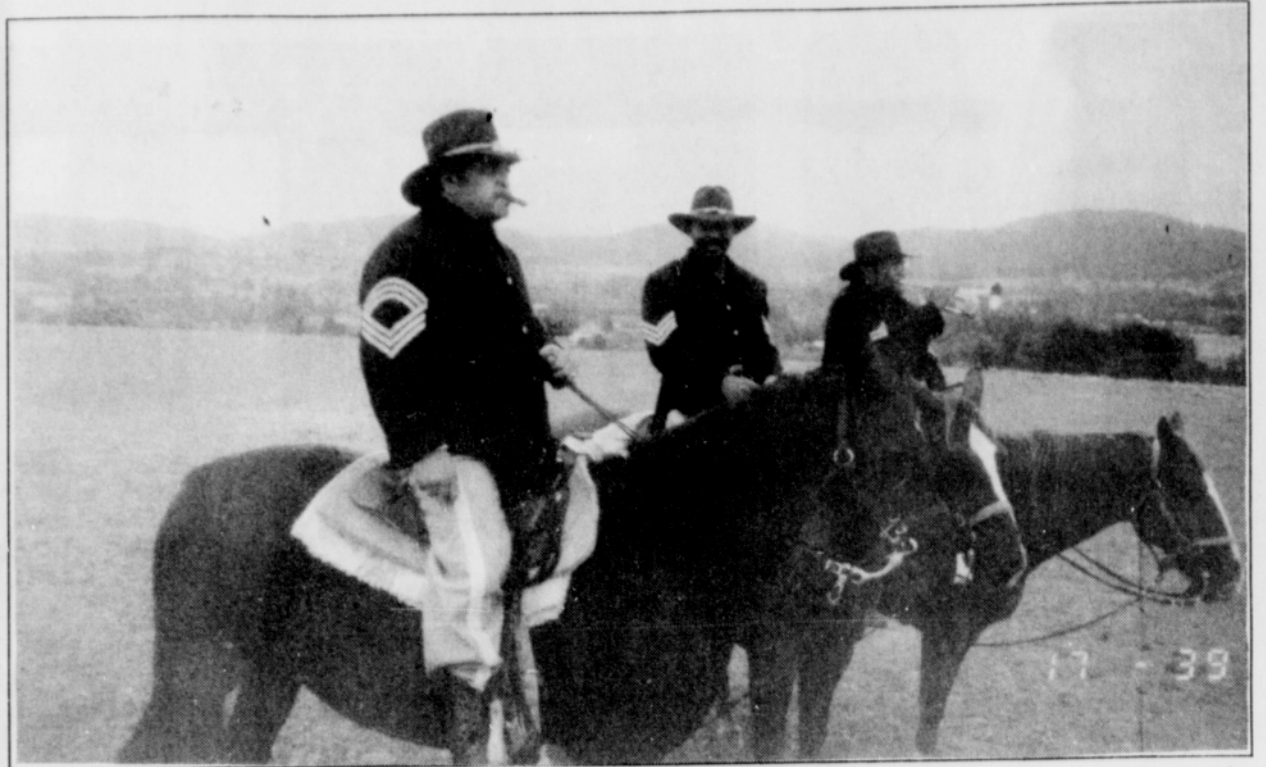


End Of The Oregon Trail With The Buffalo Soldiers



Official Wagon Train Nears Oregon City During Its Last Week Of Travel

"This is the best and most beautiful place we have seen on the whole road, or in fact in our lives."—John T. Kerns, 1852

The Wagon Train, after completing its historic 73-day trek across the West, reached the end of the Oregon Trail on Saturday, September 4th, when it rolled into Clackamette Park in Oregon City. The Official Oregon Trail Sesquicentennial Wagon Train began its 1,000-mile journey in Border, Wyo-

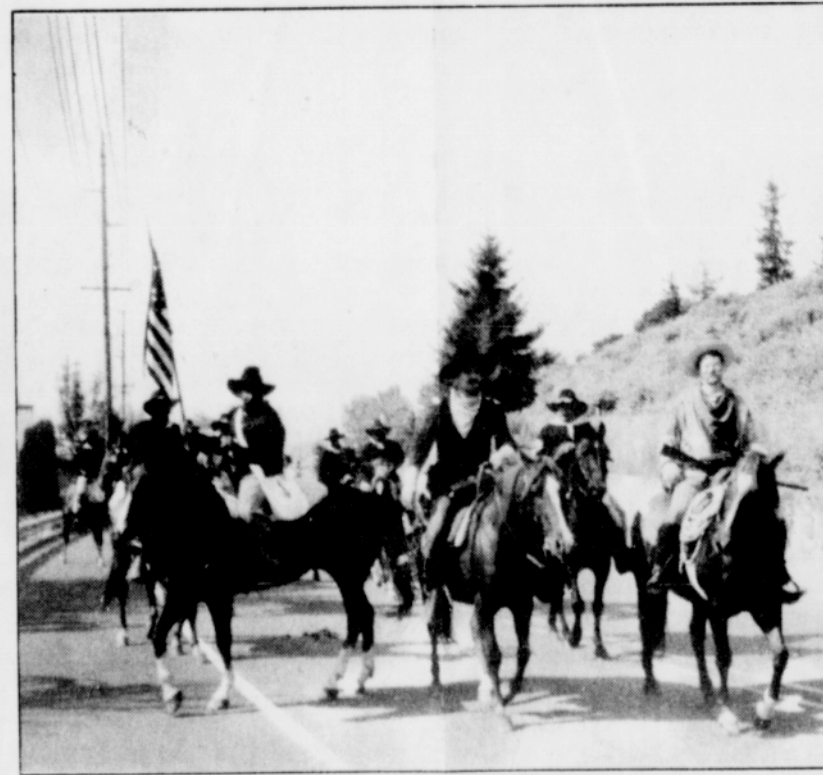
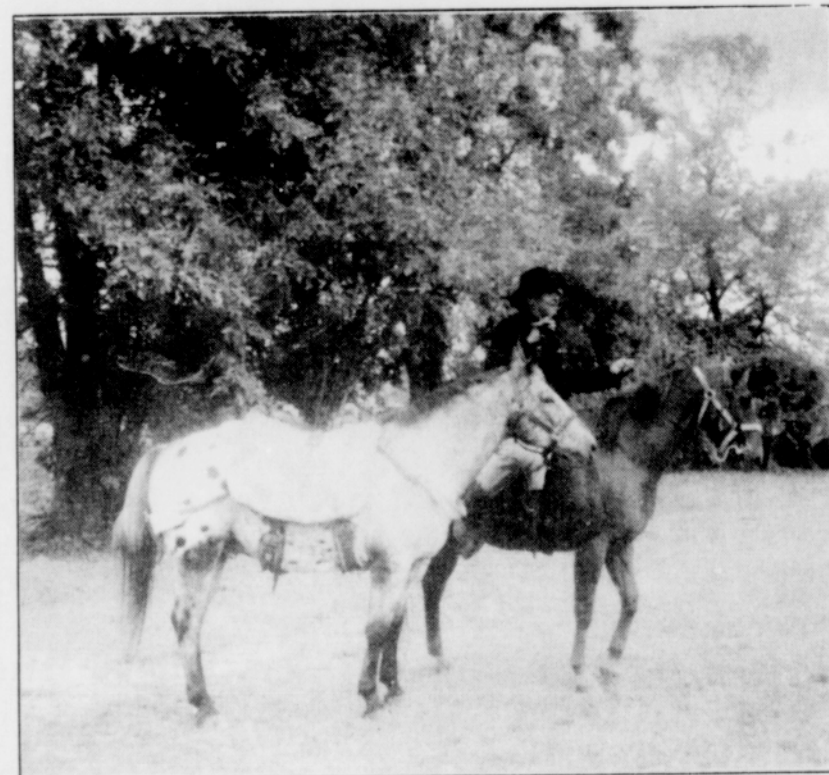
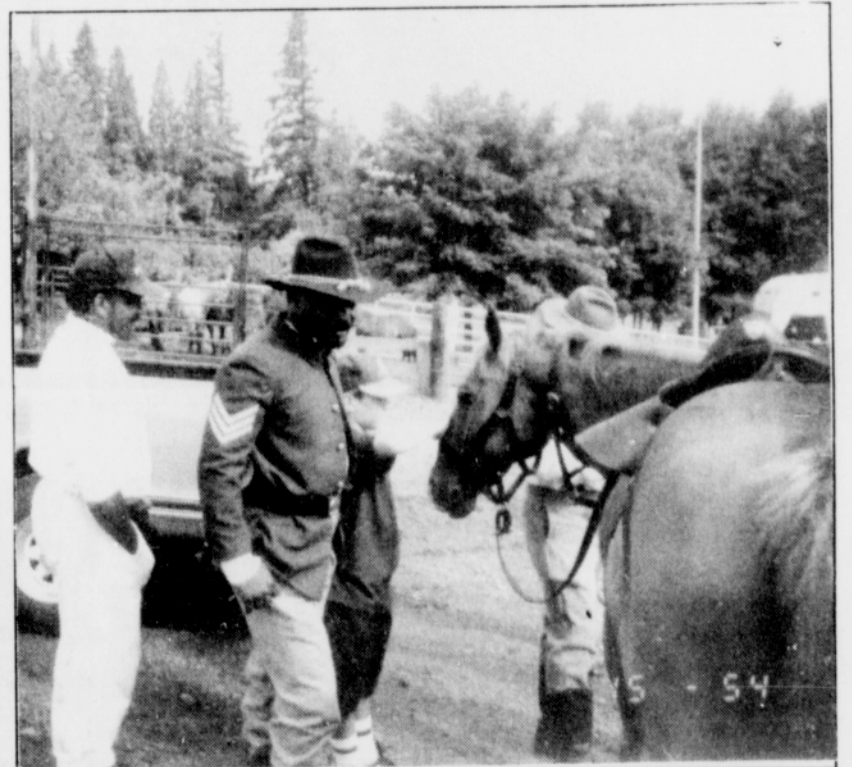
ming on June 26. The history of the Oregon Trail is the history of the American West. The Wagon Train commemorates the 300,000 pioneers who risked their lives to come West and settle the great Northwest. The historical recreation is an important story. It resembled an enchanted

valley as we wound around the hill before descending into it."—Lucia Lorain Williams, 1851. After 73 days--and 150 years--the wagons rolled into Oregon City. The Clackamas County Oregon Trail Celebration's plans for Trail's End Finale, the three-day Labor Day Weekend festival wel-

comed the Official Oregon Trail Sesquicentennial Wagon Train, included a public Walk In With The Wagons on Saturday, September 4th that kicked-off the event. Trail's End Finale was the last major Oregon Trail Celebration '93 event that took place in Oregon and served as the "grand finale" of all the

sesquicentennial celebration activities. Trail's End Finale was the largest event ever held in Clackamas County. Each day, Trail's End Finale offered a variety of activities including a children's living pioneer experience area (hands-on activities for kids to teach them about

daily pioneer life), a Native American encampment, a Pioneer Village where event-goers filed a land claim, the circle of Official Oregon Trail Sesquicentennial Wagon Train wagons, a genealogical tent, quilting demonstrations, a historical stage and a music stage.



Buffalo Soldiers Escorted Official Wagon Train Into Oregon City

Oregon Trail License Plate Available Soon

"They served as beacons to show the route at which we advanced our journey."—John C. Fremont, 1843
Between 15 and 20 African Americans playing the role of Buffalo Soldiers escorted the Official Oregon Trail Sesquicentennial Wagon Train when it rolled into Oregon City on Labor Day Weekend for the finale celebration. The riders were sponsored through Hyalite, Inc., a non-profit group that honors diversity through cultural events. Four of the riders were actors from the movie "Glory." Once the wagon train arrived at Trail's End Finale, they performed a short

play on the history of the Buffalo Soldiers. Historian Norman Monroe delivered a lecture on the topic. Although it is not widely known, the Buffalo Soldiers were instrumental in settling the West. In the late 1800s, the Ninth and Tenth Calvary, and the 25th and 26th Infantry provided security for the wagon trains bound Westward from Independence, Missouri, where the Oregon Trail originated. The name Buffalo Soldiers itself comes from the Native Americans

who battled the soldiers and honored them for their bravery, likening them to the sacred buffalo. Their curly hair and dark skin reinforced this impression, as did the fact that the men often wore buffalo skins to beat the cold. In addition to the roles they played on the settler trails, the Buffalo Soldiers also helped to restore order to the once wild ways of the Old West. "The Black soldiers were in the background doing what the Texas Rangers were supposed to do," said Mark Little of Hyalite Inc. Their ac-

ivities entailed fighting bandits, outlaws and sometimes even corrupt rangers, as well as racist townsmen who saw the Black troopers as a threat. The 150th Anniversary of the Oregon Trail celebrations have included and recognized those who have received little recognition in the past for their crucial roles in assisting the pioneers Westward. The inclusion of the Buffalo Soldiers highlights the important role African Americans played during the Westward emigration on the Oregon Trail.

In the final days of the legislative session, the Oregon legislature approved a bill creating an Oregon Trail commemorative license plate. Gov. Barbara Roberts is expected to sign the bill into law. "During the 150th anniversary of the Oregon Trail, we have a chance to increase interest around the nation," said Rep. Michael Payne, D-Baker City, the original sponsor of the Oregon Trail license plate bill. Senate Bill 98 allows the Department of Motor Vehicles to issue a license plate commemorating the Oregon Trail. The new license plates will cost drivers an extra \$5 per set. Funds generated by drivers requesting the plates will go to the Oregon Trail Coordinating Council for promotion, marketing, and further development of interpretive facilities along the Oregon Trail. The plates will be issued through the end of 1995. The design of the plates will be made by the DMV in consultation with the Oregon Trail Coordinating Council. "This is a marvelous way to commemorate the pioneers who defined the borders of the nation," said Jill Thorne, executive director of the OTCC. "I am pleased and moved that the legislature supports the concept of an Oregon Trail commemorative plate."