



Offbeat Oregon History: "Oregon's Revenant"

By FinnJD John
For The Sentinel

Marie Dorion's contribution to whatever success the Astorian party enjoyed on its disastrous trip to Oregon was considerable, most likely greater than past historians have conceded. By her presence with her two small boys, she telegraphed the peaceful intentions of the party to any nervous Native Americans they might meet along the way — who might, understandably, interpret a band of 60 heavily armed, fiercely bearded mountain-man types as a war party and react accordingly.

But on that expedition, most of what she did was amaze everyone with her stoicism and quiet competence as she took care of the children, foraged for food, and even gave birth to a third child en route.

This third child died eight days after he was born; it is very difficult to keep a newborn baby alive under conditions of ongoing starvation. But Marie and her entire family made it alive to Fort Astoria, which is more than can be said for 25 percent of the men in the party.

Still, stoic competence and surprising survival are not the sort of feats that inspired historian Greg Shine and Oregonian writer Joseph Rose to call Marie "the Revenant of Oregon," in a nod to the highly acclaimed 2015 movie about a grizzly-mauled mountain man's 200-mile journey to get revenge on the men who left him for dead.

It was Marie's second journey into the Idaho wilderness that clinched that "Revenant" title for her.

In July of 1813 — literally the very next year after she and the 44 other surviving members of the Astorian overland party straggled, starving and exhausted, into Fort Astoria at the end of their epic journey — Marie and her husband, Pierre, were packing their two children up for another journey into the wilderness that had nearly killed them.

This time, the plan was to set up a string of trading posts and start collecting beaver pelts to be turned into fetching headgear for well-dressed European gentlemen.

Under the direction of John Reed, the beaver trappers and traders spent the summer and early fall getting trading posts built and establishing re-

lationships with Shoshone tribe members in the Snake River area. Then winter came along. This time, though, Marie and her kids were ready for it. With Reed and several other members of the party, they were holed up in the expedition's main trading post, well supplied with everything they'd need to get through a Blue Mountain winter.

But then came the evening of Jan. 10, when a friendly Shoshone tribe member came to warn her that the neighboring Bannock tribe was making trouble. These "bad Snakes," as some sources call them, had started burning the Pacific Fur Company's outposts and killing the traders and trappers. The Bannock war party had just laid waste one of the camps, and was on its way to another ... the one at which Pierre Dorion was stationed.

Marie, very alarmed, thanked and fed the visitor, sent him on his way home, and packed her stuff. She and the two boys were going to go out into the snow, racing with the marauding Bannocks to get to Pierre in time to warn him.

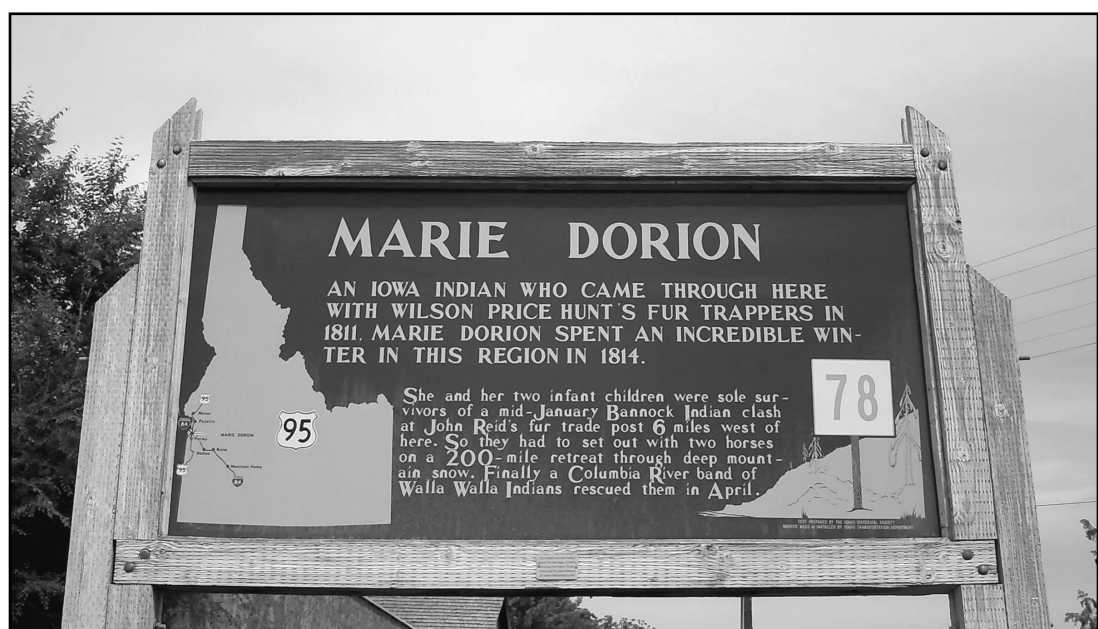
She was three days getting there, trudging through knee-deep snow and leading her horse with the two boys sitting on it. And she got there just a few hours too late.

Trapper Gilles LeClerc met her as she approached the outpost, staggering in the snow, weak from loss of blood. He was the only survivor. Everyone else had been robbed and murdered. Marie was now a widow.

There was nothing to do now but turn around and follow the trail Marie had broken through the snow, back to the main outpost. Luckily, the marauders hadn't quite managed to catch all the horses, and Marie was able to capture two of them; so all four of them were able to ride on the journey back.

Two days later, LeClerc succumbed to his injuries. Marie and the boys pressed on. But at the post, they found not the welcoming fires and nourishing food they'd expected, but charred and blackened walls with a few bones in them. The main trading post had been wiped out and burned down. Marie and the boys were on their own, a good 200 miles away from the nearest source of help.

Marie set out immediately, going northwest, making for the Columbia River area where she



knew the Native Americans to be friendly.

They struggled through the snowdrifts to the Snake River, swam it (presumably 3-year-old Paul and 6-year-old Baptiste rode across the river on the horses, but Marie probably had to swim). They foraged on through what's now eastern Oregon. But then, as they reached the Blue Mountains, one of the horses collapsed, unable to continue.

Marie decided it was time to stop. She built a rude but cozy shelter and installed her family in it. She built a fire to warm the boys, then slaughtered the horses and started smoking the meat.

The three of them lived in that tight shelter in the snowy mountains, surrounded by drifts and battered by blizzards, for 53 days. They lived primarily on smoked horsemeat, of course, augmented by a few frozen berries, the inner bark of trees, and small rodents that Marie caught in snares made from horsehair.

An early Spring thaw hit their camp in March, just as their horsemeat supply was almost exhausted. Marie packed up the children and the remaining horse meat and the three of them left their little shelter.

But two days later a blizzard struck. Trying to forge on, Marie became snow-blind, and was forced to stop, rig up another shelter (even cruder

this time) and convalesce for three days.

Finally, the food exhausted, she ventured out with the boys for a final desperate push. And, fifteen days after they left their little shelter, they reached the plains — and Marie saw campfire smoke.

Unsure if it was friend or foe, she cached the boys behind a rock and approached the village. By the time she reached it, her strength was gone and she was literally on her hands and knees.

Luck was with her. It was a friendly tribe of Walla Wallas.

Perhaps because she lacks a charismatic name like "Sacagawea," Marie Dorion is not much talked about today, and has never appeared on U.S. currency or anything like that. But her feat of surviving over the winter in some of the most hostile wilderness in the continent with two small boys in tow made her famous in her day.

The Astorian project ended the following year as a casualty of the War of 1812. Out on the edge of the known world, with British rivals just across the river from them, John Jacob Astor's traders knew their best bet was to sell Fort Astoria to the British and call it quits. The fort was promptly renamed Fort George.

Dr. Fuhrman: Do I need vitamin K2? Or is K1 enough?

Vitamin K is essential for the process of blood clotting. In fact, vitamin K was named for this important function; the scientists who discovered the vitamin named it using the first letter of the German word 'koagulation.' In addition, we now know that vitamin K also promotes bone health and heart health via interactions with calcium. Vitamin K allows the body to utilize the calcium needed for bone and tooth formation. Many studies have associated low vitamin K status with a higher risk of hip fracture or low bone mineral density.

There are two forms of vitamin K; Vitamin K1 is easy to obtain when following a high-nutrient (Nutritarian) diet, since it is abundant in leafy green vegetables. Kale, collards, spinach and mustard greens

are some of the richest sources of K1. Vitamin K2, on the other hand, is produced by microorganisms and scarce in plant foods; high K2 foods include dark meat chicken, pork and fermented foods like cheese, so K2 is more difficult to get from a Nutritarian diet. The human body can synthesize some K2 from K1, and intestinal bacteria can produce some K2, but these are very small amounts.

Studies report that a causative factor of the low hip fracture incidence in Japan was natto, a fermented soy food, rich in K2. Following this observation, several studies found supplementation with vitamin K2 to be particularly effective at improving bone health. A review of randomized controlled trials found that vitamin K2 reduced bone loss and reduced the risk of fractures; vertebral fracture by 60 percent, hip fracture by 77 percent and all non-vertebral

fractures by 81 percent. In women who already had osteoporosis, Vitamin K2 supplementation was also shown to reduce the risk of fracture, reduce bone loss, and increase bone mineral density.

A vitamin K-dependent protein binds up calcium to protect the soft tissues—including the arteries—from calcification. Vitamin K2 in particular helps to prevent the artery wall from stiffening and maintain elasticity. Coronary artery calcification is a predictor of cardiovascular events, as is arterial stiffness. Higher vitamin K2 intake has been linked with a lower likelihood of coronary calcification; however, the same association was not found for K1. In 2004, the Rotterdam Study revealed that increased dietary intake specifically of vitamin K2 significantly reduced the risk of coronary heart disease by 50 percent as compared to low dietary vitamin K2 intake. In this study, Vitamin K1 had no effect. Simi-

lar results were found in another study conducted in 2009. Furthermore, a systematic review of several studies in 2010 also found no association between vitamin K1 intake and coronary heart disease, but higher K2 intake was associated with lower risk. Therefore taking in vitamin K2 in addition to K1 is likely beneficial to help protect against vascular calcification.

There is some evidence that vitamin K is involved in insulin metabolism, and higher intake of vitamins K1 and K2 are associated with lower risk of type 2 diabetes.

Remember, leafy green vegetables provide generous amounts of vitamin K1, and getting K2 from a supplement is likely beneficial if your diet is low in K2.

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(541) 942-3325

Administration

- James Rand, Regional Publisher
- Gary Manly, General Manager Ext. 207
gmanly@cgsentinel.com
- Aaron Ames, Marketing Specialist Ext. 216
aames@cgsentinel.com
- Tammy Sayre, Marketing Specialist Ext. 213
tsayre@cgsentinel.com

Editorial

- Caitlyn May, Editor Ext. 212
cmay@cgsentinel.com
- Zach Silva Sport Editor Ext. 204
zsilva@cgsentinel.com

Customer Service

- Carla Williams, Office Manager Ext. 200
- Legals, Classifieds Ext. 200
cwilliams@cgsentinel.com

Production

- Ron Annis, Production Supervisor Ext. 215
graphics@cgsentinel.com

(USP 133880)

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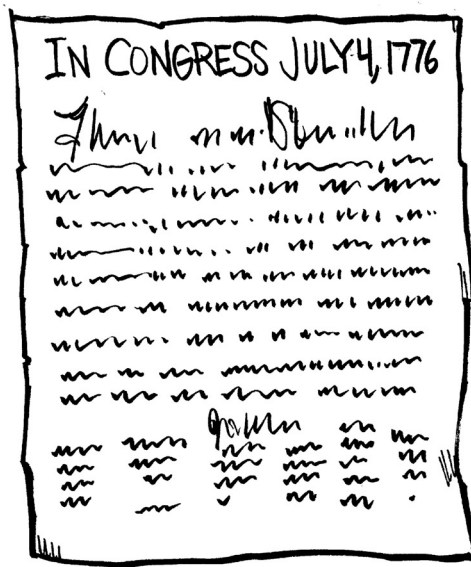
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