Ridge, and on south until it formed a junction with the road coming to the south through the Rock Hill Gap. When the road reached what is now Brownsville, it passed through the park grounds where the Pioneer Picnics are always held, and crossed the Calapooia just west of the small butte at the north end of the present county bridge, where a ferry was operated by A. Kirk.

(Continued on Page 7)

at the store of Jeremiah Ralston, the only store in Linn county at that time.

Fourth.—At the crossing of the Calapooia river at the site of the old Kirk Ferry.

Fifth.—At the spot near West Point where the old trail crossed the present division line between the counties of Linn and Lane.

Sixth.—At Albany, where the emigrant on his way south procured his supplies after the travel had abandoned the Lebanon route, and crossed the river to the old John McCoy farm. Mr. McCoy was one of our first probate judges, and had more to do in establishing the exact route of this county than any other one man.

I have not yet been informed as to whether or not this local chapter has definitely decided that they will begin this work immediately. If they should so decide it is probable that the first monument would be erected in this city, and in that event at least two questions will arise—the style and character of the monument, and its location.

The first question is simply a matter of money. If you felt so disposed you could easily run the cost of such a monument into the thousands, but that is really not necessary. I have

seen many of such monuments, and in most cases they are of plain and not very costly. In many cases they consist of a plain block of granite, and after smoothing up one end they will stretch out a line of plain bearing such a

...that this report... result of my investigations... identical old trails... all of the emigration coming up the

From 1840 to 1845 the Willamette Valley... In the first place, you must know that the old emigrant trail in its... last out road. The settlements... Vallin commenced on the Tual... (now Washington county)... the new settlers arrived from the States... they passed on up the Valley... south left wagon tracks for the next settler to follow, and in this way the... passed from one claim to another, as the pioneers worked their way up the... population became... distance regularly laid out and adopted as a part of the legal road system of the State.

**Foot Hills were Followed**  
In order that you may have a clearer idea of how this old emigrant trail... find more into this paper some of our local history, hoping that this will not render the subject less interesting.

You would naturally suppose, in passing through this country, you... early emigrants would have taken practically the route followed afterwards by the Southern Pacific railroad, or possibly the Pacific Highway, as those routes are direct and almost totally devoid of hills; but this is not the case. On the contrary, it is a fact that while the old trail followed a general southerly course, it... most every point of the compass, and while passing through this country, kept closely to the foothills along the eastern rim of the Valley. This was for several good reasons, which I shall endeavor to explain.

In the first place, the emigration from the east generally arrived so late in the year, and that they... it was impossible for any but a very few of them to go on up the Valley until the... In most years, the family was safely established in winter quarters some where in the lower valley, then when some of the men came on to the Valley and looked up a location for their future home. Then, in the spring, as soon as the weather opened, they would... and this reasoning is correct, especially in the case of the French Park and the new house I block.

Now how I think that, if you have followed me closely, as I have already done, you will find that there has been very clear to me for some time past, that the proper location for the monument at Albany is not the one or the other of these two blocks mentioned—one belonging to the city, and the other to the county.

...the Valley began, in the year... Oregon was still a Territory, and... divided into that of the Northwest... Oregon, Washington, Idaho and a part of Montana. Linn county of today... and all that part of Champoigne county that was situated north of the Willamette river, the Marion county. On Dec. 28, 1847, the county of Linn was organized, and the Oregon Territory was of such magnitude that the German Empire... larger than the German Empire... the members of the legislature were not in the least legerdemain in defining the boundaries of the new county. The north line began in the center of the Santiam river at the mouth of the Santiam river, and ran north to the North Fork—up to North Fork to the Cascade Mountains and thence down the Valley the Rocky Mountains. The west line began at the same point, thence up the Willamette river to the mouth of the North Fork, thence up that stream to its head, and from thence due south to the northern line. The South boundary was the northern line, and to the east it was the Rocky Mountains.

**John Packwood Was First**  
It was the emigration of 1845 that made the first settlement in this county until the spring of 1846. In that time there was only one settler on the south side of the Willamette river now known as Linn county. John Packwood crossed the plains in 1845, and he and his family built a cabin on Crabtree Creek. The Forks of the Santiam, in the spring of 1845. One year after that, in the spring of 1846, a party of about thirty squatters rights to the land adjacent to James Crabtree, and then came to the mouth of the Santiam country, near Olympia. In the spring of 1846 such emigrants as had arrived in the country from the Valley the year before, and had decided to locate in this part of the country, hitched up their teams, loaded in their families and their household goods, and the Valley, going by way of Salem and Pariah's Gap. Some of them brought with them their families, and some who had not secured it first, the older settlers arrive at the Valley. The first to arrive at the Santiam was Milton Hale, who with his family, had crossed the plains a year before from Burlington, Iowa, in the company of a man named Huleman was captain. Mr. Hale, like the others I have mentioned, had visited in the country during the previous winter. He had arrived at the conclusion that it would be necessary to ford the Santiam until very early in the morning, and then to put in a ferry. The place he selected was a point on the river about one and one-half miles above the present town of Jefferson. The only tools he had with which to construct his boat were a tin saw, an axe, an auger, and a large pole. There was no lumber to be had nearer than Oregon City; but with true Western ingenuity, he made up for the want of proper tools, by the primed together about ten feet apart, and placed them, and then covered the whole

**Second Family Arrives**  
These boundaries remained as indicated for four years, until Lane county was organized Dec. 28, 1851. This was the county territory south of the present line between the two counties, and in 1854, when the county was organized, we lost a part of our territory to the north, the north line was the Rocky Mountains. You will readily recognize the fact that it would be a stupor if you could understand the line between the north and south boundaries of the county as they existed in 1847, as I shall only endeavor to show the route as far south as James Spores' farm across the McKenzie river, where the town of Coburg, in Lane county, now is.

Two days before Milton Hale crossed his ferry boat the Earl family from the county of Washington, a settler, and when the ferry commenced operations they were the first family to cross to this side, and the trace left by their wagon wheels from five to five miles of the old emigrant trail.

**Territorial Road Authorized**  
From the crossing of the Calapoopia the old trail led directly south to Union Point, and on through the hills to the present site of the Diamond Hill schoolhouse. From there the road was continued in a southerly direction until it reached the McKenzie river at Spores' ferry, where the town of Coburg is now located.

By consulting some old records at the State Capitol I found that on Dec. 28, 1847, the Provisional Legislature passed an act "authorizing a Territorial Road to be laid out along the Calapoopia River, to cross the Mollalla river at the Wright Ferry—then by the most direct route to the Wright Ferry, and then by the most direct and practical route to A. Kirk's Ferry on the Calapoopia River." The road was Jesse Looney, Morgan Kees and A. Kirk, and they were to meet and agree on the route by the 1st day of 1848. This is evidently where the road from

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**First Rock Hill Man Arrives**  
Wm. Gallagher came next and located at Rock Hill Gap, back of Peterson's Butte, the claim being owned by John Peterson, who had a small tract of little later James Courtney, and James Hutchins. Josiah Osborne and William Kees were the next to locate in the country over in the vicinity of Knox Butte and up the Santiam; they considered that these localities were good.

**Deserted Burlington Was on Route**  
I am absolutely sure that the roads I have described are the identical routes taken by the emigrants passing through this country. But there still remains one question: Did the road up the river about which I have some doubts, refer to that part of the road leading south from John McCoys' farm to Spores' Ferry. I have investigated this matter to such an extent as to be able to give my own opinion. However, I can reasonably say that it was located close to the river, passing through the village of Burlington, through Peoria, and on to Harlanburg. In fact it is almost a foregone conclusion that the road that local people call the river road in that locality, passing through the town I have mentioned, and that of the town of Coburg, is practically the old emigrant trail.

that year, and, at a meeting of the petitioners to adopt these two roads exact number of names of the Society to erect in as a part of the county system, and which this county to mark the old emigrant trail, but if it is possible to establish at least one. The petition in relation to the trail, but if it is possible to establish at least one, each at the following places: At the site of the deserted praying for a county road leading from Syracuse to John McCoys' farm, by way of Alw where the emigrant trail entered what is now known as Linn county. At Spores' Ferry, by way of Alw where the emigrant trail entered what is now known as Linn county. At the site of the deserted praying for a county road leading from Syracuse to John McCoys' farm, by way of Alw where the emigrant trail entered what is now known as Linn county. At Spores' Ferry, by way of Alw where the emigrant trail entered what is now known as Linn county. At the site of the deserted praying for a county road leading from Syracuse to John McCoys' farm, by way of Alw where the emigrant trail entered what is now known as Linn county. At Spores' Ferry, by way of Alw where the emigrant trail entered what is now known as Linn county.

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**Albany Begins to Grow**  
This road had been ordered opened by the territorial legislature just before this record entry was made. I have learned from old settlers that in 1847, the first settlement was made locally by the settlers. It could not

...the Valley began, in the year... Oregon was still a Territory, and... divided into that of the Northwest... Oregon, Washington, Idaho and a part of Montana. Linn county of today... and all that part of Champoigne county that was situated north of the Willamette river, the Marion county. On Dec. 28, 1847, the county of Linn was organized, and the Oregon Territory was of such magnitude that the German Empire... larger than the German Empire... the members of the legislature were not in the least legerdemain in defining the boundaries of the new county. The north line began in the center of the Santiam river at the mouth of the Santiam river, and ran north to the North Fork—up to North Fork to the Cascade Mountains and thence down the Valley the Rocky Mountains. The west line began at the same point, thence up the Willamette river to the mouth of the North Fork, thence up that stream to its head, and from thence due south to the northern line. The South boundary was the northern line, and to the east it was the Rocky Mountains.

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