

# Annual Report of Old Oregon Trail Association Given Today

Walter E. Meacham, President of Association, Outlines the Past, Present and Future.

(Continued from page 1)

accompanied by a delegation of Baker men, spoke in Nampa, Idaho, at a joint meeting of the towns of Caldwell, Bole, Kuna and Parma, regarding the work of the Old Oregon Trail Association, and was assured that the towns represented would co-operate morally and financially with our association.

On April 24th, your President spoke before a joint meeting of the Commercial Club and Rotary Club at Buhl, Idaho, at a noon luncheon and in the afternoon addressed a joint meeting at Twin Falls, where delegates from Hagerman, Buhl, Mullanburg, Twin Falls and Burley met to hear the plans of the Association. The following day we spoke to the Commercial Club at Burley, all of these meetings strongly endorsed the movement and promised co-operation.

November 21 to 25 we spoke before the schools and Commercial bodies of Portafello, Blackfoot, Ashton, St. Anthony and Idaho Falls, making eleven speeches in all. The purpose of the trip to the towns north of Portafello which are not on the "Trail" was to acquaint them with the work of our Association in bringing the West-bound tourist out of the West Entrance of the Yellowstone, south to the Old Oregon Trail at Portafello. We found a great deal of interest in our work and received promises of support.

**Participation in Rose Carnival**  
The Portland Section of the Old Oregon Trail was dedicated during the Rose Carnival in that city in June, 1923.

The Queen of Rosaria and her attendants, attired in old-time costumes were escorted into the realm of Rosaria in a covered wagon drawn by oxen. The Advertising Club of Portland had charge of the program and thousands of people viewed the parade, which was staged on the East Side. Your President represented our Association there and took part in the program.

**Story Broadcasted**  
We have broadcasted the story of the Old Oregon Trail on the station in Baker and last June we broadcasted the story of the Trail and the coming pagant through the station in the Oregonian tower in Portland. From reports received later, the talks carried plainly and clearly to distant points.

**Territory Covered**  
During the past two years, your President has visited most of the towns between Eugene, on the south, and Seattle, on the west, and as far north as Astoria, Idaho, telling the story of the Old Oregon Trail to Commercial and Civic bodies and talking to the school children and speaking in churches. We have found a keen interest in all towns and among all people in the stirring story of the Trail, because of the history and sentiment attached to it.

We have taken a special pleasure in talking to the school children. The romance and adventure of the Trail appeals to their hearts and it instills in their minds a love and veneration for history that is local and purely American. When history takes on real color, or if no longer seems dry and uninteresting and the students take a personal interest in knowing that in their very locality history was made for the United States.

**Historic Spots**  
There is hardly a mile long the course of the Old Oregon Trail from the turbid Missouri to the

## FOR SALE

7 room house, large lot 11x12x20 feet. Electric lights. Good well, lawn, trees, shrubbery and fruit. Other out buildings. Located in Old Town. Price \$1700.00 or with all furniture, \$2800.00.

7 room house and four large lots 50x110 feet each. House has bath, toilet, city lights and water, lawn, large shade trees. All fenced. Four blocks from high school. This is a bargain at \$1500.00. Terms.

6 room house large lot wood shed, old storage, cement sidewalk, and paved street all paid. Situated on 4th street, 4 blocks south of the high school. Price \$2500.00 and \$500.00 cash will handle it, easy terms on balance.

5 room modern house, two lots, situated on East Adams ave. Garage, all fenced. Price with both lots \$2000.00 or with one lot \$2500.00. Terms.

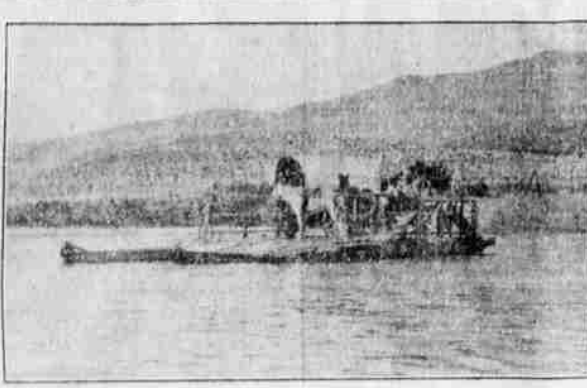
We are still doing insurance business in the same old place, with some of the best old line companies, and we guarantee you satisfaction.

**Phy, Black & Stoop**  
In La Grande National Bank Bldg.  
La Grande, Oregon.  
PHONE MAIN 86

## Of Historical Interest



The above photographs are of historical value. The one on the left shows Ezra Meeker, a famous trail maker and trail booster who has crossed the Old Oregon Trail from end to end many times. The one on the right shows the Old Ferry, the historic crossing on the Snake river, now in disuse with the completion of the new Old Oregon Trail highway.



golden lands of the Pacific that has not some historic significance. Perhaps a massacre occurred here, a fight with the Indians there, here the cholera claimed its victims, there some early missionaries or explorers camped, here a birth, there a death.

These local spots should be located and marked for posterity and the world told of the romance and adventure, the tragedy of the greatest trail of all time.

**The Road Which Saved an Empire**  
When England and the United States were disputing the title to the "Oregon Country," the matter was settled by the American people themselves. Leaving Independence, Missouri, and Council Bluffs, (Iowa), they journeyed along the Platte, crossed the Rockies at the famous South Pass, traversed the Valley by the Snake, crossed the Blue Mountains and negotiated the Gorge of the Columbia and arrived in the Willamette Valley and scattered in all directions.

Two hundred wagons came, bearing old fashioned American citizens, men, women and children. They came with their possessions, their wagons, their horses, their tools, their families, their entire households.

It was called the "Great Migration" and it settled for all time the fate of the "Oregon Country."

Two hundred wagons rolling out to Oregon, breaking through the poplar holes, lurching wide and free, crawling through the mountain lines.

Creaking, grumbling, rumbling on Two hundred wagons, rolling toward the sea.

Two hundred wagons, rolling out to Oregon, curved around the camp-fire flames.

At last when day is done, Red twilight beneath the stars, Yoke again and timber on, Two hundred wagons, following the sun.

The map of the United States is lined and interlined with automobile roads. Practically all of them are "paper" roads placed on the map by some individual or locality for selfish, mercenary motives. Hardly any of them have any history attached to them.

Of all the roads on the map the "Old Oregon Trail" stands out prominently above them all, for it was the "Home Trail" of the whites, the "Big Medicine" road of the Indians. Along its course came the explorer, the trapper, the trader, the missionary (and finally the Huns, Goths and English) Builders, our Country's "respective" of the Old Oregon Trail has been tardy. National parks have been established on the sites of our battlefields and other historic spots have been recognized.

The Old Oregon Trail was more than a battlefield, and offered a greater challenge to courage. The pomp and ostentation of war was never known along the dusty trail, but some course of the Old Trail, but men and women faced the great unknown without faltering and laid down by the way and died.

And were played at cost in letters, unmarked graves and the others "carried on" that the "Oregon Country" might be populated and moved to America. Isn't it time for us to recognize that service and pay our respects to those who made history for us and saved us an empire?

Isn't it time to consecrate our efforts on a trail with real history behind and a human sentiment attached to it and forget the "paper" highways which have sprung up like mushrooms and are exploited by selfish reasons alone?

**Our Opportunity**  
On less authority than the officials of the Federal Bureau of Public Roads and the Highway Commission of the State of Oregon, we have it that the Old Oregon Trail is the BEST HIGHWAY IN THE WEST from the Mexican border to the Canadian line.

It is recorded in the best, especially through the States of Idaho and Oregon, the varied scenery is unsurpassed; it passes through a cultivated and populated country with modern camp grounds on every hand.

The highways to the north and south of us are not completed and will not be for years to come. The road south to Portafello from the West Entrance of the Yellowstone is in good condition and will be improved and is the logical route to take by the West.

**Toll Gate Planned**  
The committee received permission from the Oregon State Highway Commission to erect and operate toll gates on each side of the present grounds and to collect toll from those entering the grounds, in order to help pay the expenses of the pagant.

In order that the expenses of the pagant might be assured, a guarantee subscription list was circulated by Haines, North Powder, Union, Hot Lake, La Grande and Baker, one-fourth of which was payable on demand to defray immediate expenses and the balance due it needed.

**President Invited**  
It developed later that President Warren G. Harding, and party were to make a trip to the West during the summer and a cordial invitation was extended to him to attend the pagant.

Through the efforts of our committee, backed by the Oregon delegation in Congress and participation in the pagant, President H. W. Stanford, the President accepted our invitation and the date of his visit set for July 2nd.

**Plans Changed**  
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Later on George B. Christian, private secretary to the President, conferred our original program and disapproved Brown's changes. After we returned home we received a wire from Brown, stating that we would not be allowed to make a charge to see the President. We replied that we were not charging to see the President, had planned the pagant before we knew of the President's trip and that to force us to change our plans and throw our gates open would entail serious financial loss.

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## Association and Pagant Funds Separate.

A great many people confused the Pagant with the Old Oregon Trail Association and thought that the funds were the same. These two funds are entirely separate and apart and funds donated for one was not used for the other.

**Difficulties Faced**  
An abnormally rainy season confronted the committee. The grounds were wet and muddy and work was delayed. The Trail was not finished and up until the latter part of June, it was necessary to tow cars through the mud.

Fears were expressed by many that there would be accidents on the "Trail" that drunkenness would be rampant and that the whole thing would be a failure.

However, the committee continued to saw wood; the State Highway Commission bent every effort to finish the last stretch of uncompleted road, hauled a large granite boulder from Haines to Emigrant Springs for us and had the road thoroughly patrolled by motorcycle officers.

**The Pagant**  
At last the eventful Third of July arrived, the sun broke through the clouds with genial warmth, and smiled down upon the Pagant Grounds. It was a setting fit for the brush of an artist. Against the background of evergreens about the top of the Indian Village; in the foreground were the wagon trains in the decorated circle of the old days; on the meadow was the frontier town with its saloons, gambling joints and dancehalls; across the "Trail" the horses were tethered; on the banks of Meacham Creek were the camps of those who came early to settle the country; in the background were parked thousands of autos.

Over thirty thousand people gathered to view the Pagant and pay homage to our President, his charming wife and his party. It was an activity and respectful crowd which came, there was no drunkenness and there was no wild hilarity. The occasion did not inspire hilarity, but it did inspire a reverence for the old pioneers and for the President who came out of his way to spend an entire day at a small mountain town because of his deep regard concerning the history made eighty years before by a hardy band of American citizens and because he and his good wife loved the West and its colorful setting.

The President and Mrs. Harding rode to the reviewing stand in an old Concord Coach, driven by Joe Woods, a veteran driver of the old days, escorted by a troop of cavalry attired in the uniforms of the fifties and sixties.

And then there passed before them over the original Old Oregon Trail itself a pagant depicting the characters of those who made history for the United States and bringing to life again the groups and the vehicles of the colorful old West.

Passing in review before them came the trapper, the explorer, the missionary, the Indians, in all the pomp and splendor of the old days, the pack-team, the ox-teams and the covered wagons, the jerk-line freight teams, the Concord Coaches, the cavalry, the hucksters, the phantoms and the cowboys.

Then came a Pioneer Dinner, served under the big headquarters tent, prepared by the women of Union County. That was followed by the exercises of the day when the President addressed a crowd of several thousand. His speech was free from politics and dealt with the historic events of the forties and fifties when life was young in the West and when history was made by the intrepid souls who subdued a wilderness and made it American territory.

Then came a pow-wow with the Indians when the President conversed with the chiefs of the Cayuses, Emathias and Walla Walla and he and Mrs. Harding were presented with costly presents by the chiefs.

Then followed an attack on the wagon train by the Indians with signal fire of the Indians by the cavalry which came to the rescue of the beleaguered train.

**Dedication of the Trail**  
An immigrant train of three miles west of Meacham, President

Harding dedicated the old Trail where a monument of granite was erected with a bronze tablet inscribed therein dedicated to the intrepid pioneers who came with the first wagon-train in 1843 and saved the Oregon Country to the United States. At this dedication were a number of pioneer women whose parents were members of that train.

Needless to say it was a solemn and inspiring occasion. There were presented to the President a gold Life Membership Card in the Old Oregon Trail Association. The President and his party departed late in the afternoon, declaring that this had been the best and most restful day in their entire trip.

**Gratitude and Interest Expressed**  
Before departing President Harding thanked us for inviting him to attend the Pagant, stating that he had enjoyed every minute of the stay. He said further that the objects and aims of the Old Oregon Trail Association were good and should be carried out. He said that he would be glad to assist in any way he could in carrying on the objects of our Association.

**The Passing of a Friend**  
Within a month after leaving us in apparent good health our President passed over the Great Divide and joined the band of pioneers who had blazed the way for him. The West and the Old Oregon Trail lost a sincere friend when Harding passed, but he helped us to make history for the "Trail" and to put its name on the lips of millions of people who knew naught of its history.

We will remember Warren G. Harding for his kindly disposition, because he was intensely business because he was courteous and considerate, because he loved and venerated the men of the old West who achieved the impossible.

We will never forget one thing which happened at the celebration. We had heard persistent rumors, even among the President's party, that his train would leave early in the afternoon. We told him of this rumor, told him that this would be a great disappointment to thousands of people and to the committee in charge. The President put his hand on our shoulder and said: "My boy, I wouldn't spoil your show for anything in the world. I am enjoying every minute of it and will stay until it is over."

**Publicity Value of the Pagant**  
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The names "Old Oregon Trail" was on every tongue and its location and its history eagerly delved into by thousands who never knew of it before.

We would indeed be negligent if we failed to "follow-up" the publicity secured and the advantages gained.

**Plans Owned by Association**  
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Our Association has in its possession a five reel film of Oregon views combined with those taken on July 2nd and 3rd depicting the

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