

# *Oregon or BUST*

--- 1853

by

*Jim Brewer*

Edited by

Lindie Rose Brewer & Irene Middleman Thomas

Or bust May 1

## Introduction

The Brewer family of Murfreesboro, Arkansas took a covered wagon trip to California and to the Willamette Valley in the Oregon Territory in 1853. They travelled on the Cherokee Trail, the Santa Fe Trail, the California Trail, the Oregon Trail and the Barlow Trail. This narrative is an attempt to assemble some of the available information and present it in a more or less chronological order.

For about the last ten years I have been reading diaries, remembrances, old newspapers, cranking through reels of microfilm, searching census records, studying maps and exploring parts of the trail that can still be seen.

Much information has been passed down to us by our relatives who recorded in their bibles; the births, deaths, marriages, children, activities, and other events in their lives. In addition there were researchers who contacted county clerks to get birth, death and marriage certificates; visited libraries, colleges, museums; and who browsed the web to get online information that could fill in the gaps.

Some of those who had a strong curiosity and interest in recording, researching and informing us about the past were: Aileen McCrimmon Brewer, Ronda Howard, Marjorie Dilts Brewer, Teresa Harris Mattison, Deanna Bass McGill, Margaret Stevens Brewer, Rachel Brewer Spoor, Geneva Zoe Bass Dimmick, Clara Crowe Gose, Margaret Isabelle Scott Brewer Palmiter Sparks, Beverly Brewer Brewer, Gary Brumbaugh, Ellen Roundtree Harmon, Elinor Roundtree Burke, Martha Brewer Crowe, Dorothy Brewer Sechler Mintz, Evangeline St. Clair Brewer Mann.

Without these family historians and family researchers this narrative could not have been told. Thank you!

*James Henry (Jim) Brewer*

6 February 2011



## Oregon or Bust ---1853

*Oliver (Sr) Brewer, had started life in the Hillsboro district of Chatham County, North Carolina in the last half of the 1700's. By about 1792 Oliver had married a girl whose last name is unknown and even her first name, Sarah, is uncertain. Oliver and Sarah carried on the Brewer family name with four children.* <sup>1</sup>

*Sarah died, though, and by 1804 Oliver had married again. Mary "Polly" Henderson was the bride and they were married on 10 Jan 1804 in Knox County, Tennessee. Polly raised Oliver's four children and in the 23 years of her marriage, she and Oliver had eight more before she died in 1827.* <sup>2,5</sup>

*Ancestors of the Brewer's had landed and settled on the Atlantic Coast of America as early as the 1600's. In general, the offspring of these first settlers emigrated west to establish their own frontier homes. Leaving the old homestead and traveling another 50 miles west toward the ever moving frontier, came to be a typical pattern for early Americans.* <sup>3</sup>

*Following this pattern, Oliver and family had made the moves from North Carolina to Tennessee to Missouri and then to Arkansas. The family arrived in Arkansas in 1818 or 1819 and first located in Hempstead County. In 1826 they moved to Clark (now Pike) County, Arkansas and settled on the Three Forks of the Little Missouri River, on what was known as 'The Island' and remained there until Oliver's death, 13 Oct 1834. Oliver had purchased this land from the government, approximately 78 acres, for \$1.25 per*

acre under the terms of The Land Act of 1820 <sup>1,2,4,5</sup>

Oliver's eldest son, John Brewer, married Elvira Alexander. Elvira's mother, a widow, Mrs. Mary (Price) Morrison Alexander, moved her family [four sons and six daughters] from North Carolina to Bellevue, Missouri in 1808. Here they joined a Presbyterian colony and it was here that the youngest member of the Alexander family, 15-year-old Elvira, met John Brewer. On 7 Sep 1815 the couple was married and a short time later they moved to Arkansas. They settled on 82 acres of land in Pike County about 2 miles west of Murfreesboro and a half mile west of Oliver's place. They had ten children. <sup>6</sup>

By 1850, John/Elvira Brewer's second child and first son was 32 year-old, William Alexander Brewer. William's grandfather, Oliver (Sr), had died back in 1834 and John had passed away in 1845. In 1850, Elvira, now widowed, was the elder in the family. Some of her kids had married and settled on places of their own, all within a few miles of Murfreesboro:

William Alexander Brewer married Margaret Isabelle Scott on 25 Feb 1841,

Sarah Ann (Sally) Brewer married John D. Bacon in 1844,

Lucinda Brewer married Patrick Laird in about 1849.

Elvira Caroline Brewer, the youngest, at 11-years-old, was still at home with her brothers; John Manning (Jack), 23 yrs; Oliver P, 17, and Reece A, age 15. They were all "scratching out a living" on the old homestead.

\*Some in the family say that Olliver and Reece were never given middle names but they just assumed their own middle initials. --- others think the P. stands for Price and the A. stands for Alexander.

## Children & Grandchildren of John & Elvira Alexander Brewer

1793-1845

1799-1857

### Three of their children died before maturity:

Mary           died at birth  
 Henry           died at 13 years  
 James W       died at 4 years


### Elvira and the following went to or were born in Oregon, Washington or California :

<p><b>William Alexander Brewer</b>  <b>1818-1859</b>                  /Margaret I. Scott  <b>1820-1913</b>                  Martha Ann                  John Fletcher                  Sarah Elvira                  Mary Lucinda                  Amanda Carolina                  James Henry                  George Warren                  William Thomas                  Evangeline St Claire                  Orlando Byron</p>	<p><b>John Manning Brewer</b>  <b>1827-1906</b>                  /Louisa Jane Johnston  <b>1845-1874</b>                  Emma Rosa                  Henry Sheridan                  Ellen Jane Brewer                  Preston Colfax                  Lewis Allen</p>	<p><b>Oliver P. Brewer</b>  <b>1833-1905</b>                  /Margaret Stevens  <b>1834-1916</b>                  Sarah Elvira                  Charity C.                  Martin Luther                  Milton Wright                  Theodore L                  Alonzo Oliver                  Loren Hines</p>
<p style="text-align: right;"><b>Reece A Brewer</b>  <b>1835-1909</b>                  /Eliza Ann Johnson  <b>1843-1870</b>                  James                  John Scott                  Martha J                  Ella Mary                  Emma                  /Flora E French  <b>1857-1878</b>                  Ellie F                  Margaret E                  Fred Reece                  /Eliza (Lizzie) James  <b>1842-1906</b></p>		

<p><b>Sarah Ann (Sally) Brewer</b>  <b>1825-1912</b>                  /John D Bacon  <b>1818-1905</b>                  John Henry Bacon                  Richard Pratt Bacon                  Mary Emily Bacon                  William J Bacon                  Jesse James Bacon                  Franklin L Bacon</p>	<p><b>Lucinda Brewer</b>  <b>1830-1908</b>                  /Patrick Laird  <b>1825-1876</b>                  Samuel T Laird                  John W Laird                  Henry R Laird                  Wm Oliver Laird                  Josie Laird                  Addie Bell Laird                  Pomroy N Laird                  Dora Laird</p>	<p><b>Elvira Caroline Brewer</b>  <b>1839-1861</b>                  /Joseph B Riley  <b>1830-</b>                  John Wesley Riley                  Henry Clayton Riley                  Benjamin F Riley                  / <b>Emily F. Olney</b></p>
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**Homesteads in Pike County, near Murfreesboro, Arkansas, 1850**


**Oliver (Sr) Brewer & Mary "Polly" Henderson**


E1/2 SE, Section 12, R 26 W, 5<sup>th</sup> Meridian, Arkansas, Pike County 77.81 acres 

**John Brewer & Elvira Alexander**


SW frct qtr, Section 12, T 8 S, R 26 W, 5<sup>th</sup> Meridian, AR, Pike County 83.26 acres 

**William Alexander Brewer & Margaret Isabelle Scott**


SW qtr, NW qtr, Section 4, T 8 S, R 26 W, 5<sup>th</sup> PM, AR, Pike County 40.44 acres 

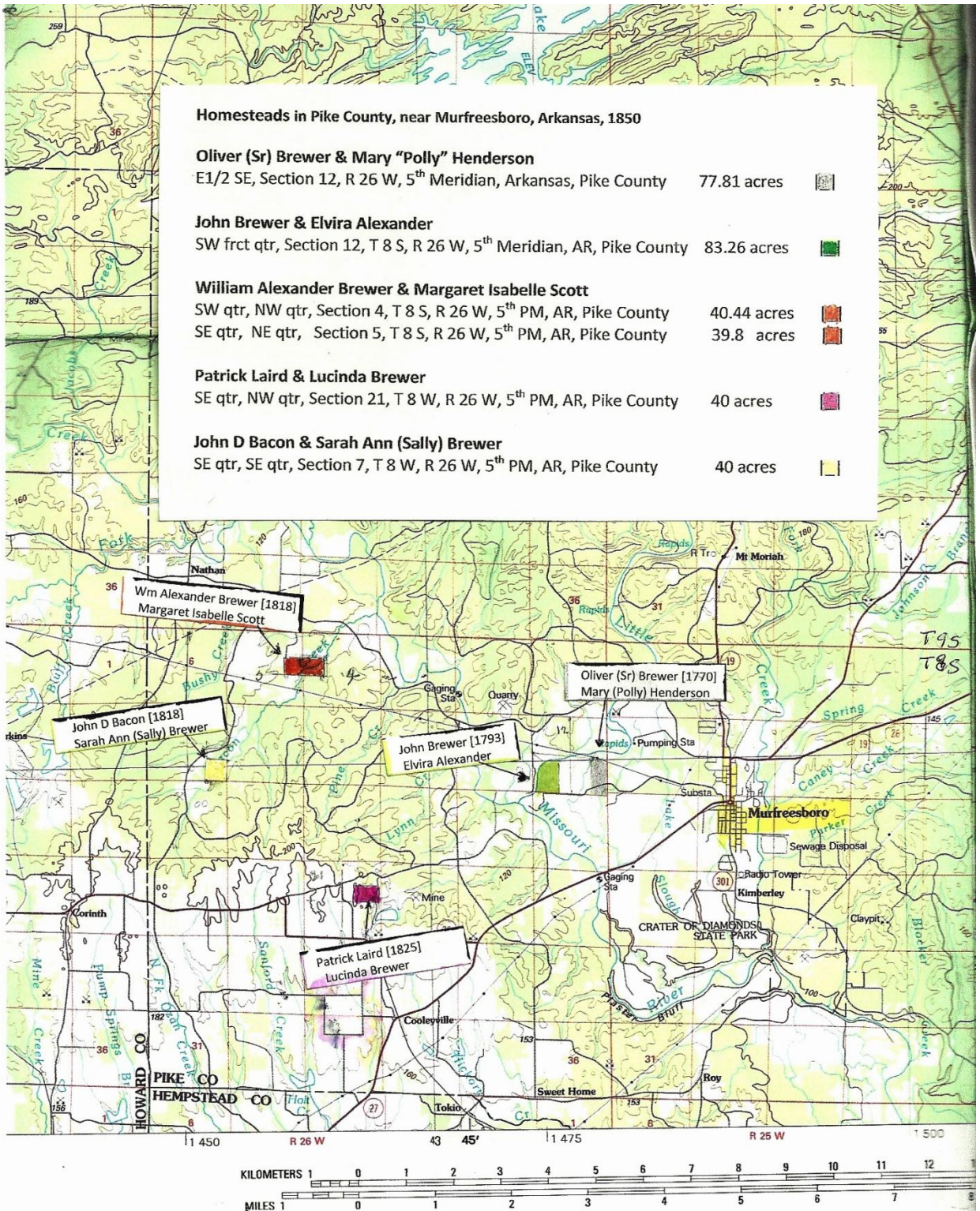
SE qtr, NE qtr, Section 5, T 8 S, R 26 W, 5<sup>th</sup> PM, AR, Pike County 39.8 acres 

**Patrick Laird & Lucinda Brewer**

SE qtr, NW qtr, Section 21, T 8 W, R 26 W, 5<sup>th</sup> PM, AR, Pike County 40 acres 

**John D Bacon & Sarah Ann (Sally) Brewer**

SE qtr, SE qtr, Section 7, T 8 W, R 26 W, 5<sup>th</sup> PM, AR, Pike County 40 acres 



Murfreesboro, Pike County, Arkansas



The 1850's style and ease of life was very different for people in different parts of the United States. In the upper circles of the East, the very wealthy enjoyed extreme luxury. They gathered at spas in New York, Newport and Saratoga according to the season. The men dressed elegantly and expensively and there were "delicate and lovely women, who wore fine furs and rolled in the most stylish equipage". Manufactured fabrics were available and women no longer had to spend time at the spinning wheel. Baseball had become popular, yacht racing and intercollegiate rowing had been introduced and a popular song of the day was Stephen Foster's latest: "Oh! Susanna". Then there were the professionals, shop keepers and farmers and at the bottom, the newly arrived, penniless immigrants who's only assets were hopes and dreams. 7

Life in the West and on the frontier in 1850 was rough and in some places, primitive. There were the steamboat gamblers and others trying to live in the highest luxury that the frontier afforded. --- at the lower end of the scale there were the settlers trying to 'scratch out a living' on the land with home-grown and hand-made products and barely being afforded the necessities of life". 7 Life was rough but here they also sang "Oh! Sussana".

In 1850, outside events were occurring that would affect the fate of the Brewer family. Zachary Taylor had been president only 16 months when he passed away in July of that year. The Slavery issue, the major concern of the day, had not been settled. The tension with the South had been relieved somewhat back in 1820 by The Missouri Compromise, which preserved a balance of Free States vs. Slave States and had kept the Union from splitting apart.

*After winning the Mexican War in 1848, the US had acquired huge parcels of land that would form the territories of New Mexico, Arizona, Utah and California. Shortly after the end of the war, gold was discovered in the new territory of California. Suddenly there was a rush to this territory where, reportedly, people could make a fortune by just strolling around and picking gold up off the ground. The area, though, was lacking in civil authority to start with and the huge influx of prospectors, miners, suppliers, adventurers and others, in a lawless environment, made the urgent necessity for government apparent. This meant that if California was to be brought into the union, a determination of whether it should be a Free or Slave state would have to be made.*

*When Vice President Millard Fillmore assumed the Presidency after Taylor's death, he inherited the unsolved Slavery problem. However, during his term in office, The Compromise of 1850 was passed. This allowed new territories the choice of entering the Union as a Free or as a Slave State, and once again the final settlement of the slavery issue was deferred to the future.*

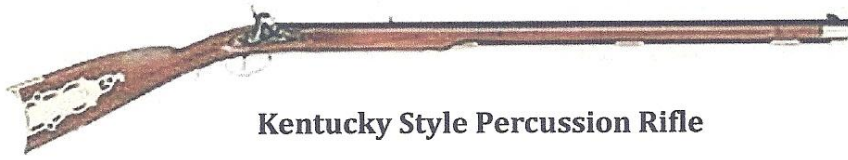
*In 1850 there were 1,862 people living in Pike County, 110 were slaves. Arkansas was a slave state and John and Elvira had owned slaves. The family of Margaret Isabelle Scott moved from Georgia to Spring Hill, Arkansas and it was here in 1841 that 21 year old, Margaret Isabelle had met and married William Alexander Brewer. Margaret's own parents had brought their slaves with them to Arkansas and as a wedding present they gave Margaret and William a negro man and a negro woman. 8*

*There doesn't seem to be a record by 1850 of Wm and Margaret owning slaves but the Pike County, Arkansas Slave Schedule of 1850 enumerated a 30-year-old female, and an 11-year-old female, owned by Elvira, William's mother, as well as a 2-month-old baby boy. What happened to these slaves by 1853 is not clear but there is no record of Negroes going to Oregon with the Brewer party. In fact, the Provisional Government of Oregon had already, back in 1844, made slavery illegal and settlers who currently owned slaves were required to free them within three years. Free blacks, 18 years or older, had to leave the area.*

*The original Oregon "Exclusion Law" subjected blacks who remained in Oregon to a whipping ---- every six months as long as they remained in the territory. Before this went into effect, the law was modified to replace whipping with forced labor. Any black found in violation of the law was hired out publicly. After the period of forced labor the "employer" then had six months to get the black person out of Oregon or face a \$1000 fine. After 1865 and the end of the Civil War, all exclusion laws were declared invalid by the Federal Government. 9*

*By the estimate of John Mack Faragher, "Two men (or one man and a strong boy) could cultivate 50 acres and produce a living for a medium sized family. An acre in a home garden; 20 acres for small grain crops and about 30 acres in corn." Corn was the essential of every animal and human on the place. 10*

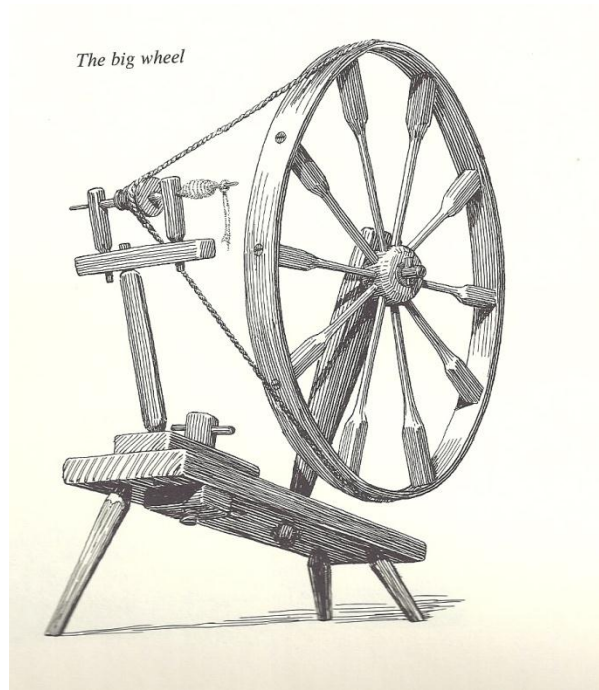
Artifacts 1850 a



**Kentucky Style Percussion Rifle**



**Chamber Pot**



*The big wheel*

**The Great Wheel**  
Used for spinning wool yarn



**Fireplace & Bread Oven**



**Butter Churn**

*“To get an idea of what life must have been like on a self sustaining frontier farm in Arkansas in 1850, we have to rely on general descriptions of an average family. Beside the human labor mentioned above, livestock was necessary. “--- an ox or preferably a yoke of oxen, was essential, although when first starting out some families made do with working a cow. Cows were necessary for milk and its products, however, and working them as draught animals negatively affected dairy production. A few sheep were necessary for wool. Geese and ducks were sometimes butchered, but they were valued most for their down. A family’s meat supply was provided by the ever present brood of chickens and the herd of swine, a dozen or more being necessary for a medium-sized family.” \* 10,13 On the Brewer farms in Arkansas, a few head of cattle would have to be included in the list.*

*“A backwoods farm,” wrote an English observer, “produces everything wanted for the table, except coffee and rice and salt and spices.” To this list could be added occasional dry goods, shoes, and metal for farm implements. A self-sufficient family could produce enough for its annual table, along with a small trading surplus.” 10*

*“The farming year opened in mid-March when thaws called the settler outside. Land had to be cleared, drained, manured, and plowed, fields sown, gardens planted. Sheep, grown woolly, needed washing and shearing, geese plucking. In the hardwood stands farmers might spend a few days collecting and rendering maple sap, or searching out any hiving bees.” \* 10*

\* In his book “Women and Men on the Overland Trail”, John Mack Faragher, used the abundance of diaries, letters and written recollections to summarize the activities and life style of the Midwestern and Frontier self sustaining farms from 1843 to the 1870’s. Information from his book is used extensively here to describe frontier farm life in the 1850’s.

Artifacts 1850 b



1851 Colt Civilian .44



Derringer Pocket Pistol



1851 Large Copper Penny



Spinning Wheel



Pitcher & Basin

*As the summer days lengthened, corn needed hoeing and hilling until it could compete against the weeds. "There was hay to make, garden crops to nurture, gather, and re-plant, and often a winter wheat crop to harvest and thresh."* 10

*In September "summer grain had to be cut, bound and shocked within a critical short period, the corn had to be picked, the last round of garden vegetables safely packed away in cold storage while still fresh."* 10

*The activity after harvest was not as frantic. "Still the grain needed threshing, the corn husking and cribbing, there was perhaps fruit to pick, dry, or preserve in a variety of ways, possibly pickles to make".* 10

*Then getting ready for winter: "sowing the winter wheat, making firewood, daubing the cracks in old cabins, barns, and outbuildings, banking dirt around foundations to keep out some of the cold, and butchering enough hogs for salted and smoked meat until the spring again provided a larder of milk, eggs, and poultry".* 10

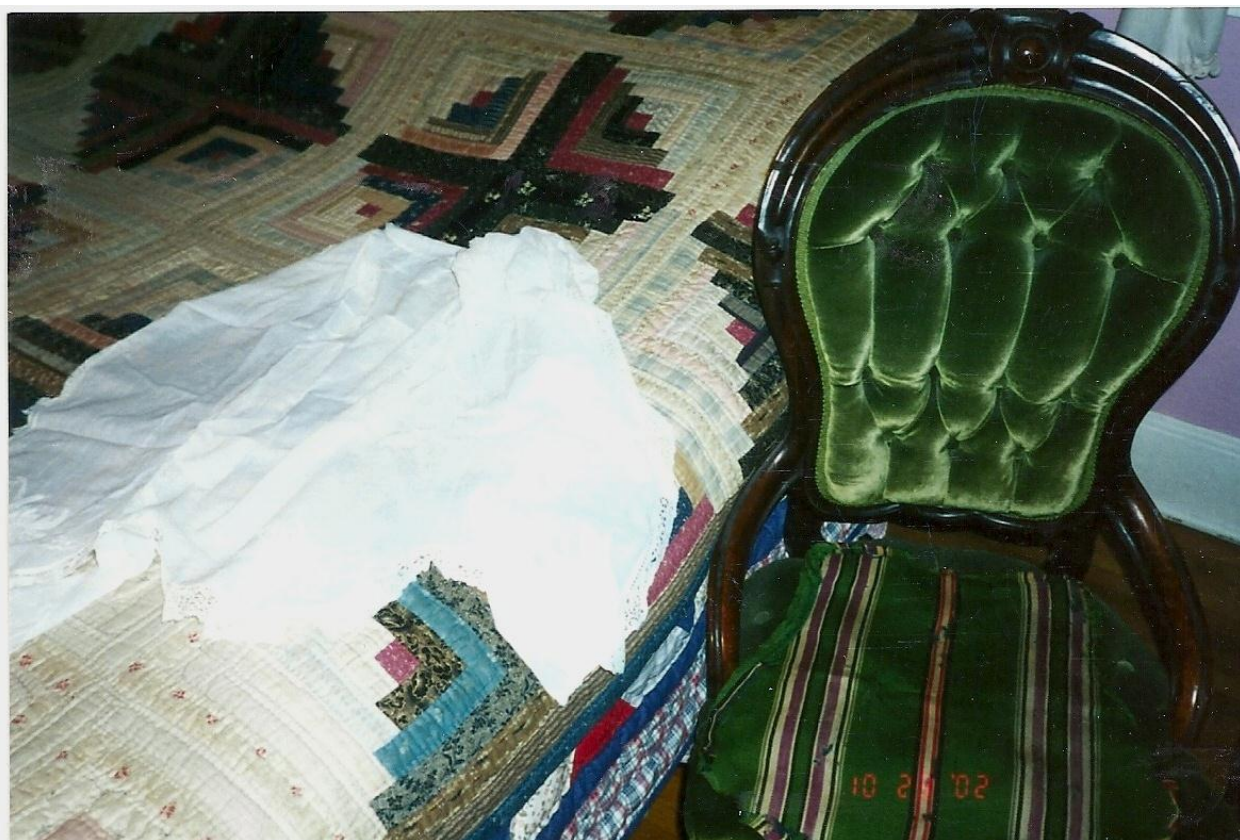
*All of this sounds like the men in the family were very energetic in making the farm provide amply for the family. They were, but ---*

*The women in western frontier families such as the Brewer families in Arkansas may or may not have been well educated or to have learned to read and write, but all of them learned spinning, weaving and needlework skills.* 50

*From an early age, little girls helped their mothers and*

*became adept at spinning, weaving and sewing linen and homespun into clothing and bedding.*

*Keeping the family in clothing took a considerable amount of time but the wives were also preparing the food, raising vegetables and flax in the garden, milking the cows, raising the chickens, making butter and cheese, preserving fruit and vegetables, and mothering the children. --- and much of the time, while they were doing all of the above, they were pregnant.*



**Needlework of Margaret Isabelle Scott Brewer**

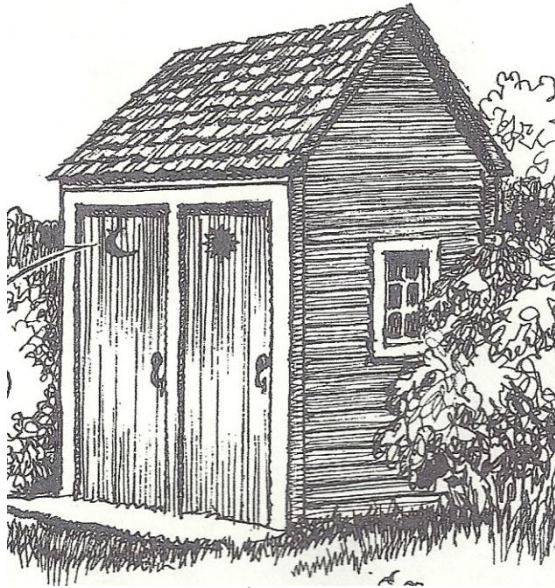
*Margaret Isabelle Scott, Williams' wife, handed down some of her handy-craft to her children. It is presently in the possession of her gg granddaughter, Margaret Ellen Lee (Mrs. Richard Liebert) of Portland, OR. The above photo*



Artifacts 1850 c



Wood Hand Saw



Privy



Hand Axe



Black Iron Cauldron



Hanging Oil Lamp

shows a quilt, an apron, and a chair with the seat that was woven by Margaret Isabelle with the wool from her own sheep. The chair is said to have come from a hotel. This seems likely, as Margaret's third husband, Judge John G Sparks, owned a hotel in Olympia.

While the men on a self sustaining frontier farm in Arkansas were very busy, the work of the women was just as essential to the success of the homestead.

The winter months were occupied with general farm repair and improvement, visiting neighbors, trading the surpluses that summer's labor had produced." It is supposed that there were social activities such as Sunday prayer meetings, weddings, barn raisings, picnics and dances. Although, dancing would not be approved by the Brewer's who were strict Methodists. William did not even allow the children to go outside to play on Sundays. ---and there were other songs to be sung in addition to "Oh Susanna".

10

In Pike County in 1850 the demanding routine of farm work did not preclude other activities. S. H. Williams stated "the Whites, the Kelleys and the Brewers were all connected by marriage, and exercised a controlling influence in the affairs of Pike County. Any public improvement they agreed upon was certain to be carried forward, and any man they supported for office was sure of his election and calling. They practically dominated the county, but their rule was a mild one and redounded to the public good." 11

Presumably William A., his brothers and brothers-in-law,

also spoke with each other and their friends and neighbors about things like weather, the condition of crops, Oregon farm land, slavery and the California Gold Rush.



Library of Congress, Public Domain

Gold was discovered in California in 1848. The news of the discovery was intensely exciting. Suddenly every red blooded young man in the nation with dreams of adven-

ture and thoughts of immediate and easy wealth, was trying to get to California either, by boat around the southern tip of South America, or by walking or riding the overland route, or, as some did, sail to central America and hike across the Isthmus of Panama and then sail up the coast to San Francisco. <sup>12</sup>

**The Gold Rush was described in the first paragraph of a Time-Life book. The Forty-Niners: "It lasted barely a decade. But the California gold rush was a grand, gaudy adventure for a generation of brash young men, most of them citizens of a brash young nation. They took their name - Forty Niners- from the year the rush began in 1849. The East was electrified by the news that across the continent on land newly wrested from Mexico, golden nuggets were lying around loose on the ground. Abandoning farms and apprenticeships, deserting their families and fiancées, the Argonauts swarmed west by the thousands. In California, they heard, a man could take a fortune out of the hills and streams with little more equipment than a shovel, a tin pan and a wooden boxlike contraption called a cradle. And if he did not strike it rich in that fabulous El Dorado--- and most did not---who cared. "** <sup>12</sup>

Oliver jr, William Alexander Brewer's uncle, died in 1832 and the inventory of his estate survives. It is instructional to read it and see what household and farm possessions were valuable to frontier people in those days. While a self-sufficient farmer on the Arkansas frontier might not have much in terms of cash, he could be living well in terms horses, cattle, other livestock, ample, wholesome food, warm clothing, good shelter, ---and proud of making a living on his own acreage and enjoying his freedom.

Addendum- Henry's Estate

Life was hard but it wasn't bad. In spite of that, thoughts of how to make life better must have always been on their minds. The excitement and hopes engendered by news of

Artifacts 1850 d



Butter Mold



Candle Mold



Candle & Holder



Quill & Ink



Smoothing Iron

*the California Gold Rush or the rumors of the unusually fertile land in the Oregon Country, must have made it difficult to think in terms of the status quo.*

*No doubt a great deal of discussion among the boys; William, Oliver, Jack. and Reece as well as the brothers-in-law (John Bacon and Patrick Laird), preceded the decision to go west. The ladies would have been consulted but probably didn't have as much say. Following that, months of planning took place. There was much to do.*

*Any money that had been loaned out was called in, the farm had to be sold or some arrangement made for its continued operation. The crops had to be disposed of, as well as everything else that couldn't be loaded on the wagons. Excess household goods, farm implements and tools, were sold for cash.. Farm equipment on arrival in Oregon was important, though, and grave consideration was given to what could practically be included on the wagon. The load would be limited to 2000 to 2500 lbs. Old farm wagons wouldn't do. They would either have to be re-worked and fortified to withstand the roughness of the trail. ---or new wagons had to be purchased. A couple of yoke of oxen was necessary to power the wagons. Camping gear, tents, a chest of medical supplies had to be assembled. Possibly a 3-gallon cask of brandy or corn liquor was included for 'medicinal' purposes. Of course a big consideration was food; enough for the 6 to 8 months of the journey. The basics were coffee, beans and bacon plus lard, flour, corn meal and dried fruit. A small coop attached to the side of the wagon and containing a couple laying hens would provide eggs along the way. Any stock being driven might include a couple of cows that would provide milk. 14*

*The cows would be milked in the morning and milk and cream would be put in a bucket with a lid. The bucket attached to the wagon would be jiggled and jerked all day long and by evening the bucket would automatically yield butter.*

*Once the family crossed from Arkansas into Indian Territory, there was no authority of law. Armament had to be considered for self-defense against Indians and other bad actors. Probably the boys thought about converting their guns from their old flintlock single shot Kentucky rifles, to a percussion lock. A five or six shot Colt's hand gun might also be considered. ---and a goodly supply of lead, percussion caps, powder and shot would be advised. 19*

*Finally the day came; the 16<sup>th</sup> of March, 1853. 15 The oxen were hitched up and the wagons were loaded. One of the wagons is said to have had a spirited message painted on the side 'For Oregon'. Meanwhile the chickens were cackling, the cows were mooing, the dogs were barking. Everyone was excited along with a little bit of anxiety and as they headed into the unknown, they waved goodbye to their assembled friends and neighbors. If they had actually known what was ahead they might have made other arrangements.*



Oregon Historical Society, OrHi88643

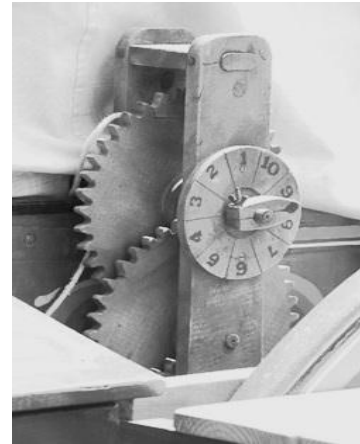
*One of the wagons used on the 1853 Oregon Trail by the Brewers is said to have been donated to a museum in Portland. A confirmation of this, however, remains to be found. A ride in a covered wagon was anything but smooth. The only springs were under the drivers' seat. Every rock and pot hole, sudden jerk and sudden stop was felt continuously by the passengers to the detriment of their comfort. Many women preferred to walk. For a man to ride in the wagon was considered unmanly unless ill. The squeaking and groaning of the wagon, the pots and pans and other tools hanging on the wagons and clanging together, as well as the snorting and plodding of the animals and shouting of men was a constant and daily din.*



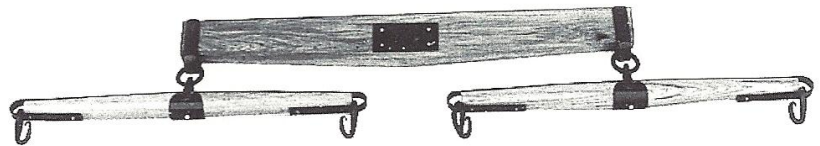
## Wagon Gear



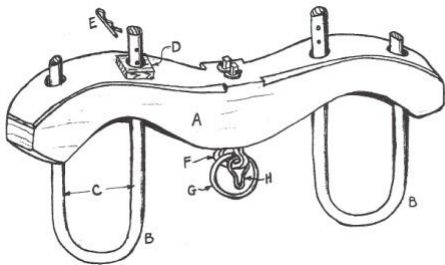
**Water Barrel**



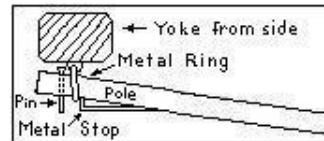
**Odometer**



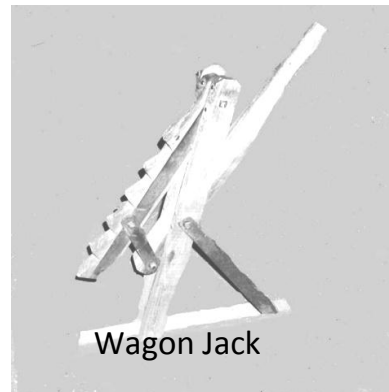
**Doubletree**



**Yoke**



(Side view) To attach the pole (tongue) to the yoke



**Wagon Jack**

They headed to the north for the Arkansas River. From Fort Smith they traveled west and then north on the military road to Fort Gibson and then north to Tahlequah (capital of the Cherokee Nation). <sup>16</sup> Another group from Arkansas was forming up. On March 29, 1853, three families (the Ward family, Hilary Cason family and Wm Bentley family) set out to the west for the Oklahoma border. This group and the Brewer outfit met up probably at Tahlequah or later on at Grand Saline on the Neosho River in Oklahoma.

<sup>15b</sup>

The Ward group, the Brewer family and others combined to make a train of 18 wagons and 22 men capable of bearing arms. They elected a man named Bob Smith as captain. D. B. Ward related that Bob Smith was an admirable man for the job. In later years (1914) Margaret Isabelle Sparks also mentioned that Bob Smith was elected captain of the company that the Brewers travelled with.

<sup>12c, 17</sup>

The wagon train headed off to the northwest on the Cherokee Trail. This is not to be confused with the Cherokee "Trail of tears" which was a forced removal of Cherokees from their farms and settlements into Oklahoma by the US Army in 1838-39. <sup>19</sup> Ten years later some Cherokee Indians independently left the Cherokee Nation in Oklahoma for the gold fields of California. The trail they took to connect with the Santa Fe Trail and beyond came to be called the Cherokee Trail. <sup>16b</sup>

Dillis Burgess Ward wrote his reminiscences, "Across the Plains in 1853". He was 15-years-old in 1853 and 60 years later was able to demonstrate remarkably good memory. Many of the experiences he relates were common to other



emigrants. His descriptions are more expansive than many of the diaries and reminiscences of other pioneers. References to his writing (and others) are used here to help in understanding the experiences common to our 1853 travelers.

The Cherokee Trail led our wagon train through the Indian Territory of Oklahoma.

“Many of the Cherokee Indians were owners of good, well stocked farms. Some of the Cherokee Indians, owned slaves, and many of the slaves were no darker than their copper-colored masters.”

18



**Pawnee Crossing on the Santa Fe Trail**  
by artist M. Gundlach

DB Ward noted that the country side was impressive.

It was interspersed with timber and prairie; “the prairies all carpeted with young grass and flowers of many varieties, while the many streams and brooks were alive with silver perch and other fish”.

20

Other diaries of the western trip also had comments on the awesome beauty and unique rock formations encountered on the way.

The wagons left the Cherokee nation behind at the Kansas

border and continued on a north westerly direction for about 160 miles to near the central part of Kansas. Here they struck the Santa Fe Trail and rumbled and creaked westward for another four or five days.

D.B. Ward continues with, "We had now passed Ash Creek, Pawnee Rock and Pawnee Fork, three points on the Santa Fe Trail, that in later years became notorious because of the historic persistency with which the Indians attacked all who were called to pass through that part of the country. Many a poor fellow lost his scalp and his life in that troublous and turbulent country." The area of Pawnee Rock, Ash Creek and Pawnee Forks was a dangerous place to be. <sup>21</sup> Good fortune prevailed as the wagon train passed through the area without incident. \*

The trail now followed up the Arkansas River. It continued southwest past a point where, 10 years later, Dodge City would be built. From here the trail extended westward 130 or so miles and passed the western border of Kansas into Colorado Territory.

A prairie thunder storm was described by DB Ward: "as we were traveling along the Santa Fe Trail, we found ourselves quite a distance from the Arkansas, by reason of that stream flowing off to the south, forming a sort of horse-shoe at this particular point. Our route lay across, so to speak, the open end or heel of the shoe. Meanwhile our captain (Bob Smith), having ridden on ahead of the train for the purpose of finding a camping place, returned about

\*Back in 1826, an expedition headed west toward the Rockies was attacked by Indians near Pawnee Rock. Kit Carson was a member of this party, a 17 year old greenhorn. During the ferocious fight that followed, he shot and killed one of the attackers, his first Indian. Pawnee Rock on the Santa Fe Trail by Colonel Henry Inman, <http://www.legendsofamerlea.com/OZ-PawneeRock.html>

Sometime after 1853, Buffalo Bill, after gaining fame as a Pony Express rider, was employed as a government scout and was captured by Indians at Pawnee Rock as he was delivering dispatches to the general at the next fort. He narrowly escaped with his life but did get the dispatches delivered. <sup>42</sup>

sundown and said we would have to travel on till mid-night in order to reach a suitable camping place, that is, a place where water and grass could be had for our teams. This we undertook to do. The afternoon had been cloudy and warm. As soon as it began to get dark, the lightning commenced to flash, accompanied by distant peals of thunder. In less than one hour after dark the lightning became almost continuous, flash succeeding flash in rapid succession and the thunder no longer distant, seemed to shake the very earth beneath our feet. In the midst of all this, the rain began to come down, at first in occasional drops, but soon in torrents, until our teams became unmanageable and we were forced to stop, loosen them from the wagons and go into camp, soaking wet, and without anything to eat.” 22

Many diaries mention prairie storms at night with wild shrieking wind, strong gusts that knocked down the tents, frightening flashes of lightning that revealed the catastrophe all about, followed by earth shuddering thunder of terrifying intensity. When the lightning, rumbling, and rain finally faded away into the distance, the campers were left with re-assembling all their scattered things and then trying to get back to sleep in cold clothing and wet blankets.

DB Ward called their travel along the Arkansas a very pleasant part of the trip and “ ---it was while following the course of this stream, and along the old Santa Fe Trail, we ran into an immense herd of buffalo. You would like to know how many there were in that herd? I do not know. There may have been 100,000, there may have been 500,000.

*“It was probably two o’clock in the afternoon while we were traveling along the level valley with the river from one to two miles to our left, the hills perhaps two to five miles to our right, and sloping back for many miles, that we entered the herd, for they simply opened up a sort of lane way through which we passed. We did not get through till six-thirty that evening--- four and one half hours. “Of course our train of ox-teams moved slowly, but we must have traveled at least five miles before we passed through the herd, which stretched off to the right and left as far as the eye could reach; so far away that a buffalo seemed no larger than a man’s hat, ---mere specks on the sides of the distant hills”. “We traveled quite late that evening in order to put as many miles as possible between us and this immense herd of buffalo. 23*

*“The next day we remained in camp, and while there were no buffalo in sight when we rose the next morning, it did not take long to find them by the thousands. We feasted on buffalo meat that day and the next, but were soon out of the range. I think the most vicious appearing animal I ever saw was an enraged buffalo bull, brought to bay by a pack of dogs. And about the most docile and foolish thing I ever saw was a young buffalo calf. The calves, of which there were many, seemed to be guided solely by instinct, and that of a very poor quality. A person on horseback might ride out through the herd, which was three to five miles from camp, and be followed in by two or three buffalo calves. ”Buffalo veal and the flesh of the heifers, which at this time of the year were fat and made fine eating. Upon them we feasted to our hearts’ content while in the buffalo country. 23*

*"I well remember the last buffalo I saw. It was in the afternoon, and as our train was wending its weary way along, looking off to the right of the trail we discovered, perhaps a half, or three-quarters of a mile away, three old fellows quietly feeding. Immediately, two of our men, with three dogs, started out to have a "little sport". The dogs singled out one of the three, an immense old bull, as poor as that 'Job's turkey' of which we have all heard, and soon 'brought him to bay'. As soon as the men got within shooting distance they fired at the old brute, wounding him only slightly. Immediately he started for the river. To reach it he would have to pass through our train, which was stretched out for quite a distance in the direct line of his march. In order that his onward march might not be impeded by our wagons and teams, the drivers had all turned their teams on the trail with their heads towards the river, thus throwing the back ends of the wagons in the direction from which he was coming, and at the same time opening up gaps through which it was hoped he would be delighted to pass without stopping on his way to the river. There was one team, however, a pair of mules attached to a light spring wagon—a family rig which upon this occasion was being driven by a young woman, a Miss Brewer, [many of her relatives are now living in the Washington State counties of Thurston and Chehalis] who failed for some reason, to so place her team. On came the enraged buffalo, smarting from the wounds he had received and harassed by the dogs which were yelping at his heels. The men, meanwhile, who had gone out for a 'little sport', had not dared to fire at him for fear a stray bullet might strike the wrong object. In his maddened condition, it so happened that he struck the train at that point where Miss*



Brewer's team was standing, striking first one of the hind wheels of the wagon, he tossed it with his horns as though it had been a bag of straw; the next instant he made for the near mule, which he severely gored in the flank then in the breast just forward of the left shoulder. All this occurred within the space of a minute of time. Meanwhile several shots had been taken at the thoroughly maddened beast, the fatal shot, however, and the one which immediately ended the trouble, was fired by a young man whose name was Ivan Bentley, the deaf mute. 24

"We left the worthless carcass of the buffalo and the wounded mule where the incident occurred, and passed on, soon forgetting in the presence of other incidents of peril, that, of the enraged buffalo." 24

One event on the trip was described by Rachel Jeanette Brewer Spoor, granddaughter of William and Margaret Isabelle Brewer: "... for five weeks the party was absolutely without bread, and often harassed by unfriendly Indians. Once while passing through a narrow valley, five hundred Indians seemed to rise suddenly from the ground, and demanded all their (the emigrants) food. 15

"The Indians stampeded our cattle and shot a buffalo calf. After a long frightful day of argument, the emigrants finally persuaded (the Indians) that the emigrants would starve if robbed of all their food, but agreed to give (the Indians) half if they would not further molest them. To this plan the Indians agreed, and every article of food, flour, bacon, dried fruit, corn meal, every thing was impartially divided, before the Indians would let them proceed on their journey". 15

*This same incident was described by DB Ward: "We had with us at this time a buffalo calf which one of our cows had kindly consented to adopt. This calf seemed an object of great interest to the Indians. However, all went well until about two-thirds of the way down the hill, when all of a sudden the Indians, who were following along from our resting place on the butte, seemed to have become uncontrollably hilarious. They laughed, they shouted, they yelled, and swung their blankets, and ran to and fro, the purpose being to have us think they were overjoyed at something or other, while their real purpose was to not only create a stampede of our stock, but of our teams as well; in which, if they had been successful---and it came too close to it for comfort---would have been the wreck and ruin of the whole train. Once more providence was with us. About that time we had reached the foot of the butte and were approaching the Indian camp, our highly prized buffalo calf, in which every member of the train had learned to take a lively interest, met its doom. A party of braves had managed to separate it from the stock we were driving, and taking it only a short distance from the road, in less time than it takes me to write, they had killed it and divided its flesh among its savage captors. We had now arrived within about one hundred yards of the Indian camp, to which the old chief had preceded us, when, without a moment's warning, from a command given by the old traitor, three hundred Indian warriors were drawn directly across our line of march. Of course, there was nothing left for us to do but stop, which we did. There were about four hundred, all told, of these warriors. They were, for the most part, armed with bows and arrows, spears, knives and tomahawks; a few of them having guns, while our men were*

well armed with rifles and revolvers--- Colt's six-shooters. We were taken at a disadvantage, in that the Indians were all around and about us and outnumbered us nearly twenty to one. From the time we left our noon camp on the hill to the present moment, they had been growing more impudent, not to say insolent, and it now really seemed as if we would have serious trouble before we got out of this scrape. Of course we had been thrown off our guard by the great pretensions of the old chief; that his people were friendly; that by the treaty we were at liberty to pass through his country without being interfered with in any way whatever. The halt having been made, a parley was at once entered into, the outcome of which was that they had been on the warpath against another tribe (I think Black-foot Indians) for some time and had been successful---and the number of scalps in sight bore evidence that in this, at least, they were telling the truth---and were hungry, and that while they were willing we should pass through their country, we should, inasmuch as we had plenty, pay them for the privilege; that a contribution of flour, sugar and hardtack would be acceptable. This suggestion, backed up, as it was by about four hundred braves who seemed to have the 'drop on us,' it was thought best to accept, in view of the fact, further-more that if we had to fight our way out, some of us would undoubtedly be killed, and that perhaps some of our women and children would fall into the hands of the Indians. A collision between our company and the Indians was narrowly averted more than once during our detention of about three hours; for there were two young women in our company, *one having a head of beautiful red hair*, \* [Elvira Caroline] the other driving the team attached to the light spring wagon before referred to, in which the Indians seemed to take great interest and ar-

gued that these two young women must be left with them. However, a vigorous punch in the ribs with the muzzle of a rifle in the hands of one of our men satisfied them that we were not of their way of thinking on the subject. After we had made our contribution, we were permitted to move on, which we were not slow in doing.” 25

The party was travelling on the north side of the Arkansas still headed west. The beauty and pleasantness of the early travel along the Arkansas had now given way to dull, drudgery. The never ending boredom of the flat, arid dry countryside was finally disrupted by a view that came into sight: the old, burned and abandoned adobe trading post known as Bent's Fort. DB Ward said, "... we passed the old adobe trading post of the Bent Brothers, which at this time was deserted---". 25b

From here westward the scenery became more interesting as the mountains could now be discerned on the western horizon. They loomed larger every day. As the caravan moved closer to the mountains it came to a point where the trail split. Travelers remaining on the Santa Fe Trail forded the Arkansas and turned off to the South toward Taos and Santa Fe.

The Cherokee Trail had merged with the Mountain Route of the Santa Fe Trail back about 70 miles before Pawnee Rock. The trails remained one and the same through Kansas and Colorado until this split. The Brewers, Wards, and others now turned northward and followed up the Arkansas, still on the Cherokee Trail. As the wagon train approached the old settlement of Pueblo, which was near

\* In an email from Aileen Brewer to Ronda Howard , Mar 2004: " Her name was actually Elvira Caroline [Brewer]. It was said that she had curly, red hair." 36

*the base of the mountains, they could look to the southwest and see the snow capped Spanish Peaks. Directly to the west, the Rocky Mountains rose up sharply. 27*



**Spanish Peaks**

Denver Public Library, Western History Collection, CHS.X470

*From here the party followed north up Fountain Creek along the base of the Rockies for several days until they reached the divide. Here they found the head waters of Fountaine qui bouille (Fountain Creek). Originally it was*

\*The Pueblo settlement was a small group of rudely constructed, dilapidated cabins occupied by rough looking Indian traders and their Mexican wives. A year after the Brewers passed by this spot, almost all of the inhabitants were murdered in an Indian massacre. Four years later, “--- after the gold rush to Cherry Creek had produced little gold [1858], many emigrants spent the winter at the mouth of the Fountain [Creek]. they liked it so well they decided to settle there, and so the city of Pueblo was born, its first houses made from the old adobes of the Pueblo”.

26

*given the French name because of the way it boiled up out of the rocks of the Rocky Mountains.*

*Past this summit, water flows north, carried by Cherry Creek. The Cherokee Trail led the travelers north following down the east side of Cherry Creek for several more days until they arrived at the confluence of Cherry Creek and the South Platte River. Five years later, at this spot, the city of Denver would be founded. This was a pleasant place with plenty of wood, grass and water but the party soon pushed on, fording the South Platte and continuing north, always with the mountains on their left and straight ahead to what would become the Wyoming border. <sup>27</sup>*

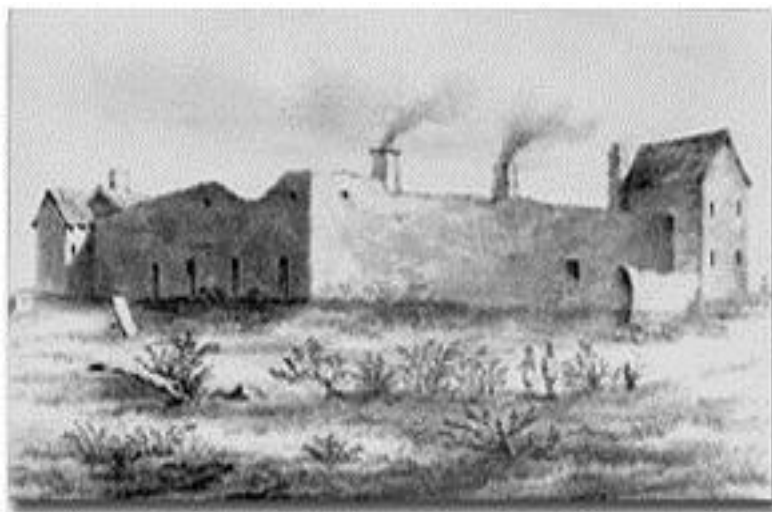
*They came to a river that had to be crossed; the Cache La Poudre. DB Ward describes “---this is the way we did it. Arriving upon its banks about eleven o'clock a.m., we went into camp and while noon lunch was being prepared the men were devising some plan for getting across the stream. There was very little timber on this stream, but two dry bits of logs were found, which, being lashed together made a raft of sufficient size to carry a man. On this, one of our men, William Ruble, who is perhaps still living in Oregon, seated himself, paddle in hand. Around his waist was fastened the end of a strong twine cord, the ball of this being held in the hands of another man who remained on the bank. While the man on the little raft pushed out into the stream and succeeded in making a landing on the opposite bank, some half mile below the starting point, the man with the ball running along down the stream in order to keep as near as possible to the one on the raft. In this way we had spanned the stream--- with a twine string.*



**Cherry Creek, Five Miles Above the Confluence with the South Platte River**

*Then securely fastening a stout rope to one end of the twine, the man on the other side was enabled to draw the rope across. By putting out a headline we had our rope ready for work. Our ferry boat was made by lashing together two wagon boxes, which had been caulked. Into this craft we placed our goods and chattels, then the women and children, and in less than twenty-four hours the entire outfit had been safely transferred to the opposite bank of the stream. Our cattle and horses had to swim the stream, at this point about one hundred feet wide, with a strong current".* 29

*After reaching Wyoming territory (actually, Wyoming wouldn't become a territory for another fifteen years) the oxen were turned and headed west again. A week or so later they came to a point near the headwaters of the North Platte River. This turned out to be a difficult crossing. The wagon boxes were caulked and used to ferry the goods across. On the last run, though, the rope broke and the wagons drifted downstream. While they were retrieving the wagons they heard the sounds of hoof beats and immediately feared an attack by Indians. The emigrants were at a disadvantage because their guns had all been shipped to the other side*



**On the Banks of the Snake River  
Ft Hall - 1849**



of the river. The Indians were coming closer and the men on the far side of the river recognized the desperateness of the situation and started shooting off their guns and the men on the stranded side of the river began yelling making all the noise they could. It worked! The Indians were spooked by all the hub-bub and disappeared leaving the stranded men to recover the wagons and make their way to the other side.” 30

DB Ward said that, “On the 4<sup>th</sup> of July, just as we were emerging from a rugged bit of mountain, covered with a growth of scrub timber, we crossed the head of a deep ravine on a bridge of snow or ice, from beneath which, a short distance away, flowed a beautiful stream of clear and perhaps I need to add, cold water.

“Soon after crossing the ravine we came out on to the top of a long, high ridge where there was no timber. The day was so cloudy and so cold that we had put on our overcoats, while the women kept themselves in the wagons under a double portion of cover. Just how long we were in getting through the mountains I am not sure, but not less than two weeks, possibly three.” 31

The contingent continued on its way west, still on the Cherokee Trail, and arrived at the junction they had been looking forward to --- the main Oregon Trail. They soon came to another crossing that was swift and deep, the Green River. However, it turned out to be easy because of a ferry operated by a white man. 32



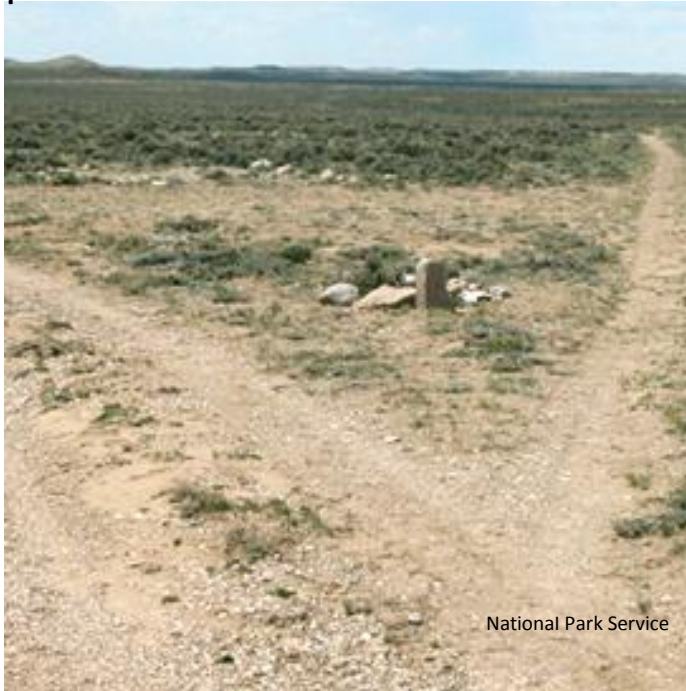
**“We now found ourselves on a broad highway from twenty feet to five hundred feet in width.”**

*Now the train was truly on the Oregon Trail. Of this D B Ward wrote, “We now found ourselves on a broad highway from twenty feet to five hundred feet in width. On the*

route we had been traveling, we had, with one or two exceptions, the best of feed in the greatest abundance, while after striking this great highway, feed was scarce everywhere.

Neither had we been seriously bothered by the dust or troubled by the alkali; but from this point on, the dust was almost intolerable and the alkali in many places very troublesome. Before this, game was quite plentiful at many points along the way, while after reaching the main thoroughfare, we saw absolutely no game. When reaching this point, our stock having had plenty of feed, were in fine condition. But we were not slow to note the different appearance of the stock of those who had travelled on the

main line. 32, 34



**Fork in the Road**

Ward, Brewer and company had travelled weeks and weeks at a time without seeing anyone other than their own party. On the main road, though, they were never out of sight of other emigrants until reaching the point where the Oregon Road branched off from the road leading to California 33

The Oregon Trail continued and near Fort Hall, in what is now Idaho, struck the Snake River. A few more days and

the travelers came to a fork in the road. D. B. Ward described it: “--- soon after passing (some) springs we came to the ‘parting of the ways’, that is, (after the Raft River Crossing) where the road to California left the Oregon Trail. [33 see Oregon or Bust Map](#)

Here some of the party, including the Brewers, left the Ward Train, and turned off onto the road to California. “Our company”, D. B. Ward said, “now consisted of my father’s family, four wagons, and my step-mothers’ brother Hillary Cason, with his family and two wagons. A part of our company, as before stated, had taken the California road, a part had kept to the south side of the Snake River, and some of the others we had left behind --- out travelled.” \* [35](#)

Our family, the Brewers, waved goodbye to Ward and company, turned left from the Oregon Trail and headed in the direction of California. They left Arkansas for California but some were now thinking of Oregon. This was the last moment for decision. Facts are a little sparse here, but it seems that Patrick Laird [28 yrs] had already gone to California. John D. Bacon [35 yrs] and his wife, Sarah Ann (Sally), age 28, possibly mesmerized by the siren call of gold, branched off to California. Lucinda Laird [23], was anxious to join Patrick in California so she decided to accompany Sally and John D. John Manning (Jack) [26], brother of the two young ladies went along as well. The Bacon children; John Henry, age 7; Richard Pratt, 4 years; Mary Emily; age 19 months and also the Laird kids,

- The covered wagons of D. B. Ward’s family, without the Brewers, traveled down the north side of the Snake River, past Bear River, past the Blue Mountains and Grand Ronde Valley. From there they travelled to the Columbia River and then on to the Dalles from where wagons, women and children were shipped by barge in the tow of a steamer to the portage at the Cascades, then by steamer again down the Columbia. They arrived at the mouth of the Sandy River on 20 Sep 1853 and finally arrived at their destination in the Willamette Valley on Oct 1, 1853.

*Samuel T, age 3, and John W, 1 year, would, of course, be included. While the details are not clear, none of these people are on the Elliott Cut-Off or the Umatilla Agency Rosters, but all ten of them did end up in California.* 17, 45, 46, 47

*The remaining Brewer travelers, having decided to go on to Oregon, turned their wagons toward the northwest and headed up along the south bank of the Snake River.* 35



**Wagon Wheel Ruts of the Oregon Trail on Keeney Pass just East of Vale, OR**

*There would have been probably three or four wagons in this group. Elvira, Reece and Elvira Caroline with one wagon, Oliver P and Margaret Stevens in a 2<sup>nd</sup> wagon, and*

William and Margaret Isabelle with their seven kids; Martha Ann, 10 yrs; John Fletcher, 9 yrs; Sarah Elvira, 7 yrs; Mary Lucinda, 6 yrs; Amanda Caroline, 4 yrs; James Henry, 3 yrs; George Warren, 16 mos old.

There would have been some hugging, waving and good-byeing and maybe a few tears as the oxen of the California bunch plodded their way out of sight. The remaining Oregon bound party headed on up the trail to the Northwest. A couple hundred miles further up the trail, they would be going over Keeney Pass and, more than 100 years later, one of their descendants, Terry Mattison, would take a picture of their tracks.

Another day of travel would bring them to the Malheur River and Hot Springs. They steered their oxen off to the left of the Oregon Road and drove 14 miles from the Snake River to the Malheur, across what one emigrant described as "the most dusty and dry and hot barren desert that any person ever travers'd", Sarah Sutton. 1854. The Malheur and Hot Springs was a place where the Brewers could camp, water and rest the livestock, wash clothing. --- and for the first time in a long time they could take advantage of the nearby hot springs to bathe in warm water. 104

The campground was abuzz with discussion. As the women went about their tasks of washing and baking, the men were greasing axles and repairing their wagons or adjusting equipment, and they were also talking about the new route to the Willamette. 37



### Malheur Hot Springs

Courtesy of the Vale, Oregon OTCC Interpretive Kiosk

Some ---“ immigrants travelled from the Malheur River north and northwest across the Blue Mountains to the Columbia, and then drove along that river to The Dalles, where the road ended just 14 miles below a spectacular stretch of rapids [Celilo Falls]. At the Dalles, wagons and families were placed on rafts or Hudson’s Bay bateaux to move downstream to the portage around the rapids at the Cascades. Then they took to the river again, as far as the mouth of the Sandy. Met there by their stock which had been driven over the old Hudson’s Bay Company trail (on the south side of the Columbia), the immigrants reassembled and reloaded their wagons and (floated down stream) to the Willamette, and followed up that stream looking for vacant land”. <sup>38, 41a</sup> The raft trip down the Columbia was very dangerous and often time-consuming with wagons waiting in line for days or weeks before rafts or steamers became available.

*“Between 1847 and 1852 several unsuccessful attempts were made to locate new passes; shortcuts to the Willamette Valley. Then in 1852 upper Willamette Valley settlers began to plan toward a united effort to open a cutoff. Soon this was being called the Free Emigrant Road to the upper Willamette Valley.” It may have been “the only immigrant road in the history of western travel which developed from community action of those already settled in the West. The Free Emigrant Road was planned for, surveyed, and a right-of-way cleared ---after a fashion--- during 1852 and 1853, all (because of) the united efforts of a group of settlers in Lane, Linn and Benton counties. With publicly-contributed funds managed by three road commissioners chosen at a public meeting, the settlers opened a road over which they hoped to channel immigrants more directly into the upper Valley.”* 39, 41a

*In late summer of 1853 a representative of the sponsors of the Free Emigrant Road was at the Hot Springs on the Malheur to encourage Oregon Trail travelers to consider taking the new route which went more directly west, followed the Middle Fork of the Willamette River down into the Willamette Valley and which would cut off a couple hundred miles and save the emigrants time in getting to their destination.* 40

*Margaret, Oliver’s wife, in her affidavit of April 27, 1915, said ---“she and others started (from Arkansas) for the State of California for the gold fields, and somewhere east of the Cascade Mountains, while on their way to California, they were persuaded to turn westward and cross the Cascade Mountains and follow down the Willamette River into the Willamette Valley, which was pictured as one of the*



*fairest valleys in all the land, where they could procure farms and erect homes.” 41*

*William and Oliver, Reece too, must have talked this over. William decided to stay on the Oregon Trail rather than take the risk of an untried route. Oliver probably would have too. It is thought, though, that Oliver had taken sick and had delayed. A passing train which was taking the new cutoff boasted a doctor as a member. This must have swayed Oliver and wife, Margaret, to take the new route and be assured of medical assistance. 45*

*Once again there was a parting of the ways with a lot of hugging, waving and good-bying, as William and his remaining entourage, Margaret Isabelle and family; Reece, Elvira and Elvira Caroline, again pointed their oxen toward the northwest. They would have been shouting back to Oliver and Margaret, something like “—see you next month in the Willamette.”*

*The oxen patiently plodded along toward the Blue Mountains, still 100 miles away .*

*When they first got on the Oregon Trail, after leaving the Cherokee Trail, back near Ft Hall, they began noticing something that was chilling to see: the trail-side graves of those who had perished and whose dreams had suddenly come to an end along the way. It was especially saddening when it was the grave of a child. Up to this point the Brewer Family had been lucky and had not lost a single person to Indians, disease, accident or any other of numerous threats.*

*By the end of August, the Brewer party had reached the Blue Mountains, which were named by David Thompson in 1811 because of their azure hue. They were more difficult to handle, than the later more scenic Cascades, ---- "because of the continuous series of ridges with deep draws and few good passes between"* 101



**The Blue Mountains**

Denver Public Library, Western History Collection, WHJ 10639

*One September day they were rumbling along through those mountains when the wagon train came to a stop. There was a flurry of activity around one wagon where Margaret Isabelle had given birth to a baby boy, William Thomas Brewer.*

*It was Sept 1, 1853. The women and others had gathered around to give assistance and comfort to Margaret and congratulations to William. "...she and the child were*

*placed on a feather bed in the bottom of the wagon and the caravan proceeded on its way”*: Ellen Harmon. <sup>41a</sup>



**Blue Mtns to the Columbia River Valley**  
National Park Service

*Now the caravan followed down the south side of the Columbia. They had to ford the John Day River and then the Deschutes but fording streams was now “old hat”.*

*Fourteen miles before reaching The Dalles, the caravan passed by Celilo Falls. Indians had fished here for thousands of years. Standing on the banks of the river or on platforms, they speared the salmon as the fish leaped their way upstream. \**

*All were anxious to get to Fort Dalles, where the trail ruts stopped and where some considered the end of the trail had been reached.*



**Celilo Falls**

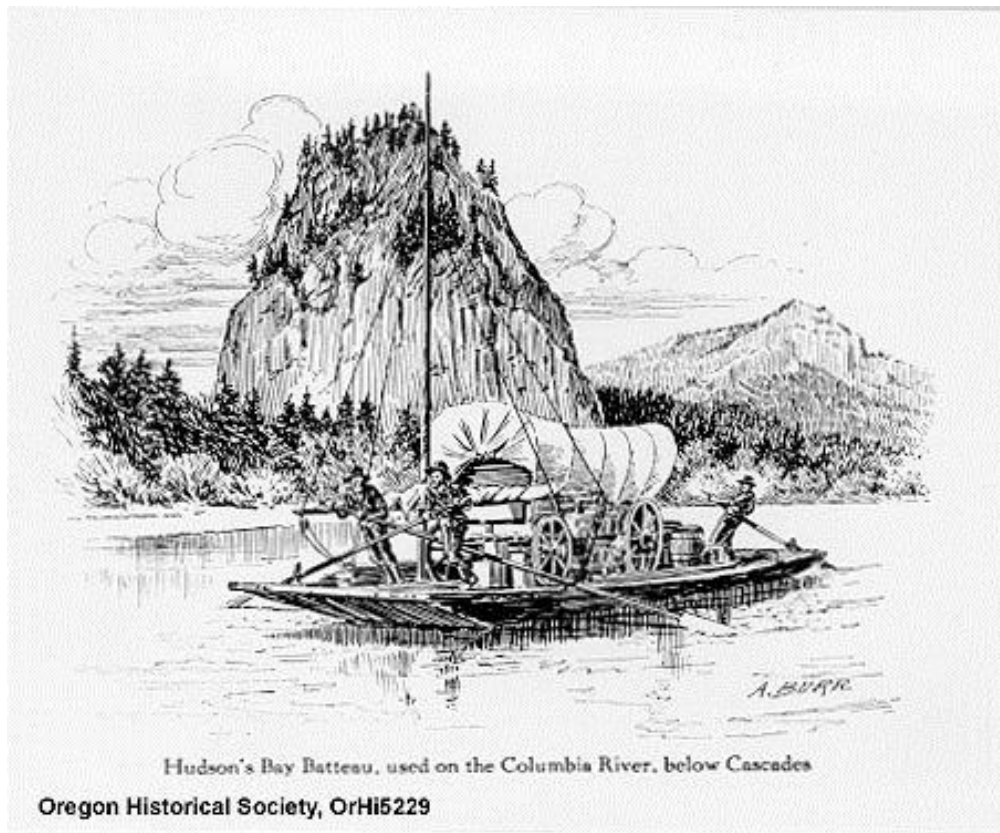
*Below The Dalles the Columbia had, through the centuries, cut a gorge through the Cascade Mountains and left high cliffs on both sides of the river which blocked the passage of wagons.*

*When travelers made their weary way into The Dalles, and were blocked from going any farther, they waited for small boats or Hudson's Bay bateaux, to take them down river.*

*Some, instead of waiting, cut down trees and made rafts using the abundant timber that was close by. Some of the rafts were big enough to hold up to six wagons. Women,*

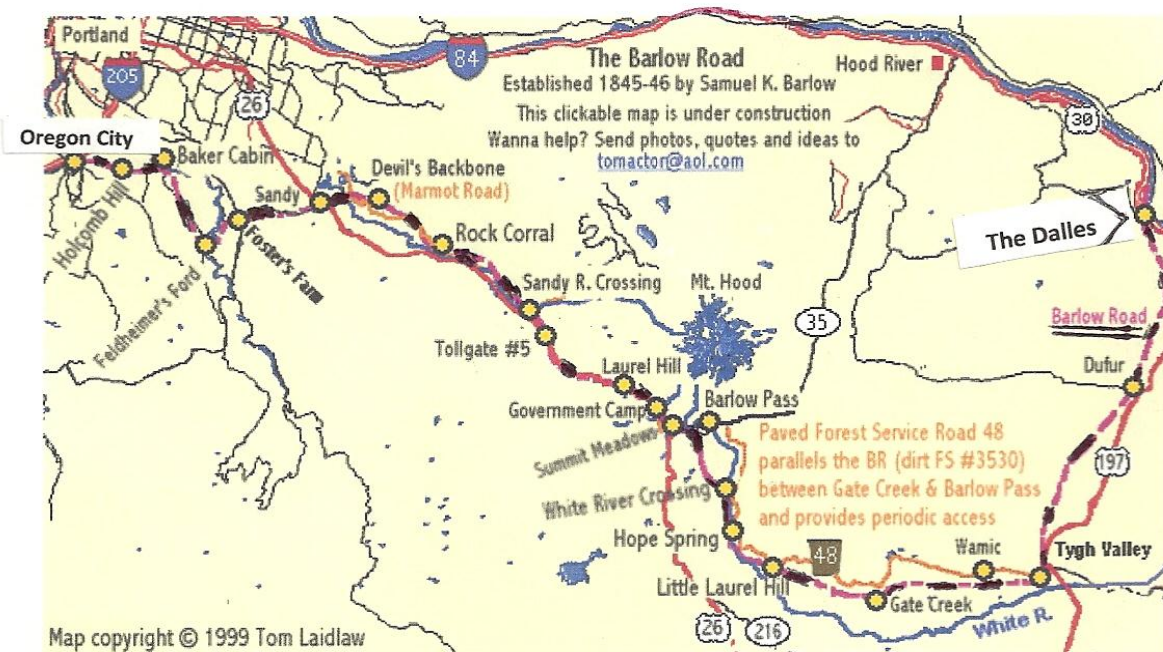
\* Celilo Falls was submerged when The Dalles Dam was completed in 1957.

children, wagons and all possessions were loaded on the rafts and floated down the river. This was a very dangerous part of the trip. The wind ripping through the Gorge, energized by the narrowness of the canyon reached forces that tipped over wagons and rafts. Or, some of the rafting emigrants got caught in one of the sudden, swirling whirl pools that occurred on the river.



***“One of our boats containing six persons, was caught in one of those terrible whirlpools and upset. My son, ten-years old, my brother Jesse’s son, Edward, same age were lost. It was a painful scene beyond description. We dared not go to their assistance without exposing the occupants of the other boat to certain destruction. The bodies of the drowned were never recovered”*: Emigrant, Lindsey Applegate. 43**

The rafts were put in the river just below The Dalles and floated down past Hood River and as far as the Cascade Falls where everything had to be unloaded, portaged past the falls and reloaded for the balance of the trip downstream to the mouth of the Sandy River or the Willamette. Some were brave enough to run their rafts through the rapids. By the 1850's steamboats were on the river. Rafts and barges could be towed by steamers on the upper river. Then after portaging around the Cascade Falls, wagons, women, children and possessions were reloaded on a lower river raft and a steamboat would continue the tow down the Columbia to the mouth of the Sandy. In the meantime, some of the men and boys would have driven the stock down the south bank of the river and over Lolo Pass on the north side of Mt Hood. That, though, was a trail too rugged for wagons. The drovers, with their herd, would reunite with their families at the Sandy. Going by steamboat was preferred but many of the travelers could not afford the



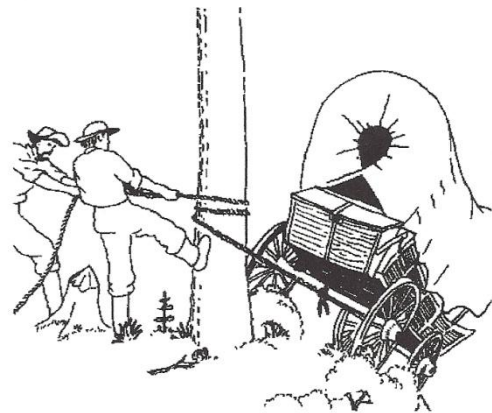
**Barlow Road Map**  
 Courtesy of Tom Laidlow

*steamer trip as it was quite expensive.*

*Five or six years before the Brewer wagons pulled up in The Dalles, an alternative to the Columbia River route had been developed.*

*The Barlow Trail had been hacked out of the forest. It went south from The Dalles around the east and south side of Mt Hood and ended at Oregon City. This was the true End of the Trail according to Oregon City. While the Columbia River was dangerous and for some, the trip ended before the End of the Trail, the Barlow Road had its drawbacks too.*

*Many thought it was the most harrowing 100 miles of the 2,000 mile trip. The road was rough and rocky and presented anxious moments when emigrants struggled down slick muddy slopes, with the wagon hitched to a block and tackle, or attached to a rope wrapped around a stout tree.*



Public Domain

*When the rope wasn't strong enough or the locked wagon wheels didn't provide enough traction there was a tragic crash at the bottom of the hill.*

*“A small party, including the Brewer family, came down along the east side of Mt Hood, through central Oregon. Part of the time Grandmother (Margaret Isabelle) drove a span of mules to a light wagon. They had heard that the Indians would not take mules but would do anything to get good horses. Their party consisted of only seven or eight wagons. Just after getting down one of the steep and*

crooked passes, they saw Indians in the distance. Quickly they formed the customary circle with their wagons as a barricade against the enemy. For three days and nights the men lay on the ground and periodically the Indians rode around at a distance and shot at the camp. On the third morning the men decided to make an attempt to move on. Putting their wives and children in the wagons, they told them, should the Indians break through the barricade, to whip the teams and go as fast as they could down the valley. Fortunately, some men living down below had heard that a small party was in danger and came on good horses and with good guns. As they came near, the Indians vanished.” 108

Generally the trip was very difficult because they had to drive the wagons over extreme mountainous terrain, over huge boulders, and narrow pathways through dense forest. There were places where road maintenance work had to be done by themselves as they went along.

The notorious difficulty on the Barlow Road was the dreaded Laurel Hill. The slope inclined at near 60° and seemed to be impassable. Those who made it down, cursed Samuel K. Barlow for building such a road and for charging the high price, in those days, of 10 cents a head for livestock and \$5 per wagon. 107, 108





*photo by Peggy Price*

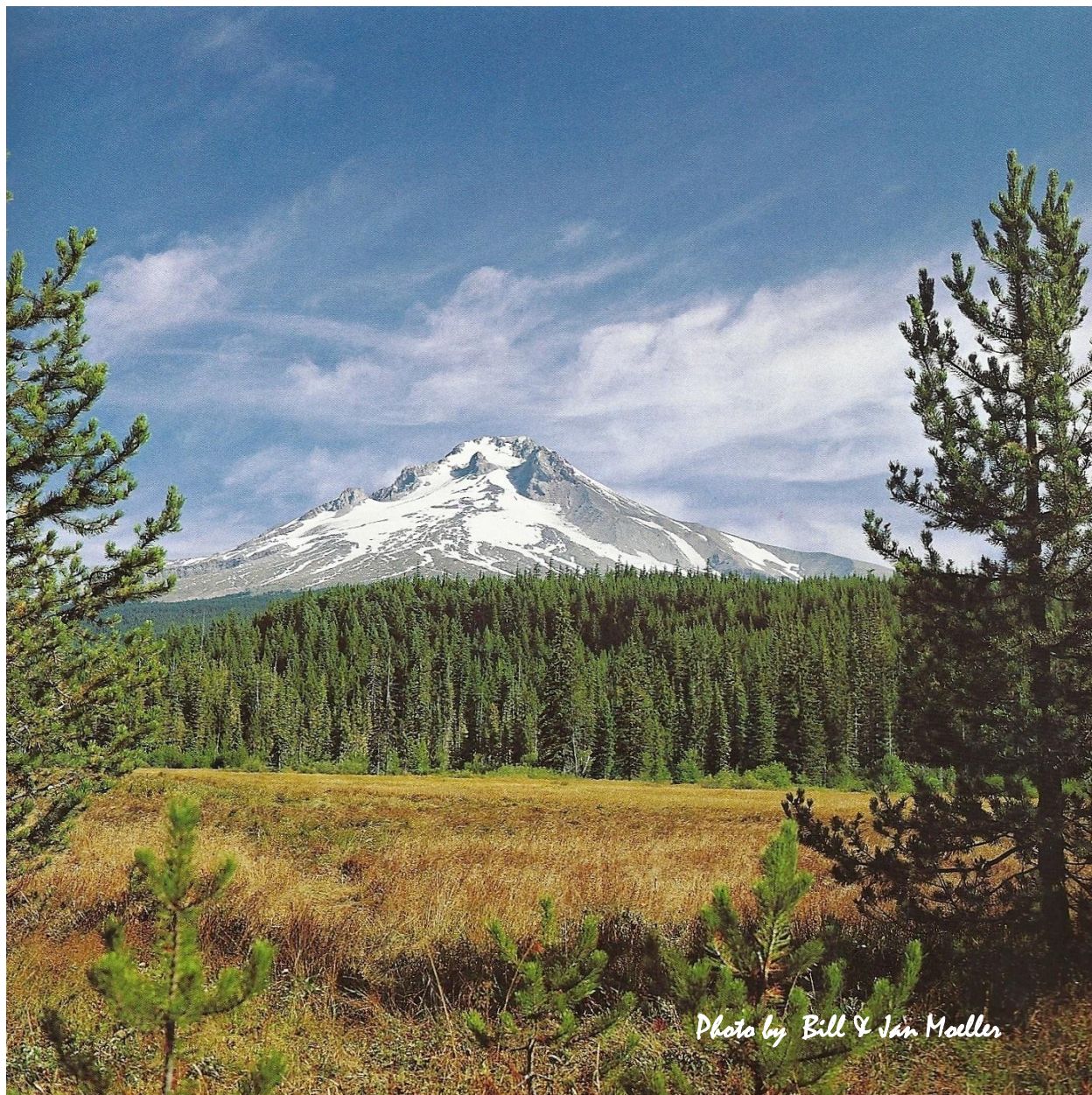
**The Barlow Road Tollgate**  
Courtesy of Mountain Press Publishing Co



*Photo by Bill & Jan Moeller*

**Barlow Road below Laurel Hill  
Courtesy Mountain Press Publishing Co**

*This late in the year, Sept, and at this altitude, 4155 feet at the summit of Barlow Pass, they were lucky if they didn't run into icy cold fog and snowy weather. It was about 80*



**Mt Hood: An Old Obstacle; Now a Beautiful Scene**  
Courtesy of Mountain Press Publishing

*miles from Laurel Hill to Oregon City and while generally it was down hill, it was still rough and difficult but occasionally a good camp with wood, water and grass was*

found. The Brewer Family must have had the happy feeling that the end was in sight. Maybe they could look at Mt Hood and see the beauty of it rather than seeing it as an obstacle.

When the family finally wearied their way into Oregon City they might have, as many others did, “ ----- camped on the broad creekside meadow near the Willamette River. This spot, Oregon City’s Abernethy Green, marked the traditional End of the Oregon Trail.” <sup>44</sup>

The Brewer’s ---“first view of Oregon City would have contrasted sharply with the wild and deserted country they were leaving behind on the Trail. Homes, churches, and small businesses made a community several blocks in size while beyond, on the Willamette, barges, ships and canoes headed toward the Columbia River. A portage road led around the Falls and into the City. Workers ported crops from the upriver Champoeg and Tualatin Plains farms into town for sale or reshipment on downriver boats. The Falls themselves supplied power to mill lumber and were a prime location to fish for salmon and sturgeon. There were nearby flour mills, dairy farms, boatyards, orchards, and businesses“. --- and people. After the solitude of the plains, deserts and forests, it must have been pleasing to be in a community of people. <sup>44</sup>

Brothers, William and Reece, like most new arrivals, were probably anxious to look around and find suitable land to make their claim. The last and final leg of the journey was

**Arrival Dates** According to Lea Collins Menefee in **Immigration Rosters of the Elliot Cut-Off: 1853 & 1854 and Immigration Registration at Umatilla Agency, 1853**, pp 363-364, “Arrival dates were given by immigrants on their Donation Land Claim Applications. However, this has been used cautiously since the applications sometimes listed several different dates of arrival in Oregon. What the immigrants individually considered to be “Oregon” is still in question.”

In 1853 the Oregon Territory included the whole state of what is now Idaho and even parts of Utah.

If the immigrant considered the day he first entered the Oregon Territory as the Arrival Date, it could make a difference of over a month compared to the date of arrival in Oregon City or the Willamette valley. For the above reasons, where the Arrival Dates have been used here, it is with ‘tongue in cheek’.

from Oregon City, south to Eugene, about 100 miles. Elvira arrived in Oregon on Oct 1, 1853 and William and family arrived on Oct 23, 1853. These were the dates they put on their Donation Land Claims. Reece, at 17, was not old enough, at the time, to be eligible to submit a claim.

The part of the family that had arrived in the Willamette Valley consisted of William and Margaret Isabelle and their now eight children (Martha Anne, John Fletcher, Sara Elvira, Mary Lucinda, Amanda Carolina, James Henry, George Warren and the new baby, William Thomas), Williams' mother, Elvira, and Williams' siblings, (Reece and Elvira Caroline).



**Construction Crew on the Free Emigrant Road**

Courtesy of Tom Laidlow

The whole family was probably on the lookout for Oliver and Margaret. It will be remembered that Oliver and Margaret, back at the Hot Springs on the Malheur River, decided to follow a doctor who was in a wagon train that was taking the new Free Emigrant

Road into the Willamette Valley. This new road was supposed to be several hundred miles shorter than the Old Oregon Trail. It would seem like Oliver and Margaret would

have arrived in the Willamette ahead of William and family. Never the less, Oliver and Margaret could not be found and as mentioned previously, the established settlers in the Willamette Valley had appointed a commission to supervise the building of a road that would connect with the old Oregon Trail near the Malheur River crossing and go directly west to the Willamette instead of the round-about way of going north to the Columbia and then traveling south again for another 100 miles up the Willamette River.

Oliver P and wife, Margaret Stevens Brewer had stopped at the Hot Springs on the Malheur River. They had decided to take the Free Emigrant Road and watched as the remainder of the family, Elvira, age 54, and children, Reece, age 17, and Elvira Caroline, 13 ; William A. and Margaret Isabelle and their seven kids, departed for the northwest. The family as of now, was split up and going in three different directions.

This must have been about the last week in August and the last week for the road construction crew to hack a path through the forest of the Cascade Mountains.

In a week or so, William A.'s northwest bound train would have rattled, jerked and bounced the hundred miles or so to the Blue mountains and Oliver P and Margaret S. would be on their way over the Free Emigrant Road or, as others called it, the Elliott Cutoff.

Oliver P, and Margaret S. didn't keep a diary of first hand personal events of their trip. We have to rely on the descriptions of others to get an idea of what it was like on the

*Elliott Cutoff (or Free Emigrant Road). "Oregon bound over the plains, and deserts, rough rocky lava, high mountains-West. Through unmarked wilderness and down precipitous slopes into the bed of this strange river (the Willamette) ---after long weeks of great hardship, they finally reached the valley in late October. **The Elliott Cutoff, 1853**"*

*The above is the beginning paragraph carved on a wooden marker situated in Greenwaters Park at Oakridge, Oregon.*

*The marker was dedicated in 1950, and it describes and commemorates some of the events that took place on the Elliott Cutoff in 1853.*

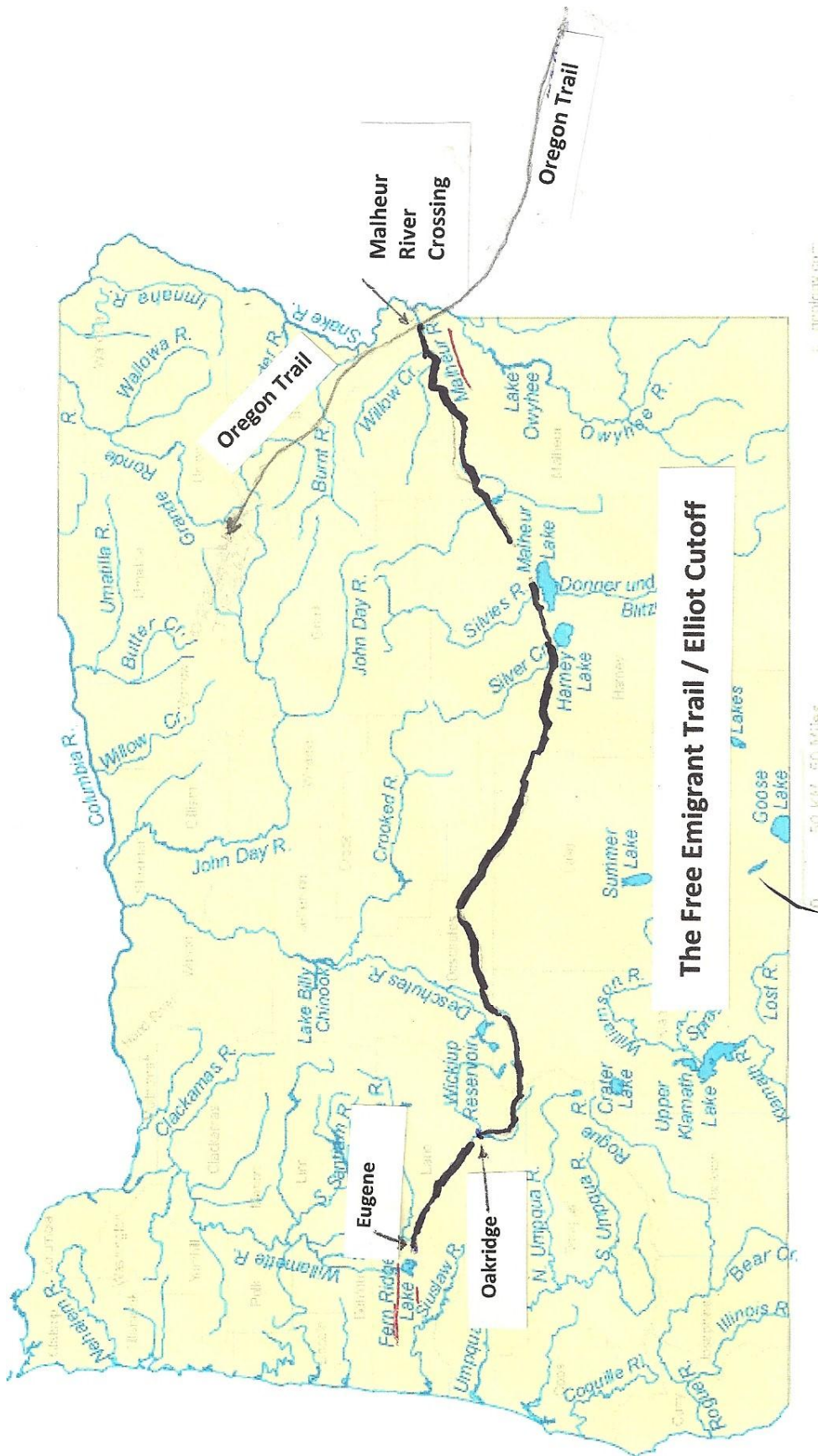
*"After a hard trip across the Oregon desert, they camped near (what is now the city of Bend) along the Deschutes River, and sent their scouts ahead. Fresh blazes were happily reported near what is now Lapine. The wagon train turned up the eastern slope of the Cascades toward their sought-after landmark, snow-capped Diamond Peak. Early October storms had already started. Though traveling through snow was a great dread, they forged desperately ahead toward their destination, the Willamette Valley.*

*"The trail weary men and women endured extreme difficulties as they forced their way south of Diamond Peak, through the forest and rugged bluffs of the high Cascades. Heavy timber and downed trees added up to near impassability." The road building crew had cut down huge trees and they didn't have the means of moving this heavy timber out of the way so the fix was to build bridges over the*

huge logs.

*“With hand axes, the men (emigrants) chopped deep notches in the huge downed trees while women and children helped by carrying limbs, rocks and dirt to bridge up to the cut and over the obstacle. It was back-breaking work. Some days not even one mile rolled under the wagon wheels. Wagons with broken wheels continued with a skid jerry-rigged under one axle of their wagon. Many other wagons wrecked and were broken down, unable to proceed. Teams of horses and oxen died from lack of forage and cruel over work. It was getting late in the season and settlers in the valley were wondering why the anticipated wagons hadn’t arrived over the new road. The mystery came to be called ***The Lost Wagon Train of 1853.***”*





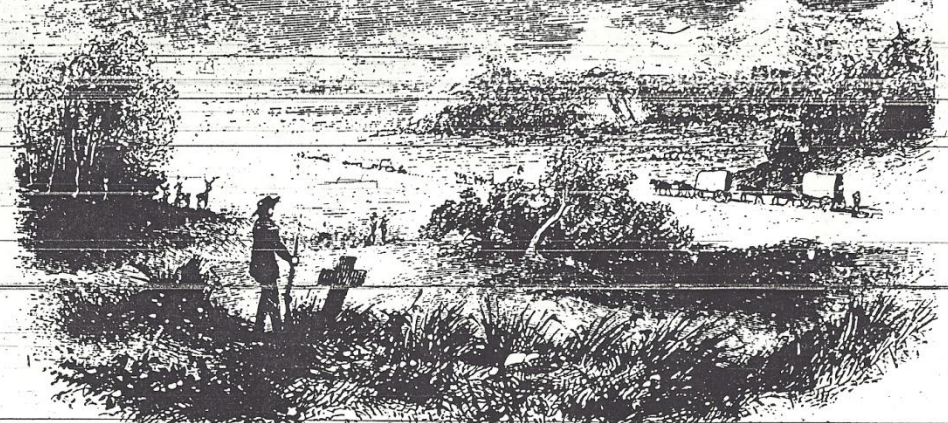


History sleuths explore a new clue on the trail of

# THE LOST WAGON TRAIN



Three characters in the saga of the errant wagon train: Jane Elliott, Sidney Saylor, Elijah Elliott.



**T**HE QUESTION of whether Oregon's "Lost Wagon Train" was ever really lost has been debated for decades. But a missing portion of the caravan's trail apparently is lost no more.

After a two-year search for traces that would show where the wagon train crossed the Sunriver tract, nature was discovered concealing the trail under a line of lodgepole pine trees. Staff naturalist David Danley of the Sunriver Nature Center says he had looked for the trail on the ground, but the clue turned up in aerial photographs.

The Lost Wagon Train is one of the legends of Oregon history, a story climaxed by a dramatic Lane County rescue effort. Among present-day Lane County residents are descendants of either the rescuers or the rescued.

Danley said he had known the immigrant route passed close to present-day Sunriver. He began the search for the exact trail, hoping someday to find artifacts that could be part of a history exhibit at the resort's Nature Center.

"I was looking for a path, an opening through the trees," Danley says.

But it was while looking at aerial photographs that he was surprised to see a narrow line thick with trees that reached about a mile northeast to southwest, straight across the 3,300-acre Sunriver tract. On either side the trees are scattered and far apart.

Danley says the crowded trees took root in the wheel ruts during the first years after the wagons passed. Normally the loose, lightweight Central Oregon punice soil dries out quickly, and in the summer heat few lodgepole seedlings survive. But in the wheel ruts the soil was compacted, moisture was retained and the seedling roots reached good soil.

Aerial photography is widely used in modern archaeology. The unusual vegetation pattern indicating past human activity is just the sort of evidence it can reveal, says aerial photographer Gordon Wilkinson of WAC Corp. in Eugene.

"From the air you see the whole perspective; you see a pattern that is not apparent on the ground," he says.

Since the discovery, the Sunriver governing board has designated a quarter-mile strip of trail near the resort community's headquarters as a historic site. Signs will mark the trail location and next summer Danley plans to search for artifacts to support his claim that the string of trees is a trace of the famed wagon train's route.

It was 120 years ago that the wagons crossed Eastern Oregon headed for the Willamette Valley. Short of food and with winter near at hand, more than 1,000 people began a difficult crossing of the Cascades. Their rescue is one of the dramatic events of Lane County's history. However, as the story has been retold over the years,

it has been warped into a legend of starvation and death that at times is more fiction than history.

The story has three chapters. It began in 1832 when the territorial legislature endorsed the idea of a wagon road across the Cascades, to open a direct route from Fort Boise to the Willamette Valley.

No money was provided, but legislators said the road would save 300 miles from that which settlers followed on the Oregon Trail route, which near present-day Vale turned north for more than 100 miles and followed the Columbia River to Portland before turning south into the Willamette Valley.

Development-minded Lane County pioneers, intent on attracting new settlers, collected money and in the summer of 1837 a crew started work near present-day Lowell. They were to hack a wagon path through the timber, cross the Cascades south of Diamond Peak and reach the Deschutes River south of present-day Bend. While the work was under way a Lane Coun-

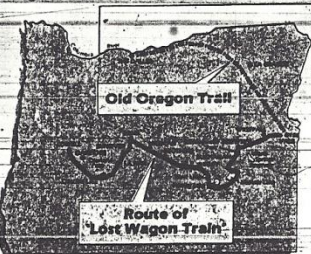
ty man, Elijah Elliott, was to take word of the new route to Fort Boise. He was going to the Idaho country to meet his family and on return was to lead immigrants to the new mountain crossing. His trek back to Lane County would cross roadless miles of sage brush and desert, with snow-capped Diamond Peak and the Three Sisters mountains as landmarks.

Elliott left Lane County early in the summer of 1833, going by way of Portland. Heavy snow still covered the unexplored Cascade passes. But the Lane County road builders were confident that by autumn the Free Emigrant Road would be ready.

"Free" was included in the name to increase the road's appeal. Travelers on the Oregon Trail had to pay fees to use the Barlow Toll Road at Mount Hood or face the cost of going by raft on the Columbia River from The Dalles to Portland.

The next chapter in the Lost Wagon Train

Turn to LOST, Page 3C



New trail cut 300 miles from the long trip to the Willamette Valley

stories by BILL LYNCH

## Time veils wagon route

**T**ODAY A MOTORIST going east to west in Oregon, from Ontario to Eugene, will cross and recross the route of the "Lost Wagon Train."

Ranch fences, a few communities, back roads and highways are major evidence of change. But for many of the miles the sagebrush hills, rimmock and open country appear much as they did to the immigrants of 1833.

The 20 wagons in Elijah Elliott's group left the Oregon Trail near present-day Vale, the city 12 miles west of the Oregon border on Highway 20. A few miles west of Vale the wagons crossed to the north side of the Malheur River. The route angled north, going close to the present-day Bully Creek Reservoir and tiny Westfall — both now served by side roads. The route passed near present-day

Dreweby and then Sinkingwater Pass, near what is now the Highway 20 summit. The wagons ran south of Highway 20 near Buchanan, then went along the west edge of the Crow Camp Hills and entered the present-day Malheur Wildlife Refuge. One of the campsites on the trail was at the "Sole House Spring" near the headquarters buildings.

After wandering in the Harney Basin, the pioneers left by way of Silver Lake, still staying close to present Highway 20. The trail and the highway intersect near today's communities of Riley, Brothers and Millican.

The wagons reached the Deschutes River at what is now Bend. The east end of the Free Emigrant Road ended at the Deschutes, north of the present-day community of Gilchrist and

Turn to ROUTE, Page 3C

*"Hunger was their constant companion after meager provisions ran out. Starvation was not a stranger. Colonel*

*Cline, a member of the train, had retained a few head of cattle that he hoped to build into a herd in Oregon.*

*“One by one, the beef had been butchered. Each beef killed was tough and stringy and cooking kettles had more bones than meat. One of the hungry men remembered, ‘meat was so tough I couldn’t stick a fork in the gravy’.*

*“Their situation became increasingly hopeless. A young school teacher, Martin Blanding, set off ahead to search for help. He followed the cut of the Free Emigrant Road Builders down to the valley. He straggled as far as the river and some valley settlers spotted his campfire. Word of the wagon train’s desperate plight quickly spread through the valley. Emergency provisions were volunteered by the settlers, loaded on packhorses and hurried back upriver to the starving emigrants.*

*“With emergency food to tide them over, they regrouped, leaving a trail of broken wagons and discarded household items. Even their precious and indispensable dutch ovens were sacrificed because of weight. Their hardships were far from over.*

*“Rescuers from the valley hurried the newcomers down from the mountains, and helped them set up winter camp in abandoned cabins as the late fall storms began in earnest. Many families of this grimly determined group established their hard-earned homes and became prominent in the affairs of the new land that they won by so much heartbreaking effort. 48*

While Oliver and Margaret didn't keep a diary of their Elliott Cutoff adventure, Margaret *did* provide some information in her affidavit of April 1915: "In April of 1853, she and others started for the State of California for the gold fields, and somewhere east of the Cascade Mountains, while on their way to California, they were persuaded to turn westward and cross the Cascade Mountains and follow down the Willamette River into the Willamette Valley.

"The Willamette Valley was pictured as one of the fairest valleys in all the land, where they could procure farms and erect homes. Being so convinced, the wagon train turned off the main trail going to California. The train had been on the road six months from the time it started until it made this western turn over the Cascades. The train wandered in the mountains lost for a further period of three months \* and finally came down the mountain side striking the head waters of the Willamette River and followed it for many miles where the ox-teams and wagons were kept in the creek bed for a road and progressed in that way until the water got so deep that the cattle could not keep their footing. Then they had to go on the bank and a road had to be built. Finally, the train was met by a pack train of miners and prospectors who relieved the destitute and hungry by furnishing them flour and food, many of the train being destitute and in a starving condition; the cattle having died and wagons having been left in the timber or on the road.

"That upon arriving in the Willamette Valley my husband, Oliver P Brewer, filed on what is known as Fern Ridge." <sup>41</sup>

\*Actually, they started their trip on Mar 16<sup>th</sup> and arrived in the Willamette on Oct 20<sup>th</sup>; 7 months & 4 days total travel.

*Oliver and Margaret arrived in Lane County on 20 Oct 1853.*

*These dates are hard to understand what with Oliver arriving on Oct 20, Wm arriving on Oct 23 and Elvira arriving on Oct 1. These dates are the ones the emigrants put on their Donation Land Claim applications. \**

*After their long journey, when Elvira, William and family, and Oliver/Margaret S. finally got together in Eugene, they searched around and applied for land in the Fern Ridge area about seven miles northwest of Eugene.*

*Meanwhile nothing had been heard from the California bunch for some time. After all, the Pony Express hadn't been invented yet and mail was still traveling at the speed of oxen unless it was sent by ship. Even then it was not too dependable. In December of 1854, John Manning (Jack) Brewer found himself on board ship having just left San Francisco and heading for the Columbia River and Portland. [59](#)*

*Back in August, the California group had left the Oregon Trail at the Raft River crossing and were headed southwest through Nevada to the gold fields in California. They apparently withstood the rigors of the trail and arrived safely.*

*John D. Bacon became busy prospecting for gold and later, also farmed. In April of 1855, still in California, John*

- **Re Arrival Dates in Oregon.** The arrival dates given by immigrants on their Donation Land Claim applications has been used cautiously because some applications listed several different dates of arrival in Oregon or they may not have remembered the exact date. Also, at that time Oregon Territory included all of present day Idaho and part of Utah. If they used this part of the territory as their arrival in Oregon, it could make a difference of a month or even more. [102](#)

D and Sally had their 4<sup>th</sup> child, William J. Bacon. While they were still in California they had two more boys: Jesse James Bacon, b. 1858 and Frank Bacon, b. 1864. Their daughter, Mary Emily Bacon passed away in 1868. [51, 52](#)

By 1870, John and Sally and their five boys were living in Battlecreek Twnp, Tehama County, CA. [51, 52](#)

Their next move was to Tuscarora, Elko County, Nevada. By 1880, two of the boys had left home and Frank, William and Jesse remained. [52](#)

John D. died on the 15 Jan 1905 in Fresno County, CA [53](#)

In the meantime, back in 1854, Jack Brewer apparently did not see any opportunities either in gold mining or farming in California and decided to go on to Oregon where he could still apply for a Land Claim. [54](#)

Early in December of 1854, Lucinda and Patrick Laird, along with Jack Brewer packed up and got ready to take an ocean trip up the Pacific Coast to the Columbia River and on to Portland. The dangers of sailing this route, especially in the wintertime, were well known. In fact, there were so many shipwrecks along this stretch of coast, that in later years it became known as the "Pacific Graveyard". Those who were shipwrecked and made landfall, still had to face the dangers of starvation or of capture and/or death at the hands of the Indians. [55, 56](#)



San Francisco Harbor, 1850's

*However, going by ship was still the best way. There were settlements all along the coast at almost every inlet and bay that could shelter a ship from storm. But there were very few roads connecting these communities and the spaces in between were still wilderness. Travel by horse or wagon would have been extremely difficult and with snow on the ground, probably impossible.*

*At any rate, Jack (Lucinda's brother) met the Lairds on the dock in San Francisco on the morning of Dec 20, 1854: Patrick, Lucinda and their two kids, Samuel T. (3 yrs) and John W. Laird (1 yr), and all headed for Oregon. <sup>59</sup>*

*The ship, the SS Southerner, was a two masted side-wheel passenger steamer of 338 tons. The ship was powered by wind and the steam engine could be brought into service*

during periods when the wind was slack or when the power of both steam and sail was needed. 57

The Southerner left the dock at 10-1/2 o'clock that 59 Wednesday morning. She traveled north making scheduled stops at Eureka and Crescent City, delivering freight and picking up and unloading passengers and mail. 59 As they traveled from one stop to the next, the passengers had been enjoying the view. It was beginning to get choppy, though, and the sun had gone away. 59

The food in the galley was good but some of the passengers were beginning to get sea sick as the wind was picking up and the sea was running rough. 56



**Sketch of the SS Southerner from a description: a Two Masted Side Wheel Steamer**

The weather was turning thick and foggy and they weren't able to make a stop at Umpqua or at other scheduled stops. Finally, five days after leaving San Francisco, they arrived at Tillamook Head. 56, 59





### **Tillamook Head just South of the Columbia River**

*Here swells were coming in from the west and now squalls with heavy rain were frequent. As they came abreast of the Columbia River, crossing the bar did not look promising. The captain was fully aware that in ---“1849 alone there were four major wrecks: the Aurora, the Morning Star, the Sylvia de Grasse and the Josephine. In 1852, five ships were destroyed on the bar .” So Christmas day was spent* <sup>60</sup>

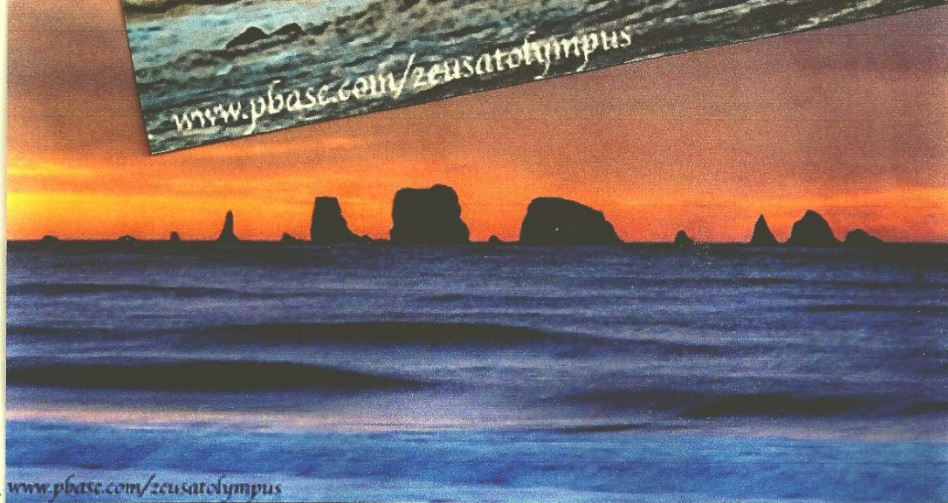
making offshore. This was difficult to do as it was now blowing a gale from the south west. The engine was laboring and would not go over center without the help of the sails. The ship had sprung a leak and water had been rising in the engine room. Only the steam pumps kept the water from getting up to the level of the boilers. 59,

The weather was not clearing up and the captains' options were dwindling. He decided to go north along the coast and seek shelter in the Strait of Juan de Fuca. 59



*Photo by John Vass*

“A small island was seen through the fog”



Scenic Views: Navigation Hazards *Photos by John Vass*

If Patrick, Jack and Lucinda didn't know they were in serious danger, they became suddenly aware when the captain ordered the passengers to form a bucket brigade to bail out the rising water in the hold. 59

With the bailing gang organized, the captain then ordered the crew to lighten the ship by throwing some of the cargo overboard. Lucinda must have been horrified at this news and then anxious in her effort to convince the two children they were safe. Lucinda could find some comfort with fellow passenger, Mrs J. H. Chapman and her three children. They were all on the same boat. 58

During the night of the 25<sup>th</sup> and the day of the 26<sup>th</sup>, all hands were desperately bailing water. They continued for 18 exhausting hours and still the water was rising. 61, 65

Now the engine was working slowly and the gale was increasing in intensity. Sometime during the night the engine stopped completely. It was clear they would not make Cape Flattery and The Strait. 59, 61

A small island was seen through the fog. Their only chance seemed to be to anchor in its lee and wait out the storm. There was hardly time for passengers and crew to breathe a sigh of relief for within a half hour the ship started dragging anchor. Capt Sampson immediately gave the order to slip the chain and let her drift. Now, according to James Gibbs in his book, "Shipwrecks off Juan de Fuca", Capt Sampson ordered his crew into action, "... chopping down the masts, dismantling the stack, and throwing overboard heavy pieces of cargo and gear..." 58 permitted the craft to gain some stability". Then the fury of the storm was manifested in a monstrous wave that hit the floundering ship broadside and crashed her onto the

beach. "She was lightened enough for the breakers to push her higher on the sandy beach, and by morning she rested up among the driftwood, the tide having ebbed away from her battered timbers." <sup>62</sup>

Mornings' light, on Dec 27<sup>th</sup>, allowed Jack and the Lairds and their bewildered children to escape to solid ground and to their surprise, find themselves still alive. With almost disbelief they looked around to find that everyone on board had survived. The relief was so great that it hardly seemed to matter that while they were on firm ground, they were also in the wilderness in the middle of a furious storm of rain and wind with no idea of how they could get food and little idea of which direction to go. They could only hope they wouldn't meet hostile Indians.

After three days of "---Trudging over rocks and fallen trees and through ravines, they came at last to the Indian settlement at Neah Bay where they found refuge ---." --- and fortunately these Indians were friendly. <sup>62</sup>

News of the shipwreck was slow in getting back to civilization due to continuing stormy weather. Jack and the Lairds must have been ecstatic on the morning of January 13, 1855, when the steamer 'Major Tompkins' arrived at Neah Bay and received all survivors. <sup>58</sup>

Jack, Linda and Patrick and the other survivors were all welcomed onboard the Major Tompkins. The officers and crew treated the survivors royally, even giving up their own quarters for the comfort of the rescued. ---and after <sup>58</sup> nearly starving, Jack and the Lairds must have really savored the ships' mess.

**Pioneer & Democrat, Olympia, Washington Territory, Saturday  
January 20<sup>th</sup>, 1855: Passenger List & Description of the Rescue**

with other settlers; which right did not invent them with a fee in these compons, and ceased as soon as the lands were taken up for cultivation or their cattle and stock should be disposed of.

*Resolved*, That as good citizens, and loyal to our treaty obligations, we shall use all endeavors to have respected the rights and immunities of these companies as thus defined.

On motion of Mr. Miles, the meeting adjourned.

**SETH CATLIN, Chmn.**  
George Gallaghen, }  
J. W. Witny, } *Secretaries.*

**\*NOTE.**—The name of Mr. STRICKLER, of King, was unintentionally omitted as being a member of the committee, in the proceedings of the former meeting, published last week.—Ed.]

Mr. Clark, the whig candidate for governor of New York, is said to have been elected over Bronson, the democratic, and Ullman the "wake cantata" candidate, by a small majority. From all accounts, the lights in the wigwags of the "wake cantata" party in the east, are rapidly going out, and ere the ides of another Presidential election, the present prospect bids fair that that party will be known only in name. It is confidently asserted that the organization was instituted to operate on the coming Presidential campaign; but its creation has been

"Too rash, too untimely, too sudden;  
You like the lightning, but dare cease to be,  
How can you say it lightning?"

**News by Stuart's Express!**

TOTAL LOSS OF THE  
**Steamer Southerner!**

**PASSENGERS AND CREW ALL  
SAVED!**

CARGO A TOTAL LOSS—ESTIMATED AT \$70,000

FULL PARTICULARS:

**Arrival of the "Tompkins!"**

Just as we were going to press, the steamer *Major Tompkins*, Capt. Hunt, made her appearance in our harbor, we therefore have delayed to insert interesting news brought by her. She arrived at Guidings' wharf, last evening 6 o'clock, bringing the mails and Stuart's press, together with the officers and passengers of the late steamship *Southerner*.

The *Major Tompkins* left Olympia early 4th, and on her arrival at Stead Sound the U. S. revenue cutter "J

go ahead on her—engine would not pass the centre. Orders were given to slip the chain and let her go on shore, which was instantly done. When she drifted upon the beach orders were then given to cut away the masts and smoke stack, after which she remained comparatively quiet. At day-light on the morning of 27th, succeeded in landing all the passengers and crew safely. About an hour after, the after-part of the ship broke in ten thousand fragments. The three days following it was blowing a perfect hurricane, 27th, 28th and 29th. On the morning of the 30th, wind and sea having gone down, Capt. Sampson, with Mr. Blaisdell, 2d officer, and five of the crew, left in a boat for Port Townsend with the intention of procuring assistance. On the morning of January 13th at 10 a. m., the steamer *Major Tompkins*, Capt. Hunt, arrived and received us on board and left at 2, p. m. Arrived at Olympia Jan. 19th, after having experienced heavy gales of rain ever since entering the Sound. Much praise and credit is due to Capt. Hunt, J. H. Seran'on Esq., Mr. T. Hunter and all her officers, for the many

trials they have undergone every their ing coa we by ev w t t u

sen, but it was no use. He got to "slip her chain and let her go. She struck and broke in two quite at ease, and the next day landed safely. On the 30th Capt. Blaisdell, 2d officer, took a boat and started for Port Townsend for assistance. By constant exertions for four days and nights, he completed one of the most perilous ever undertaken by any man. The boat being too thick for the current, he started before 3 p. m. for Olympia. Before I close, I must say that could be done for our countrymen and Capt. Hunt, that I shall ever gratefully remember many attentions received, during to-be remembered trip up the coast.

I am your obt. servt.  
R. N. S.

**Capt.** We, the undersigned of the steamship *Southerner*, late disastrous passage, feel it duty, as well as a privilege, to do in conjunction with the coast

- LIST OF PASSENGERS—R. N. McLaren,**
- Maj. B. Alvord, U. S. A., A. J. Aekley,
  - Mrs. Barnum, J. H. Chapman, wife and 3 children, J. Laird, G. Oppenheimer, J. A. Young, J. Pond, G. Oppenheimer, J. Titecomb, C. H. Door, A. & Co.'s express
  - M. Couvelly, J. M. Brewer, J. F. Munson, Chas. Garrey.
- Officers.**—Capt. F. A. Sampson, James Freeborn, purser; J. L. Foster, 1st officer; N. J. Blaisdell, 2d officer; F. Clayton, engineer; Jno. Harling, assistant eng.; Wm. Thompson, steward.
- Crew.**—D. Harris, George Long, J. C. Kennedy, and James Cain, firemen; L. Paul DeMaines, and R. Wilson, coal pass.; C. O. Koefe, bar-keeper; S. Parne, C. Peckers, H. Hallinger, Wm. Price, E. Bradley, John Brown, W. E. Hurlburt, seamen; John Law, and John Martin, cooks; D. McMillan, F. O'Brien, and L. Mulleney, waiters.

*From Neah Bay, the ship headed for Olympia and arrived there on Friday, January 19<sup>th</sup>. The newspapers displayed a passenger list as well as numerous accounts by various survivors and observers and included the wonder and thankfulness of all. 58*

*From Olympia, Jack and the Lairds made their way to Portland and then south to Eugene where they reunited with the rest of the clan. They must have entertained the family with tales of their trip for a long time afterwards.*

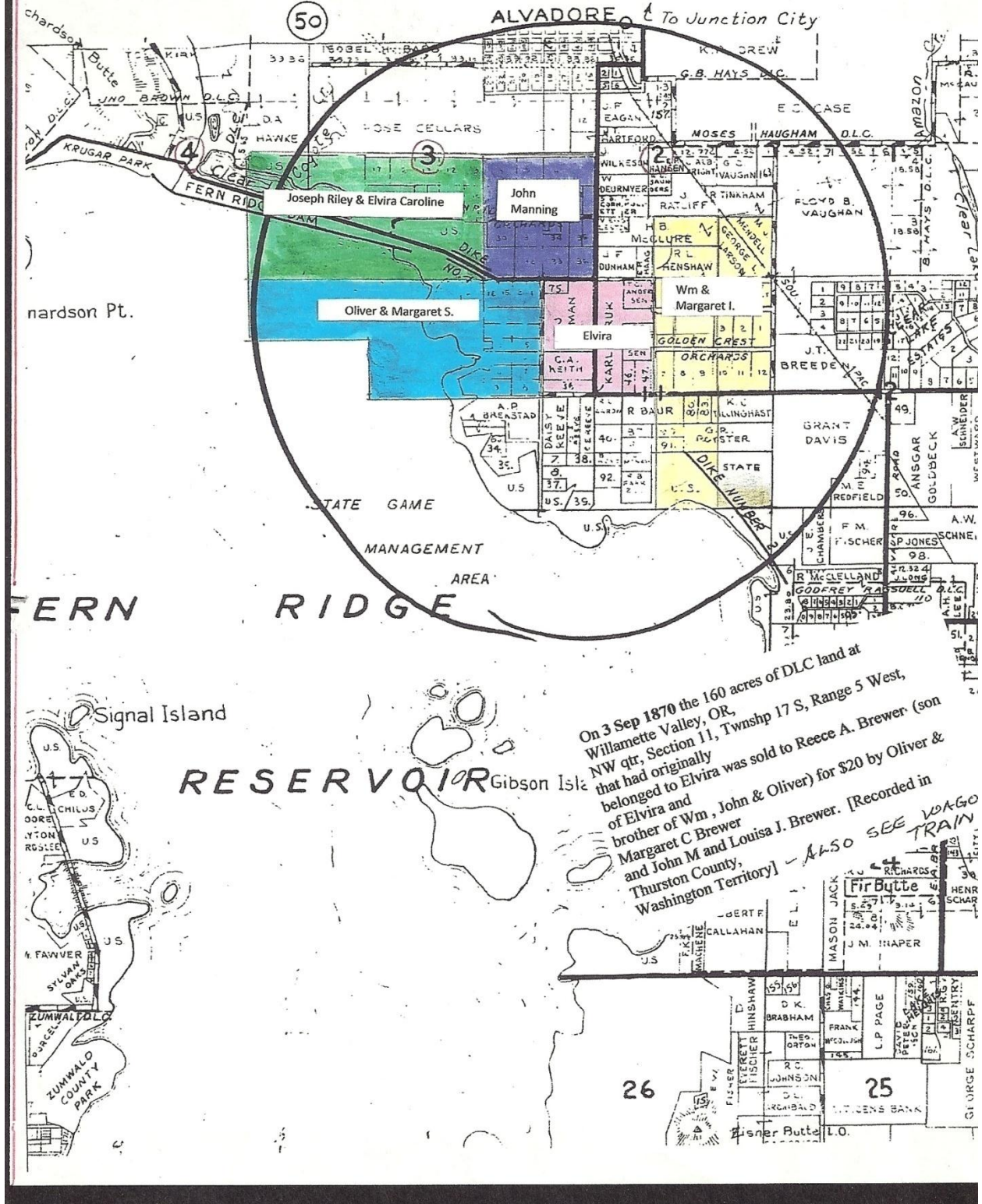
*In the absence of Jack and Patrick, the boys, Wm and Oliver had made claims on acreages about 7 miles north west of Eugene, OR. Patrick Laird later acquired 124 acres through the Homestead act of May 20, 1862, at a location about 14 or 15 miles due east of Eugene. 68, 69, 70*

*Patrick and Lucinda Laird settled on their 124 acres, farmed and raised a family of eight children; six boys and two girls. Patrick died on 30 Aug 1876 at age 51, and was buried at Pleasant Hill Cemetery, Lane County, OR. 68, 72*

*Lucinda remained on the farm with her kids. She died on 2 Dec 1908, at age 78. She is also buried at Pleasant Hill Cemetery in Lane County. 73*

*Elvira Caroline, Williams' youngest sister, had met a young man on the trip from Arkansas, Joseph B. Riley. They had married in Eugene on the 20<sup>th</sup> of Oct 1854 and together they claimed 320 acres. 67*

# TOWNSHIP 17 S..RANGE 5 W.W.M. LANE COUNTY ORE.



50

ALVADORE To Junction City

chardson Butte  
JNO BROWN D.L.C.  
KRUGAR PARK  
FERN RIDGE  
ROSE CELLARS  
JOSEPH RILEY & ELVIRA CAROLINE  
JOHN MANNING  
OLIVER & MARGARET S.  
ELVIRA  
Wm & MARGARET I.  
GOLDEN CREST  
ORCHARDS  
BREEDEN PIC  
GRANT DAVIS  
STATE GAME MANAGEMENT AREA  
DIKE NUMBER

FERN RIDGE

Signal Island

RESERVOIR

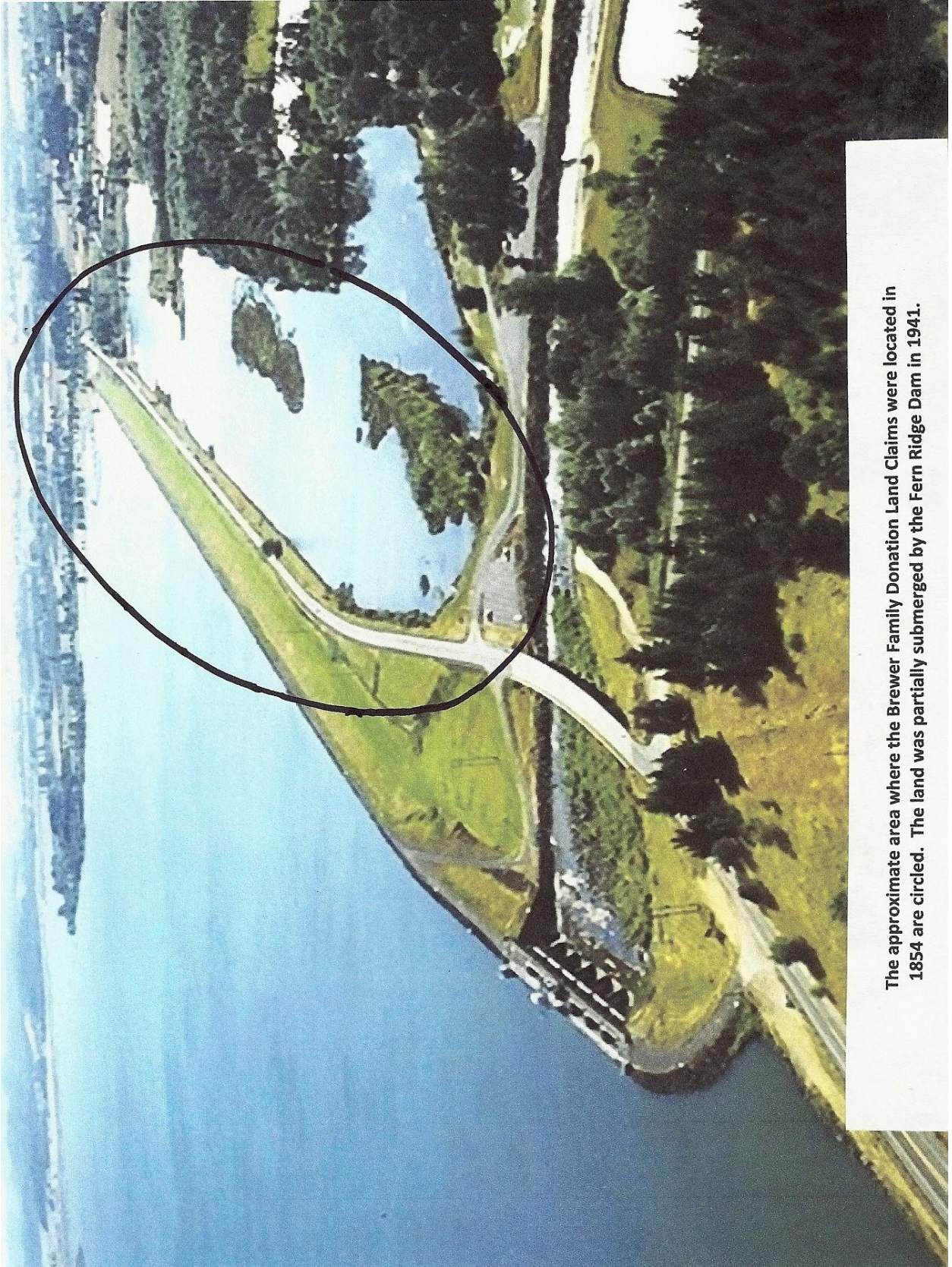
On 3 Sep 1870 the 160 acres of DLC land at Willamette Valley, OR, NW qtr, Section 11, Twnshp 17 S, Range 5 West, that had originally belonged to Elvira was sold to Reece A. Brewer (son of Elvira and brother of Wm, John & Oliver) for \$20 by Oliver & Margaret C Brewer and John M and Louisa J. Brewer. [Recorded in Thurston County, Washington Territory] - ALSO SEE WAGO TRAIN

ZUMWALD COUNTY PARK

26

25





The approximate area where the Brewer Family Donation Land Claims were located in 1854 are circled. The land was partially submerged by the Fern Ridge Dam in 1941.

*John Manning (Jack) Brewer's claim showed an arrival date in Oregon of 15 Feb 1855. He settled on 160 acres of Donation Land Claim #2099 on 2 Mar 1855. 71*

*Except for the Lairds, all these parcels of land were adjacent to each other in the area called Fern Ridge. Years Later, in 1941, Fern Ridge Dam was built and much of the land formerly owned by the Brewers was submerged under Fern Ridge Reservoir.*

*In the autumn of 1855, Indian trouble had become so serious that on the 15<sup>th</sup> of October, 1855, the Oregon Territorial Governor proclaimed the need for two battalions of volunteers for service in the Rogue River country. Each volunteer was to furnish his own horse, arms and equipment. 74*

*On the 23<sup>rd</sup> of October, Jack was mustered into Company "A", 2<sup>nd</sup> Regiment of the Oregon Mounted Volunteers, commanded by R. L. Williams. He served in the Rogue River Campaign and after reaching the rate of Sergeant Major was honorably discharged on Feb 6, 1856. \* 75*

*In 1860, Jack, along with the rest of the family, moved to Grand Mound, Thurston County, W.T.*



**John Manning Brewer  
1827-1906**

\*Rustin Canada Brewer served in the Rogue River Indian campaign in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Regiment of Oregon Mounted Volunteers and was also under the command of Robert .L. Williams, but in Company "E".

When Jack's sister, Elvira Caroline, died on 27 Dec 1861, her three boys were taken in by the rest of the family. <sup>76</sup> After Jack married Louisa Jane Johnson on 22 Oct 1863, they took in and raised two of Elvira Caroline's boys; John W. Riley and Henry C. Riley. Her baby, Benjamin, was raised by his aunt, Margaret I. (Grandma Sparks). <sup>77</sup>

Jacks' wife, Louisa, died on 18 Jan 1874, six weeks after the birth of her 5<sup>th</sup> child, Lewis Allen Brewer. Sarah Ann (Sally) Bacon, Jacks' sister, left Tahoma County, CA and her five boys, and travelled to Rochester to stay and help take care of the children still at home there; Emma Rose (9), Ellen Jane (6), John W. Riley (16) and Henry C. Riley (13). <sup>77, 77c</sup>

Sally & John had moved to Tuscacara, Elko County, Nevada by 1880. Frank, Wm & Jesse were still at home. <sup>77c, 78</sup>

In 1900 Sally and John D Bacon were living in Fresno, CA with one son remaining at home: William J. <sup>78</sup>

John D passed away on the 15<sup>th</sup> of Jan, 1905. Shortly afterward Sally left Fresno, California, to visit Jack at his place in Rochester, Thurston County, Washington State. She was accompanied by her son William J. Bacon. <sup>53</sup>

John Manning (Jack) Brewer died on 17 Mar 1906. Sarah stayed on to help as did William. In 1910, Ellen Jane (Jennie), Emma Rosa, Sally and William were still on Jacks' old homestead in Rochester. However, Emma Rosa died on 8 Dec 1911. Within two months, Ellen Jane passed away on 6 Feb 1912. Three months later, **Sarah Ann (Sally) Brewer Bacon** died on 20 May 1912 at age 87,

at Jacks' old place. Sally was survived by four of her sons: John, Richard, William and Frank. <sup>79, 80</sup>

Meanwhile, back at Fern Ridge in 1858, the Brewers' had settled on their Donation Land Claims and after many hardships, four years, and the required improvements, they came into ownership of their land. \*

In 1858, William and Oliver negotiated with Thomas and Malissa Markham for the purchase of 320 acres of land in Douglas County near Roseburg. The transaction was completed on 8 Jan 1859. <sup>81</sup>

On 20 Jan 1859, Wm and Margaret sold their Fern Ridge DLC land to Thomas Markham for \$1000. <sup>103</sup>

Tragically, William died just one week later on 28 Jan 1859. \*\* <sup>66</sup>

He was "buried in the Fern Ridge Cemetery, a tract of land donated by his brother, Jack Brewer. Many years later the caskets were removed to Pleasant Hill." \* <sup>82</sup>

William was born in 1818 and spent his boyhood with his brothers, Oliver, Jack, and Reece, and his sisters, Sarah, Lucinda and Elvira Caroline, on their fathers' (Johns') Arkansas self-sustaining farm where he learned the many skills needed for success in the hard work, hand-made, and home-grown life-style of the Frontier. <sup>82</sup>

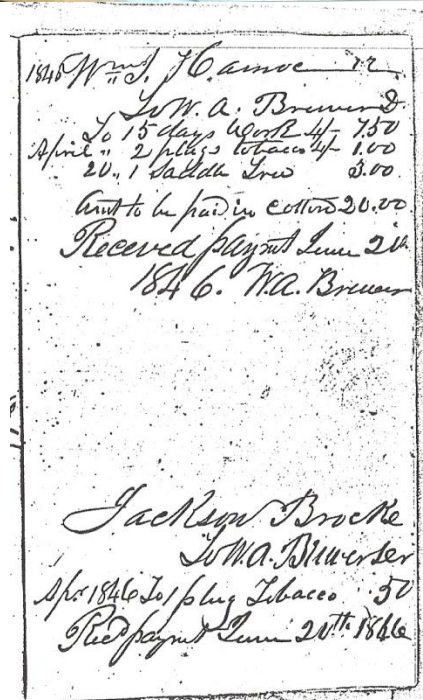
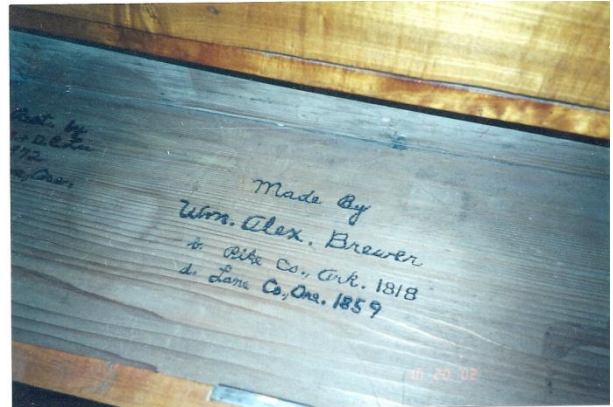
- Reece Brewer told the story that: "---there was so little to eat in Eugene City that first winter that many ducks were consumed. These were fish eating ducks, not grain fed. He swore never to eat duck again".

\*\* Wilbert Brewer told Aileen there was a rumor That Wm A. Brewer had taken his own life.. He felt responsible for all the families and it overwhelmed him.

*William Alexander Brewer* married Margaret Isabelle Scott. She was born Oct 29, 1820, in the Abbeyville District, of South Carolina. At the age of 5, with her father, James Scott, and stepmother, two brothers and two sisters, she moved, in 1825, to Georgia where she attended a girls seminary. Her family moved to Arkansas in 1837. <sup>83</sup> Four years later, on Feb 25, 1841, William and Margaret were married.



*Wm Alexander Brewer built this chest of drawers, probably in the 1850's*



A page from Wm A's Ledger Book

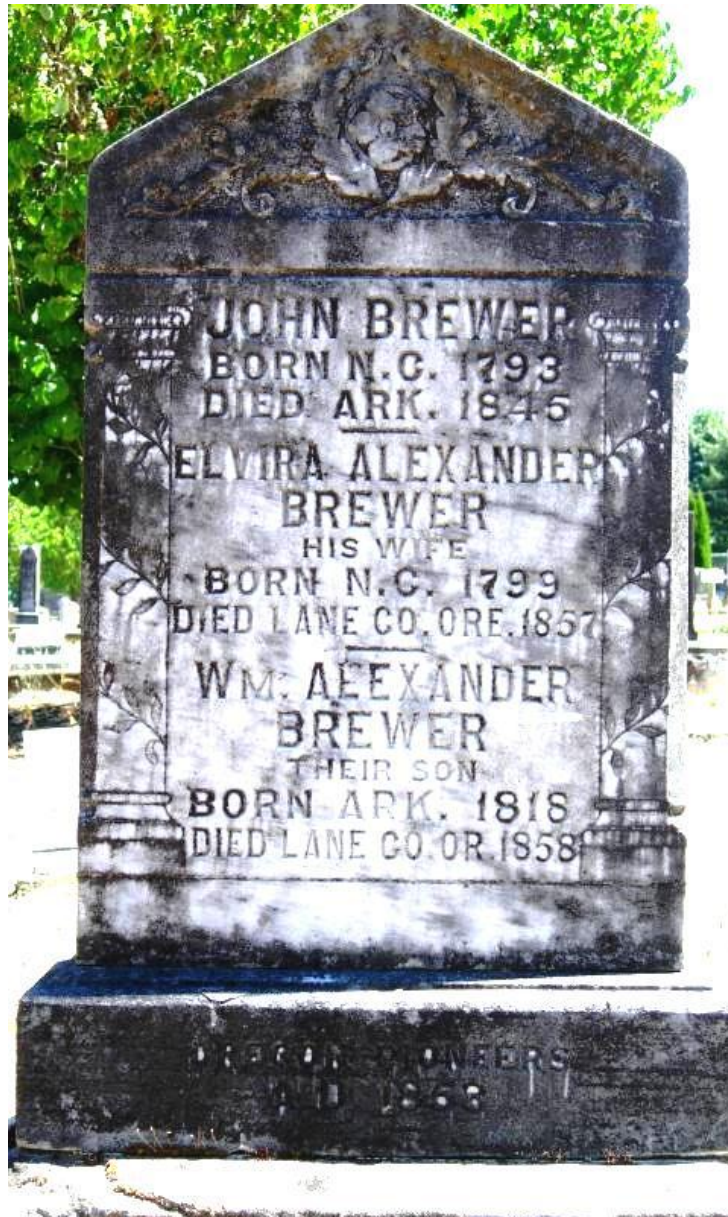
*In early life, William clerked in a store and later taught school. It was said that he developed a strong mechanical ability and given a model he could duplicate almost anything.* 84

*A chest of drawers, built by William, was handed down from Mary Lucinda Brewer Roundtree Harris, to Margaret Scott Roundtree then to Bessie Smith Sellich then to her sister, Dora Ellen Smith Lee. Dora's husband, Merle Lee, inscribed the information on the drawer. The chest is now in the possession of Margaret Ellen Lee Liebert, gg granddaughter of William and Margaret. Margaret Liebert and her husband reside at 4411 NE Alameda, Portland. OR 97213.*

*A search was made for a diary that someone was supposed to have written. A ledger book did show up which was kept by William. The first part of it was apparently a record of cash payments and receipts to friends and family with dates ranging between 1846 and 1852. The latter part of it was a hand written *Guide to Oregon* starting near Fort Hall and ending in Oregon City and Salem. Unfortunately it was not a diary.*

*William was a very enthusiastic worker in the Methodist church, acting as minister for several years to a congregation in Fern Ridge".* 84

*After William's death, there seemed to be a lot of confusion about the Douglass and Lane County properties.*



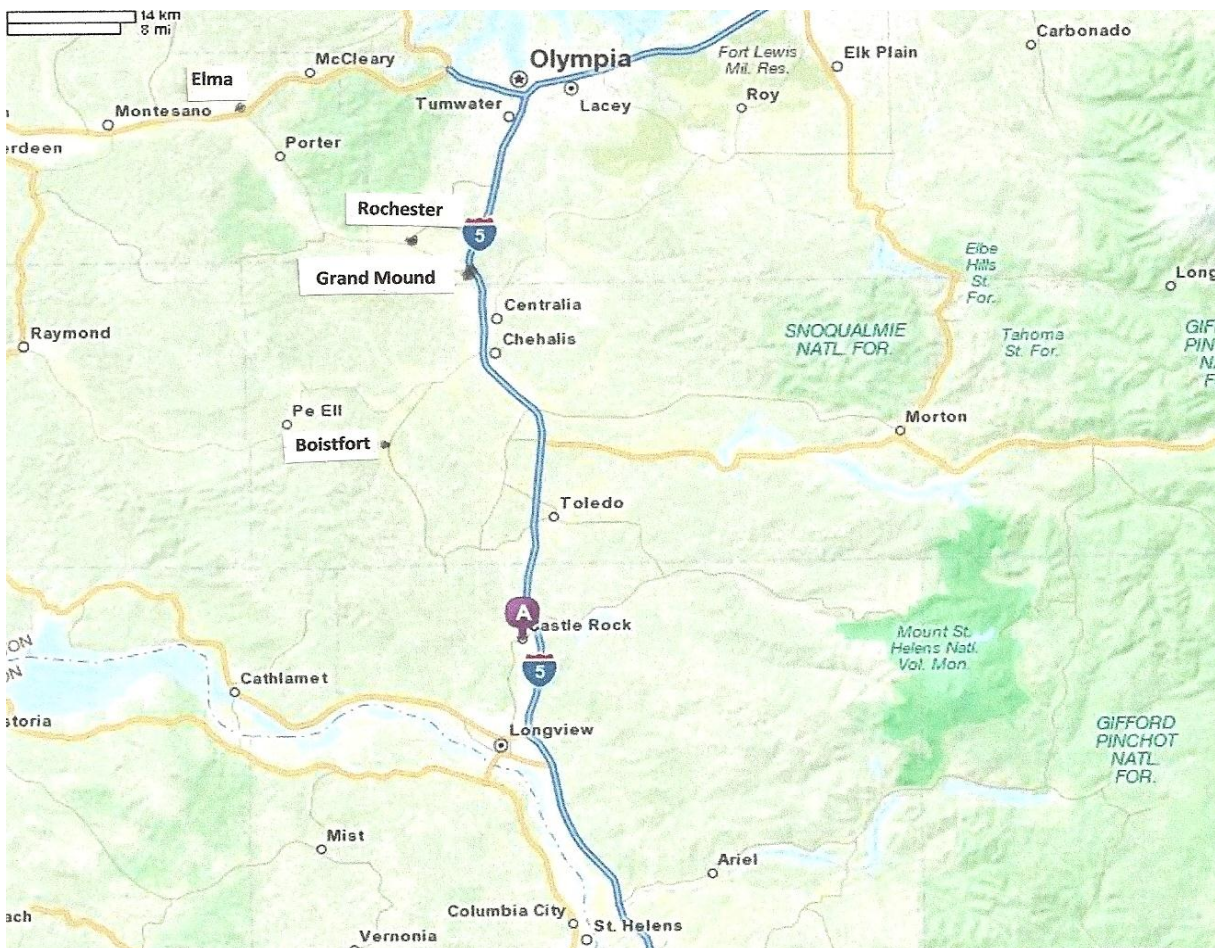
**John Brewer died and was buried in Arkansas. Elvira died in 1857 and was buried at Fern Ridge Cemetery (a plot from Jack Brewer's DLC , designated as a cemetery). William died in 1859 and was also buried at Fern Ridge Cemetery. Years later, the graves of Elvira and William were removed to Pleasant Hill Cemetery in Lane County, OR. This memorial stone was photographed by Rustin Porter Brewer.**





*Jack Brewer sold his Donation Land Claim in Lane County in July 1859. Oliver and Margaret S. sold their 320 acres in Feb of 1860. A month later, March of 1860, Oliver and Margaret S. sold their 160 acres in Douglass County for \$350; and Margaret Isabelle sold her half (160 acres) for \$900. The purchase and resale of the Douglass County property resulted in a net loss. 81*

*Later, Margaret Isabelle, as recounted by Jennette Brewer Spoor, “sold and moved to Grand Mound, Washington Territory. Here in this wonderful country, she and her large family endured many hardships, often hungry and*



Grand Mound-Rochester-Elma-Olympia Area Map

ill clothed, many times the little girls had but one dress apiece. At night, after they were in bed,, she would wash and iron their dresses, so they would be neat and clean for school the next day. Kind neighbors divided their substance with them even to the last side of bacon. 82

“While living here she married Henry Palmiter, and in 1861 they moved to Boistfort, VT. Sorrow and suffering stalked their pathway. An epidemic of scarlet fever and diphtheria swept the country, taking its toll of little children. On May 29, 1864, little William died. The following day, May 30, 1864, Orlando passed on. Both were buried in the same grave. 82



**Margaret Isabelle Scott  
Brewer Palmiter Sparks  
1820-1913**

“George was working away from home, The 12 year old boy, hearing that his little brothers were dead, hastened home. He too contracted the disease and in just two weeks he was gone. 82

“The husband, Mr. Palmiter, (Henry) was absent from home, in Oregon, working in a mine. He had a strong premonition that all was not well (and that Margaret needed him). He came home to find the boys had been dead several weeks.” 82

*“Three years later he too was taken, and again she had to face hardships alone. She decided to make another change in residence. This time to Elma, WT.”* 82

*John Fletcher Brewer, Margaret's oldest son was born in Arkansas on 2 May 1844. He had made the Arkansas to Oregon trip in 1853 at the age of nine. By the time John F. was 19 he was independently supporting himself.* 95



**John Fletcher and  
Elvira Ann Axtel Brewer**

*In 1865, he took a land claim of 162.27 acres in Thurston County, under the 1862 Homestead Act.* 96

*John had met and admired Elvira Ann Axtel and on 26 Apr 1865 they were married. The details of their marriage are unclear. However, Jennette Brewer Spoor said that, “this was a runaway marriage”.* 97

*In spite of that, they had 10 children. They moved to Milton, OR, sometime after 1881. Their 10<sup>th</sup> child, Milton, was born there on 19 Nov 1883 but they were with heavy heart when he died the same day.* 97

*The family moved from Milton and --- “took up residence on a farm near Lexington, remaining there until purchasing a farm three miles east of Goshen”. John F. was very successful with his various farms where he grew trees (on a timber claim) and fruit, vegetables and livestock.*

95, 97

In the spring of 1902, John set out on a tour of the North west with the intent of visiting relatives.



Cover and a Page from John Fletcher's Rememberence Book

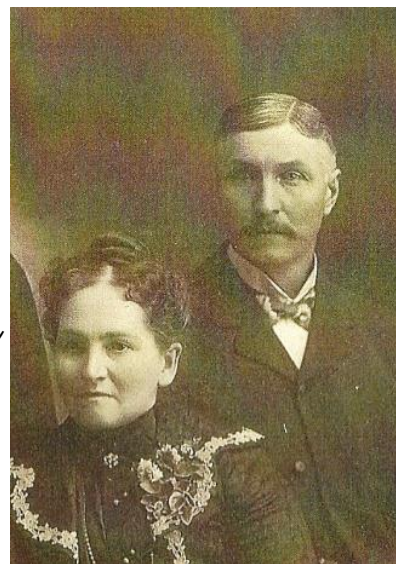
He purchased a booklet of blank pages. As he travelled around from place to place, probably by horse & buggy and partly by train or street car, he invited his aunts, uncles, nephews, cousins and nieces that he visited to sign their name and leave their comments. The fifty pages were filled with pictures, childrens' drawings, news items, happy thoughts and 125 names. <sup>98</sup>

John Fletcher died 20 Dec 1931. <sup>99</sup> John's wife, Elvira Ann Axtel Brewer died on 12 Jan 1939. <sup>100</sup>

Back when Henry Palmiter died, Margaret's 2<sup>nd</sup> son, **James Henry Brewer**, who had been only three years old at the time of the trip to Oregon, and who was now --- "a youth of 16, managed the farm and worked to support the family until his mother married J. G. Sparks of Olympia. At age 18, 'JH' started out in life for himself. First, he cleared a piece of land and received a horse for his pay. He then borrowed money and bought 40 acres near the present site of Satsop. As soon as he was 21 years old, he homesteaded an adjoining 80 acre tract and engaged in farming on a more extensive scale".

"On December 20, 1871 he married Emma Smith, a Chehalis County resident. She was born April 30, 1854 in Watertown, Dodge County, Wisconsin. \*

"After his marriage Mr. Brewer (J.H.) farmed for a year and then received a government position of Head Farmer and Teamster on the Quinalt (Indian) Reservation. He worked there for five years, returning to his homestead in April 1876. He again farmed until 1880 when he accepted a position of manager of the creamery and general store near the Quinalt (Indian) Reservation for a year before once more returning to his farm. He engaged in the dairy business and carried on a large business in raising grains and livestock." 85

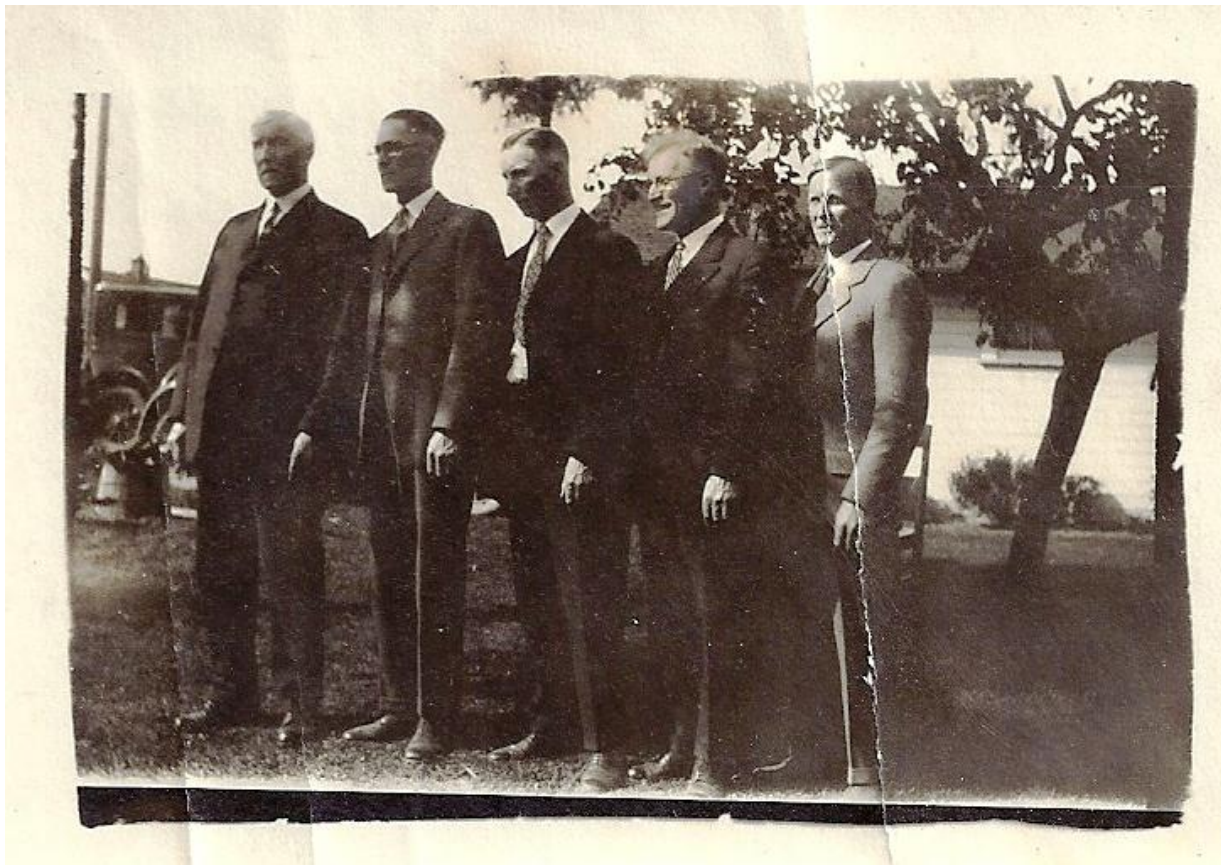


**Emma (Smith)**  
**James Henry Brewer**

Emma & James Henry were both active in the Elma M. E. church. J.H. was Superintendant of the Sunday School for

many years. Emma hosted many church dinners, meetings, and church social events: 93

*"With George C. and E. G. Morgan, James Henry was instrumental in organizing and incorporating the Satsop Mercantile Creamery Company with a capital of fifteen thousand dollars. This proved to be a profitable venture and was considered one of the most important establishments of the county.*



**The 5 Sons of James Henry & Emma Brewer. The 3 on the Left are Clarence, Bernard and James Rufus but in Unknown Order. The 4<sup>th</sup> is Alonzo Orlando. On the Right is Edgar Leon Brewer. Ca 1927**

\* Albert Moore Brewer ( who is also a g grandson of James Henry Brewer-) told me the story of James Henry when he was building a cabin near Satsop and at the same time was working at the Quinalt Indian Reservation some 40 miles away by horseback. He asked Emma Smith to marry him and Emma's father said "No, come back when the cabin is finished.". James Henry **did** finish the cabin and it worked out well for all of us (descendants), otherwise we wouldn't even be here. JHB

Mr. Brewer (James Henry) served as Commissioner of Chehalis County for four years and was considered one of the most efficient members who had ever been on the board.

He belonged to the I.O.O.F. Lodge No. 133 of Satsop.” <sup>85</sup>  
--- and was a member of the state legislature in Olympia in 1909 <sup>86</sup>

Emma died in Tacoma on 12 May 1928. <sup>129</sup> James Henry Brewer died on 6 Apr 1939 in Seattle, WA. <sup>101</sup>

**Champion Bramwell (CB) Mann** married **Evangeline St Clair (Eva) Brewer**, youngest daughter of Margaret and William, on 16 Dec 1873 in Olympia, Thurston County, Washington Territory. <sup>131, 89</sup>

CB Mann came to Washington in 1864. He was born 2 Nov 1842 in Summerhill Township, Crawford County PA. He left Pennsylvania on 20 Apr 1864 and travelled by train to New York. Then went, via the Isthmus, to San Francisco by steamer and arrived 28 May 1864 He continued on a 3 day steamer trip to Portland, OR. Then 2 days to his aunt, Mrs Carr, and then by wagon to Aunt Mrs. West Jefferson, then another day wagon trip to Brownsville and aunt, Mrs Colbert. <sup>131</sup>

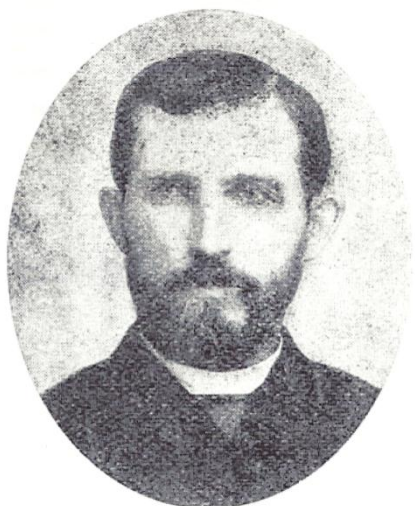
CB moved to Olympia in 1870 where he taught school for several terms. Shortly before marrying Evangeline Brewer, he bought in with Dr Willard in a drugstore in Olympia. He remained in this business for the next 38 years <sup>131</sup>

*Eva and CB had their first child, Avis, on 21 Jul 1875. By 1891 they had five more children: Helen Whipple, Ida Scott, Claude, Anna Viola and Gladys Margaret.* [131](#)

The 1900 Census shows: Thurston County, Washington Census, 4 Jun 1900, p. 203a, Sheet 3, 1st Ward, 502 Franklin St, House 64.

Champion B Mann	Head	55 yrs	Druggist	PA
Evangeline	Wife	44		OR
Ida Scott Mann	Dau	20	Nurse Apprentice	WT
Claude Brewer Mann	Son	18	At School	WT
Anna Viola Mann	Dau	10	At School	WA
Gladys M	Dau	8	At School	WA
Elizabeth Mann	Mother-in-law	78		b. Massachusetts

*Avis had married Charles Sparks sometime before 1900.*



Champion Bramwell Mann  
1844-1929

*CB left the drug store business in 1911 and switched to the seed and paint business, still in Olympia. In 1915 he was elected Thurston County Commissioner.* [131](#)

*CB was interviewed for the Thurston County Pioneers and it came to light that during his time in Olympia he held Public Office: eight years as County Treasurer, three years City Treasurer, two years as*

*Mayor, as well as his job as County Commissioner.*



**Jim Brewer**

---

**From:** "Roger Easton" <waresearcher@earthlink.net>  
**To:** "Jim Brewer" <jimbo@interfold.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, March 31, 2007 5:01 PM  
**Attach:** J G Sparks Hotel0259.JPG  
**Subject:** Emailing: J G Sparks Hotel0259.JPG

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# OLYMPIC HOTEL.

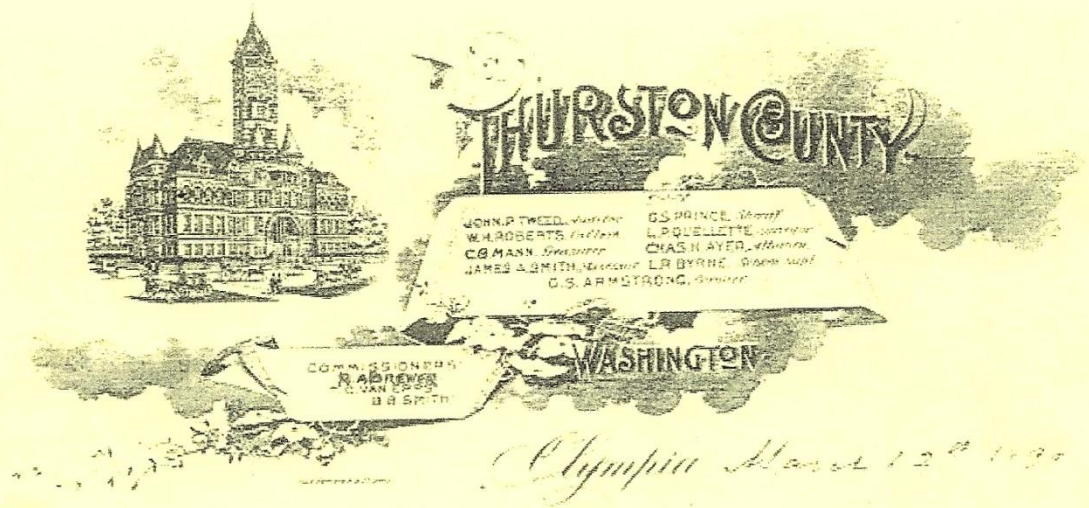
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J. G. SPARKS, Proprietor.

---

West Side Main Street, between Second and Third,  
**OLYMPIA, W. T.**

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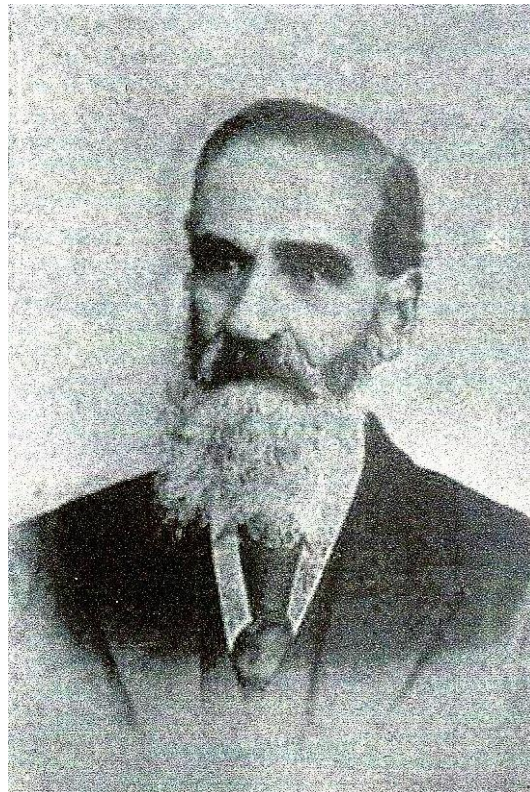


Thurston County Letterhead from 1890.  
R. A. (Reece) Brewer, Commissioner; C. B. Mann, Treasurer

*It was in Elma that Margaret met John G. Sparks, who resided in Olympia. He was a widower with two small daughters, Millie and Sarah Sparks. <sup>87</sup>*

*John and Margaret Isabelle (Scott) Brewer Palmiter were married in 1868. Margaret brought her 13 year old daughter, Evangeline St Clair Brewer, and her 7 year old nephew, Benjamin Franklin Riley, to the new household. John had three children by his first wife. Five year old, Millie Ann and three year old Sarah S. remained with him in their Olympia home.*

*John's son, one-year-old Francis M, was living with someone else. Francis is mentioned in John's 1889 will.*



**Judge John G. Sparks  
1811-1891**

*John G Sparks was of Scotch descent, and was born in 1811 near New Albany, Indiana. He went to Illinois in 1832 and was married there. He studied law under Judges Allen and Underwood, and was admitted to the bar in 1844, when he went to Columbia, California, where he set up an office and practiced law until 1858. He was located in The Dalles, Oregon, for two years, from there he went to Walla Walla, W.T.*

*“While in that city he was appointed Internal Revenue Assessor by President Lincoln, which he filled until after*

Lincoln's death in 1865. He came to this city in 1862, and is today one of Olympia's most respected citizens. He has served one term as Territorial Auditor and four terms as Justice of the Peace. He has gained for himself an enviable reputation here, and has a large circle of friends." 88

John Sparks moved to Olympia, W.T. from Walla Walla in 1862. He held a number of positions in Olympia: Justice of the Peace, Territorial Auditor, Attorney at Law, Hotel Proprietor, Financier and Real Estate owner. 88

The Puget Sound Directory and Guide to Washington Territory, 1872, listed city officers: Magistrate. J. G. Sparks.

--- and Stearns Directory, Portland, 1876-1877 listed John G. Sparks, Attorney at Law, as a "Leading Business Man".

John and Margaret Sparks were at home in Olympia in the summer of 1880 along with John's two teen age girls. Benjamin Riley, now 19, had gone out on his own. Millie Ann Sparks eventually married Charles Petterson and Sarah S. Sparks married James S. Brewer (son of Reece and Eliza Brewer). 88

John was recognized as a most respected citizen by the Olympia Tribune in its 1891 Souvenir Edition.

John G. Sparks died in 1891 on the 14<sup>th</sup> of November. Funeral services were held in Olympia at the Methodist church of which he had been a faithful member for more than a score of years. He was a man of high character and honorable life. In politics he was a stalwart Republican. 111

*The Elma Chronicle*, Nov 10, 1900, printed an item from the *Olympia Standard*: “Mrs. J. G. Sparks was 80 years old on Monday and the occasion was celebrated by a family gathering of her daughters, consisting of Mrs. (Martha Ann) Crow of Walla Walla, (James) Henry Brewer and wife (Emma Smith) and Mrs. (Amanda Caroline) Sherwood of Satsop, Mrs (Mary Lucinda) Harris of Boistfort, and Mrs. (Eva ) Mann of this city. The old lady is in excellent health, and will probably live to count many more returns of her natal day.” 110

Margaret Isabelle *did* live to count a few more natal days. She could reflect on the remarkable events of her life. She brought eight children safely across the plains, one of them even arriving along the way. They made it to the Willamette Valley in spite of Indians, accidents, disease, hunger and other depredations and hazards. Williams’ brothers, Oliver, Jack and Reece too, had all established homes, farms and families in the Thurston County area.

**Oliver P. Brewer** married Margaret Cunningham Stephens in 1853. It was just a few weeks before 16 Mar 1853, when the Brewer Family Wagon Train left Murfreesboro for California / Oregon. Oliver and Margaret could have called this trip their honeymoon. 128, 15

Five or six months later, Oliver and Margaret (sometimes called Margretta) left the group and turned off The Oregon Trail having been persuaded to take the Free Emigrant Road to Oregon. 41

They arrived in Oregon on Oct 20, 1853 and secured Claim DLC #2042, Nov 23, 1854:

NE NE qtr, Sec 9, Twsp 17-S, R5W, Lane County, OR 40

NE	Sec 10 Twsp 17-S, R5W,	160	
N-1/2 NW,	Sec 10 Twsp 17-S, R5W,	80	
SE NW	Sec 10 Twsp 17-S, R5W,	40	70

*Two months after arriving in Oregon, Oliver and Margaret had their first child, Sarah Elvira Brewer, born 26 Dec 1853. 128*

*More children arrived in the succeeding years: Charity, Milton W, Martin Luther, Theodore, Alonzo, and Loren Hines. 128*

*Oliver and his brother, Wm Alexander, on 8 Jan 1859, bought 320 acres in Douglas County. 81 William died on 29 Jan 1859 at Fern Ridge, Lane County, Oregon. This happened just 20 days after the purchase of the Douglas County property. 66*

*The Fern Ridge area was said to be poor farm land; too dry in the summer and very wet the rest of the year. Somehow the attempt to purchase better farm land in Douglas County went awry ---and then the death of William made the situation more difficult. The three brothers must have heard of good land up in Washington and decided to move the clan to Grand Mound, Thurston County, WT.*

*Oliver and family settled in Rochester and were there at the time of the dreadful Scarlet Fever scare in 1864. Unhappily they lost their daughter, Sara Elvira, 29 May 1864, and son, Martin Luther, on 14 Jun 1864. 128*

*Oliver made a number of moves during his career.. From Rochester they moved near Oakville, Grays Harbor County in 1866; Shelton, Mason County, WT in 1868; and they were*

in Mabton, Yakima County, WA, by 1905. Oliver farmed but he was also a minister of the Methodist Episcopal Church. In the archives of Washington State University at Pullman, there is a large file of information on Oliver and his connection with the church during his lifetime. [128](#)

Oliver died on 6 Jun 1905 at Mabton, Yakima County, WA. He was buried at Grand Mound Cemetery, Thurston County, WA State. [128](#)

Margaret Cunningham Stephens Brewer was also buried in the Grand Mound Cemetery. She died 1 Feb 1916. [128](#)

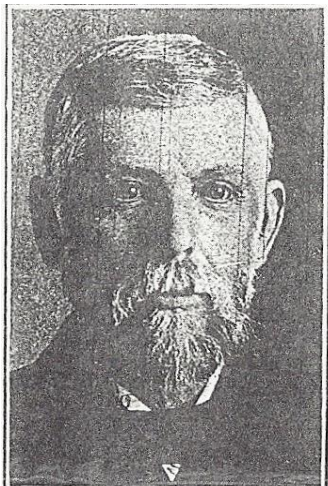
**John Manning (Jack) Brewer** established his homestead in Rochester. See p. 78 for more detail.

**Reece A. Brewer** grew up on his dad's, self sustaining, frontier farm a few miles west of Murfreesboro, Arkansas. He was 17 years-of-age in 1853, when he and his three brothers (Wm, Oliver, and John [Jack]), got together and decided to go to California or Oregon).. [120](#)

In Oregon, he was too young to qualify for a Donation Land Claim, but there was plenty of work for him to do on his brother's or his mother's place.

When Reece was 23 in 1858 he married Eliza Ann Johnson, a girl from Fern Ridge, on the 20<sup>th</sup> of May; witnessed by his brother, Oliver, and George W. Miller and officiated by J. M. Lakin. [120](#)

“Reece, with his wife (Eliza Ann) and baby, James; his sister-in-law (Margaret Isabelle) and her unmarried children; Oliver and his wife and children; and Jack, all



Reece A Brewer  
1835-1909

*moved to the Grand Mound (Thurston County) Washington Terr. in the fall of 1860.”* <sup>122</sup>

*In the next 10 years, Reese and Eliza Ann had four more children all born in Rochester: John S, Martha J, Ella M, and Emma.*

*The condition of the family turned to sadness when Eliza Ann passed away in January of 1870.*

*In September of 1870, Reece purchased the 160 acres of Elvira's old DLC land at Fern Ridge. When Elvira died, ownership had gone to Oliver and Margaret and to John M. and Louisa Brewer. They sold it to Reece for \$20.* <sup>123-124</sup>



**Reece Brewer Home. Built in the 1860's by Reece Brewer with his friend, George Miller, who was also a JP. On Scatter Creek near Rochester, Thurston County, WA. Now a State Bird Sanctuary and lived in by a State Park Ranger, when photo was taken in 1980's.**

Reece owned several small acreages around Grand Mound and in April of 1873 he made a large purchase of 467 acres on Scatter Creek near Grand Mound, known as the Donation Land Claim of David F. Biles, for \$2100. [124](#)

Five years after the death of his first wife, Reece married Flora E. French in Rochester, Thurston County, Washington Terr. on the 31<sup>st</sup> of January, 1875. [120](#)

Flora and Reece had three children: Effie F, Margaret E, Fred Reece. Three years after this marriage, Flora died in Rochester on 3 Dec 1878. [126](#)

By 1890 all of Reece's children had reached adulthood. About that time Reece married again and to 58-year-old Eliza (Lizzie) James. They lived together for six years and once again Reece lost his wife when Lizzie died on 5 Nov 1906. She was buried at Grand Mound Cemetery. [127](#)

Reece died 27 Dec 1909 at Rochester, Thurston County, Washington State. [120](#)

**Elvira Caroline Brewer**, William's youngest sister and Margaret Isabelle's sister-in-law, a young lady with curly red hair, had married Joseph B. Riley in 1854. Elvira Caroline passed away at age 22 in 1861. She left three boys: besides Benjamin, her baby, there was John W, and Henry C. Riley. [90](#)

John W. & Henry C. were taken care of by Oliver and Margaret S. for a time after Elvira Carolines' death. [90](#)

The two boys later moved into the household of Elvira Carolines' brother, John Manning (Jack) Brewer in Rochester, W.T. [90](#)



After Elvira Caroline 's death, Joseph B. Riley's 2<sup>nd</sup> marriage was to Emma F. Olney. <sup>91</sup> For some reason, Joseph B. left the care of his children to Margaret I. and Jack Brewer. Since Joseph's marriage to Emma Olney in Aug of 1863, no record has been found for either except for an appearance of Joseph living in the household of Michael Boty, Minister of Gospel, in Walla Walla Precinct, Umatilla County, Oregon, in 1870. The mystery remains of what happened to Emily F. Olney and what prevented Joseph from taking care of his own kids?

Margaret Isabelle, "Grandma Sparks" as she was lovingly called, enjoyed her 23 years of life with John Sparks, and an active social life in Olympia and freedom from many of the hard times, heartaches and disappointments of her earlier life .

In speaking of ancestors, Margaret (Grandma Sparks) said that, " --- the Scott family claimed that they could trace their lineage back to Mary Queen of Scotland". It was said by Jeanette Brewer Spoor, " --- I do not know, but I do know that our beautiful, gentle grandmother was a queen among women, worthy of emulation". <sup>87</sup>

Martha A (Brewer) Crowe recorded, "She died at the residence of her daughter, Mary Lucinda, and son-in-law, Edward Harris, at Boistfort, WA, and was buried in Olympia in the Masonic Cemetery by the side of her late husband, J. G. Sparks. She died in the triumph of a loving faith and I, as her oldest daughter, offer this tribute to her memory. She was always a good mother and may we all meet her in a better land. May we remember her loving counsel and her loving voice. Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord." <sup>92</sup>

*'Grandma Sparks', Margaret Isabelle Scott Brewer Palmiter  
Sparks died on the 14<sup>th</sup> of March, 1913.*

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## **Appendix**

- 1- Sources
- 2- Oliver Sr Descendant List
- 3- Estate Inventories
- 4- John & Margretta Stevens' 1855 Handwritten Letter
- 5- Transcript of Stevens' Letter
- 6- Old Time Tools
- 8- Bibliography

## **Oregon or Bust --- 1853**

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- 24 **DB Ward** pp 19-21 miss Brewer
- 15 **Rachel Brewer Spoor**, DeAnna Bass McGill email dtd 18 Aug 2005. p 1
- 25 **DB Ward** pp 32-33 buffalo calf
- 25b **DB Ward** pp 24-25 Bent's Fort, Old Pueblo
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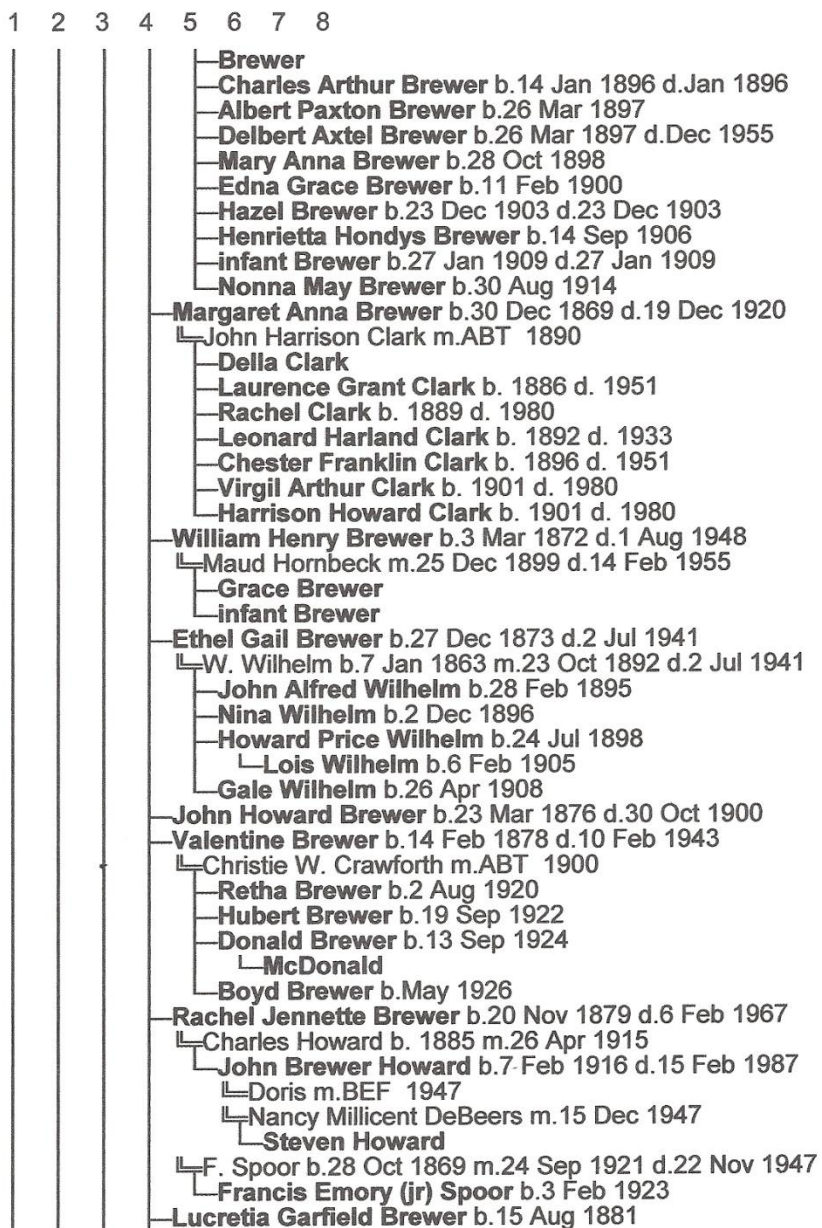
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Flora French m. 31 Jan 1875, 3<sup>rd</sup> Eliza (Lizzie) James
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State Library- Historical Department

## Descendant List from Oliver Brewer (Sr)

**Oliver (Sr) Brewer** b.ABT 1770 d.13 Oct 1834  
 └─**Sarah (unknown) Brewer** b.ABT 1772 m.ABT 1792 d.BEF 1804  
 └─**John Brewer** b. 1793 d.9 Apr 1845  
   └─**Elvira Alexander** b.5 Mar 1799 m.7 Sep 1815 d.15 Dec 1857  
     └─**Mary Brewer** b.12 Oct 1816 d.23 Oct 1816  
       └─**William Alexander Brewer** b.26 Feb 1818 d.28 Jan 1859  
         └─**Margaret Scott** b.29 Oct 1820 m.25 Feb 1841 d.14 Mar 1913  
           └─**Martha Ann Brewer** b.15 Jan 1843 d.16 Jan 1923  
             └─**W. Crowe** b.31 Dec 1829 m.8 Jul 1857 d.16 Aug 1900  
               └─**Mary Isabel Crowe** b.22 Jun 1858 d.16 Aug 1930  
                   └─**Harvey A Broxson** m.ABT 1879  
                     └─**Preston Wright** m.AFT 1879  
                       └─**Marion Douglas Crowe** b.25 Aug 1861 d.20 Feb 1921  
                           └─**Ida M Lockard** m.ABT 1885  
                             └─**Sarah Louvisa Crowe** b.25 Apr 1864 d.12 Jan 1932  
                               └─**L W Bennett** m.ABT 1884  
                                 └─**Clara Elnora Crowe** b.29 Apr 1866 d.May 1952  
                                   └─**Thomas Phelps Goss** m.ABT 1886  
                                     └─**Eva Margaret Crowe** b.11 Mar 1868  
                                       └─**A E Pierce** m.ABT 1888  
   └─**Mr Cummins** m.AFT 1888  
   └─**William Frank Crowe** b.11 Apr 1870 d.27 Oct 1951  
   └─**Beulah V Moore** m.6 Jun 1931  
   └─**George Edward Crowe** b.6 Jan 1872 d.12 Jul 1878  
   └─**Hattie Ann Crowe** b.9 Jun 1874  
   └─**C Frank Urmay** m.ABT 1895  
   └─**Lulu Amanda Crowe** b.8 Feb 1877 d.16 Jul 1926  
   └─**Franklin L Bass** b. 1872 m.1 Jan 1901  
   └─**Maybelle Bass** b.1903  
   └─**Frank L jr Bass** b.1904  
   └─**Ina Bass** b. 1907  
   └─**Geneva Bass** b. 1910  
   └─**Dean R Bass** b. 1919  
   └─**Ralph Scott Crowe** b.17 Jul 1879 d.17 May 1922  
   └─**Carrie Miller** m.ABT 1900  
   └─**Della Barbara Crowe** b.18 Sep 1882  
   └─**C E Cole** m.ABT 1900  
   └─**John Fletcher Brewer** b.2 May 1844 d.20 Dec 1931  
   └─**E. Axtel** b.28 Sep 1847 m.26 Apr 1865 d.12 Jan 1939  
   └─**Ulysses Grant Brewer** b.6 Mar 1866 d.06 Feb 1943  
   └─**Arthur Manning Brewer** b.5 Feb 1868 d.18 Dec 1932  
   └─**Henrietta Severighn** m.25 Dec 1894 d.22 Feb 1953

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

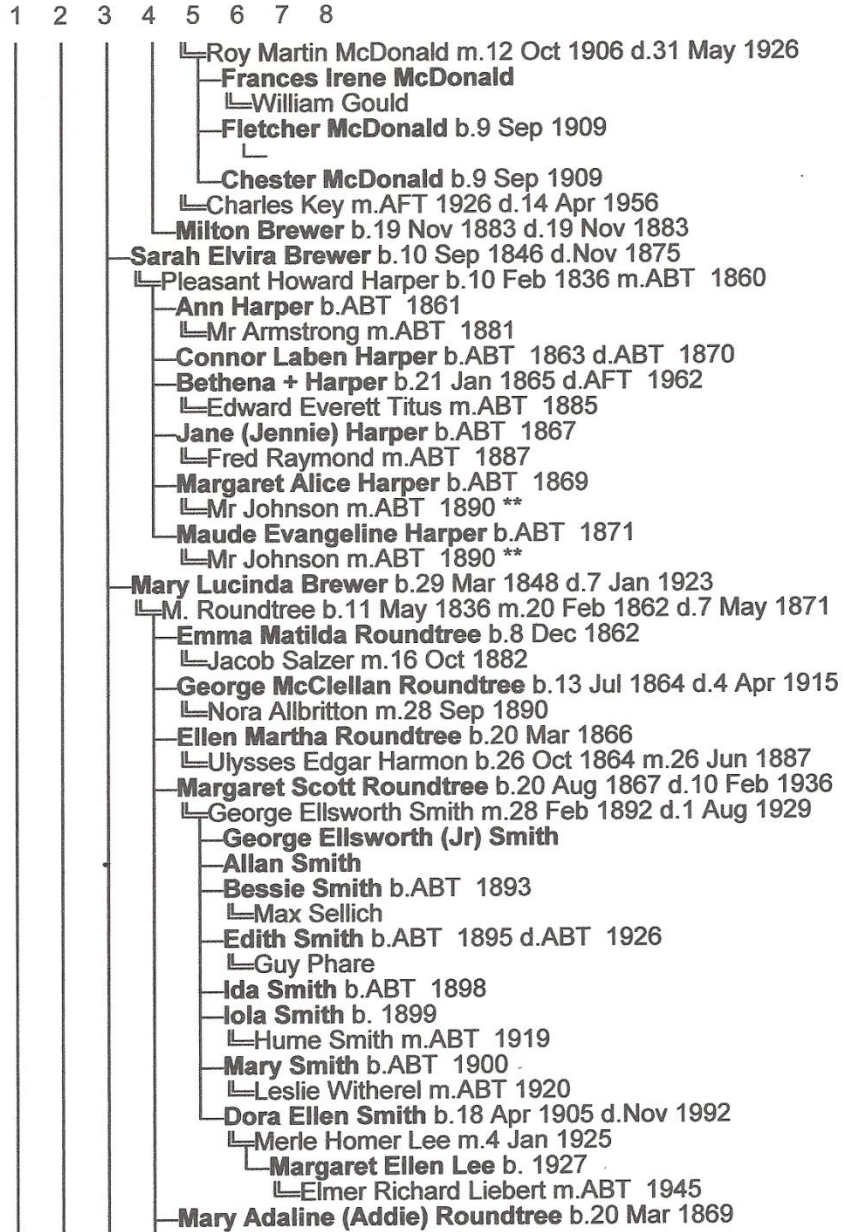
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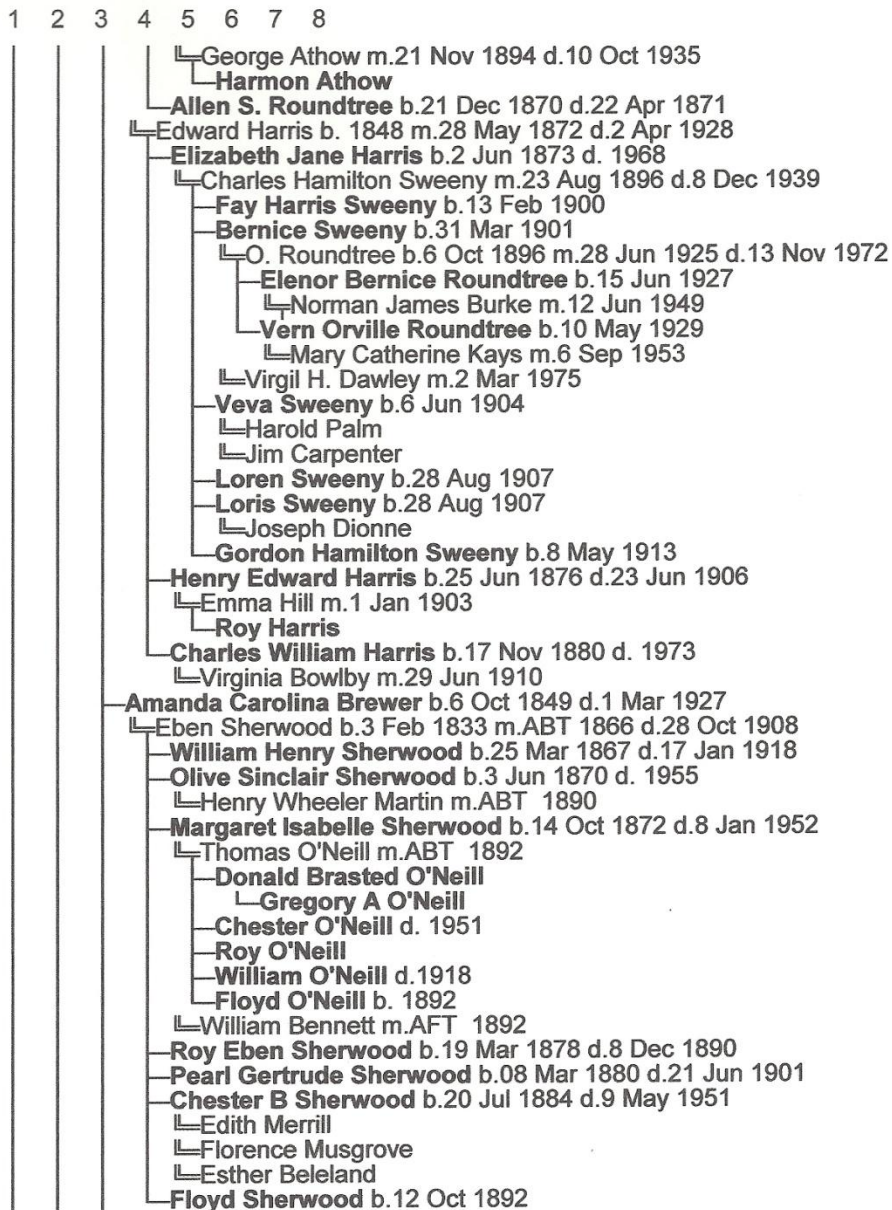
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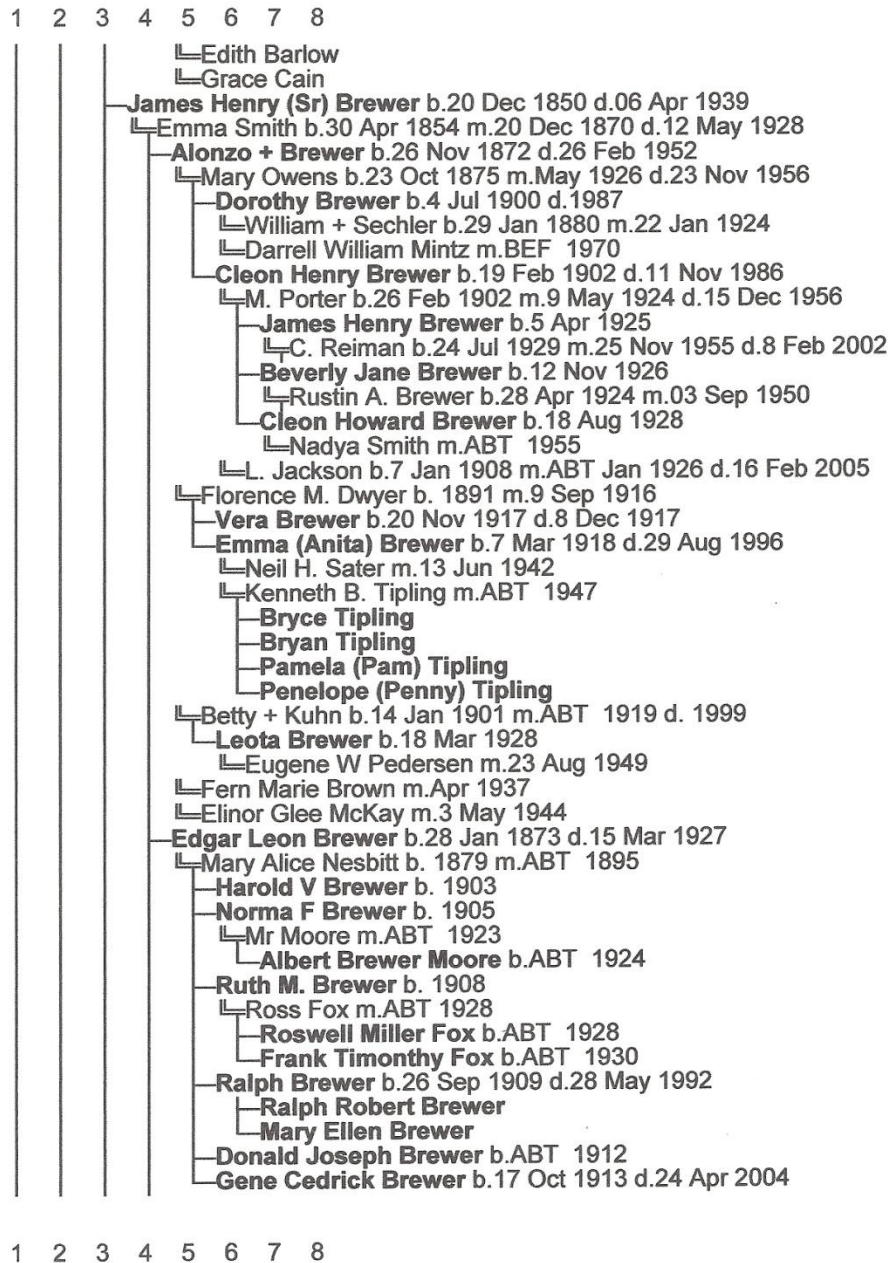
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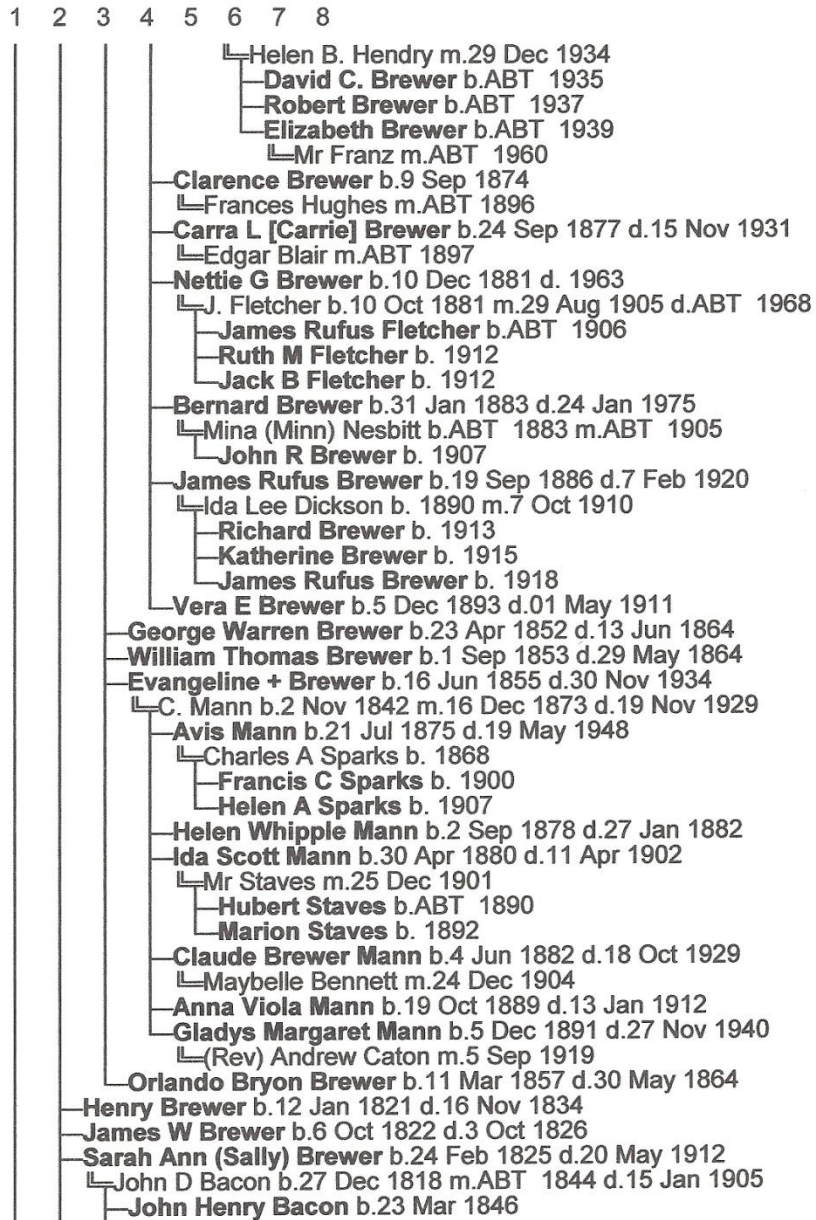
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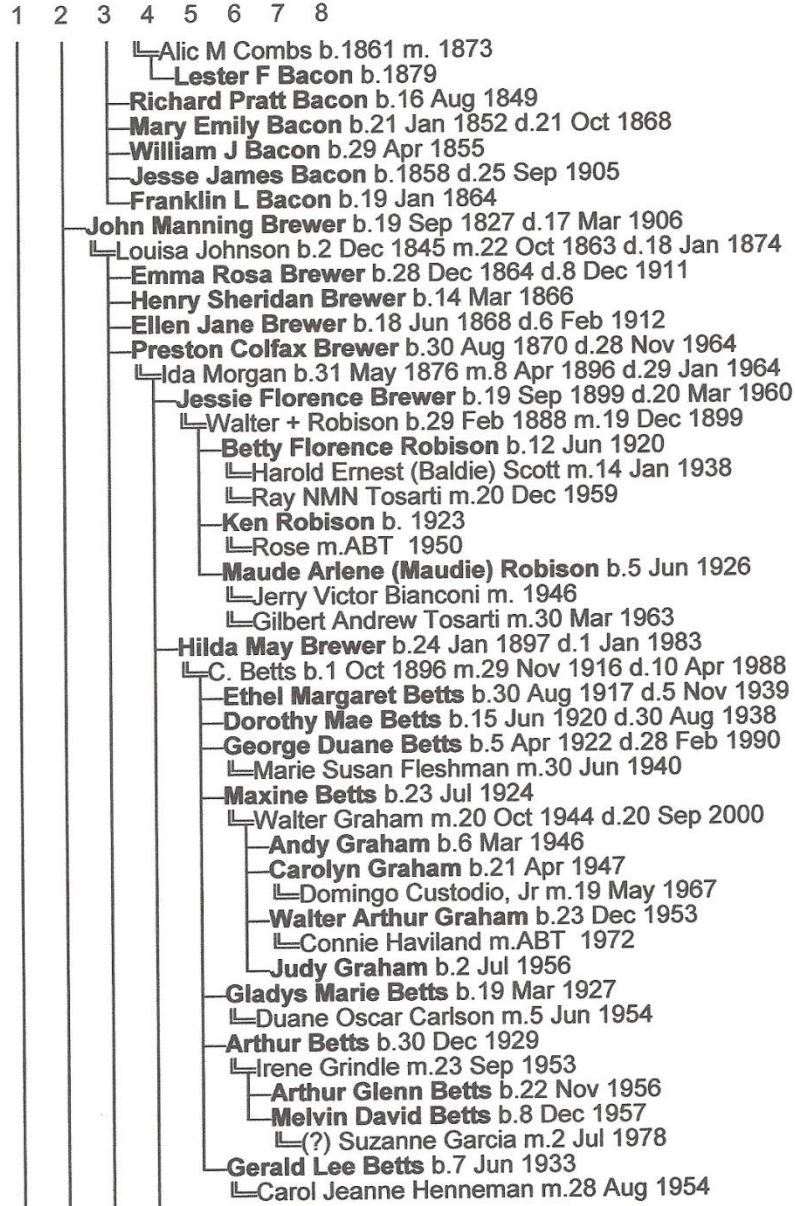
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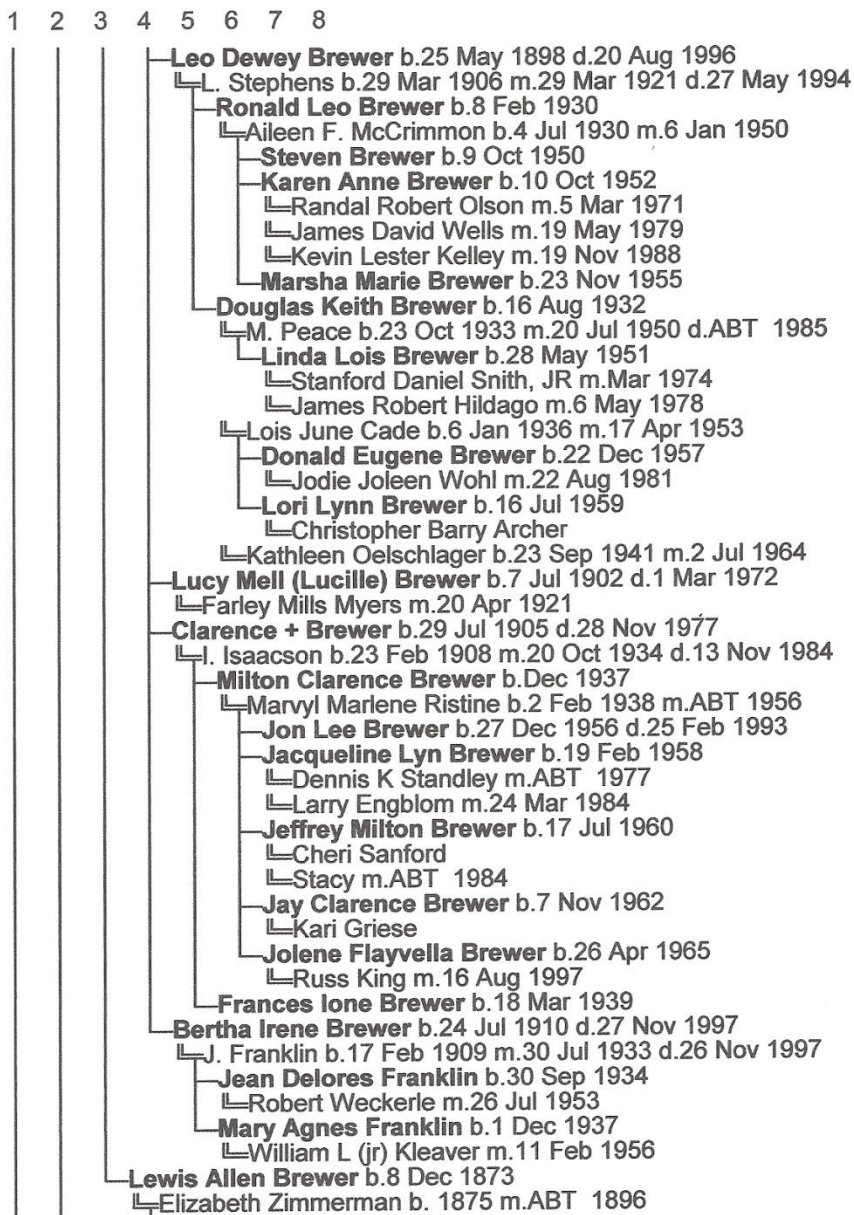
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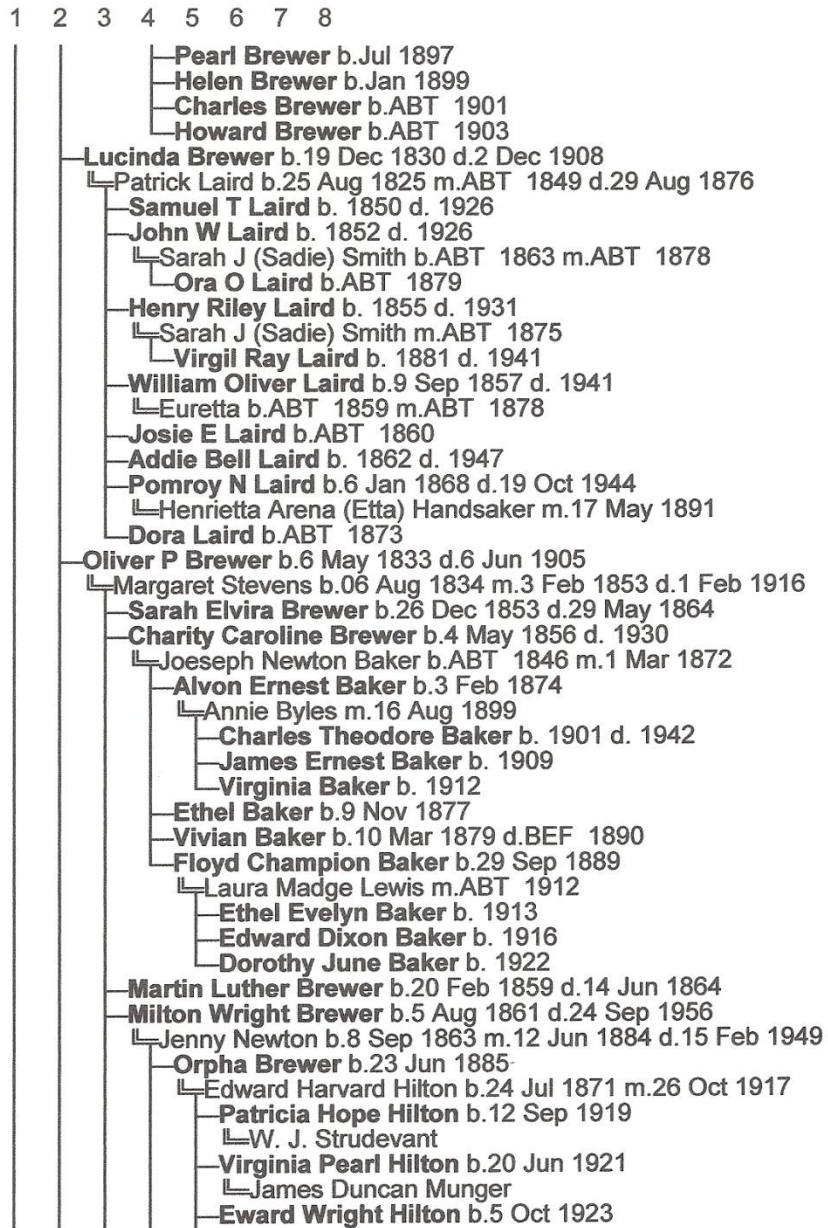
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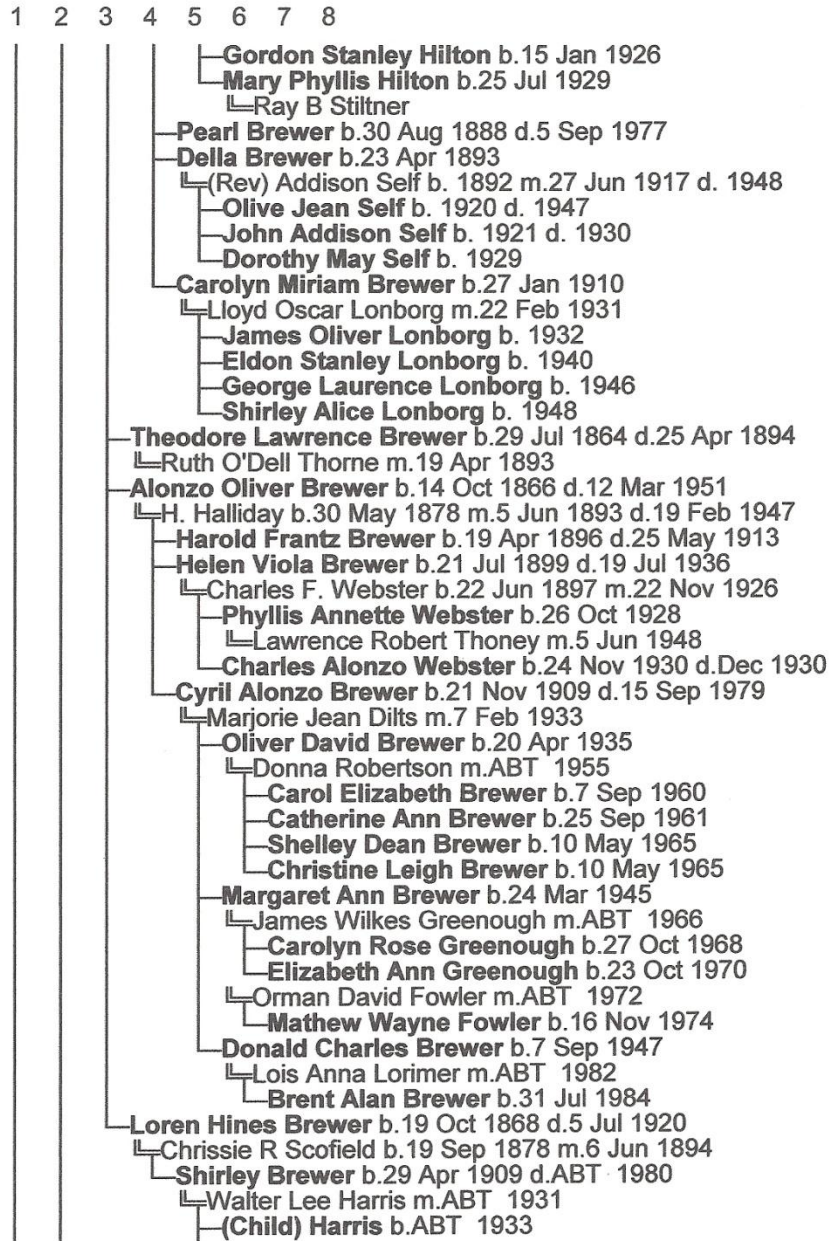
Brewer Family History



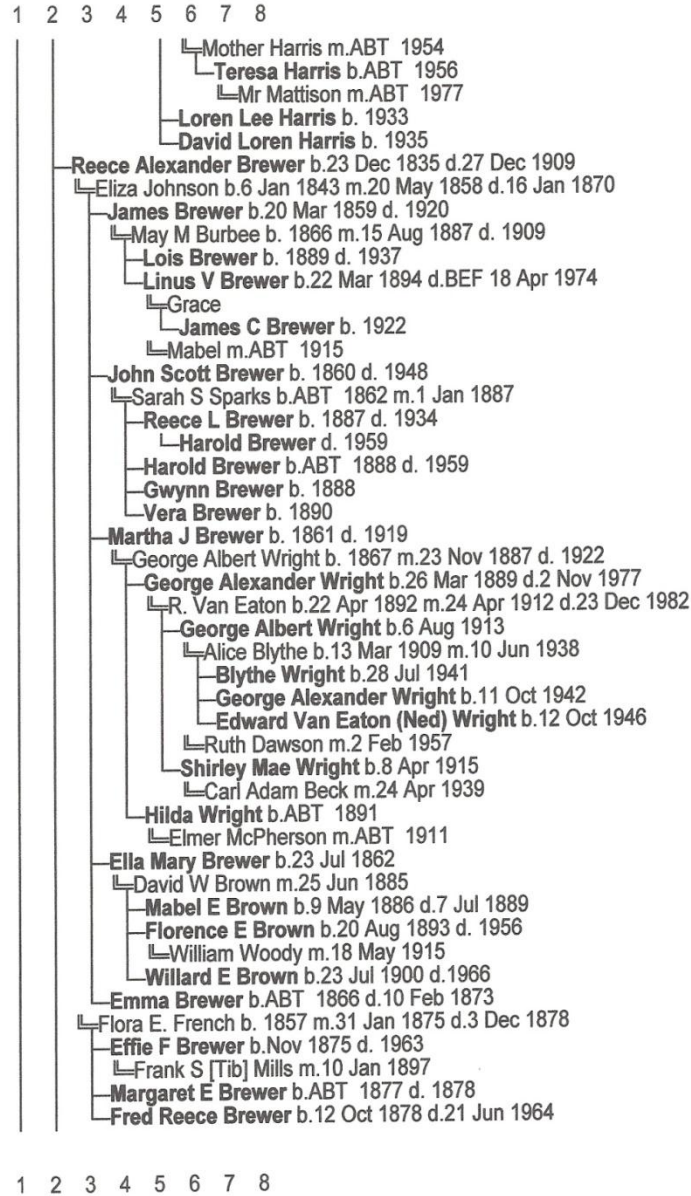
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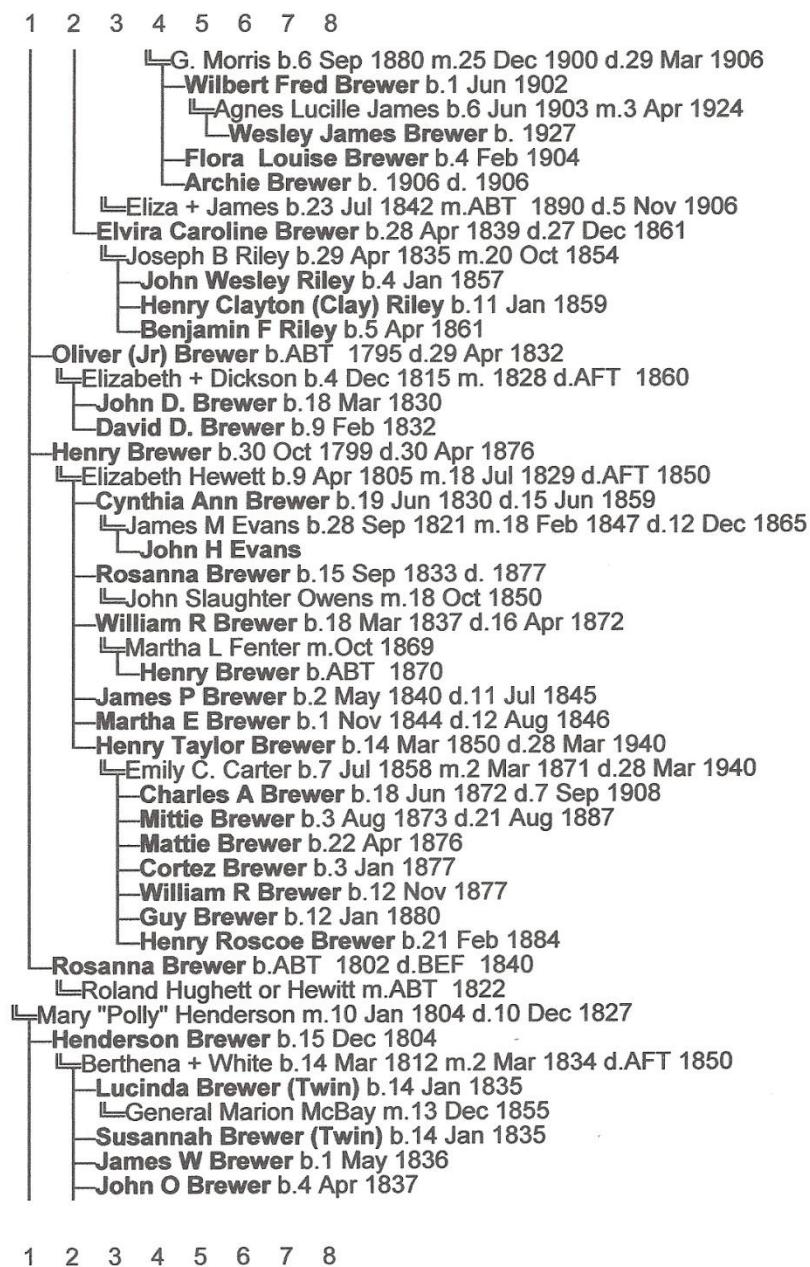
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1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8



Brewer Family History



1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

- └─Elizabeth Yates m.ABT 1850
- └─**Mary Ann Brewer** b.4 Nov 1838
- └─**William Jordon Brewer** b.9 Apr 1840 d.20 Apr 1937
- └─Julia Ann Young m.ABT 1860
- └─**Martha Brewer** b.4 Apr 1841
- └─**Laureyett Brewer** b.28 Jun 1845
- └─**Ann Brewer** b.14 Feb 1847
- └─**Thomas C Brewer** b.20 Oct 1848
- └─**William Lewis Brewer** b.3 Oct 1809 d.1 Mar 1871
- └─Elizabeth Sorrels m.ABT 1828
- └─**James Stephenson Brewer** b.26 Jul 1811 d.AFT 1860
- └─Zerilda (Serilda) E White m.3 Mar 1833
- └─**Lucinda Brewer** b. 1813 d.12 Dec 1886
- └─John M. Dickson m.ABT 1834
- └─Abijah Davis m. 1839
- └─**Rebecca Brewer** b.12 Jan 1815 d.1 Jul 1899
- └─Paschal C Sorrels m.17 Oct 1830
- └─James Erwin Griffin m.ABT 1838
- └─**Luvisa Elvy Griffin** b.30 Nov 1840 d.10 Jan 1925
- └─**James Erwin (jr) Griffin** b.31 Oct 1841 d.4 Oct 1879
- └─**Matilda Ellen Griffin** b.7 May 1844 d.15 Mar 1923
- └─John Lavender m.ABT 1865
- └─**Lewis Leonard "L.L." Griffin** b.12 Nov 1846 d.1 Oct 1928
- └─**Granderson Kurb Griffin** b.12 Feb 1849 d.9 Apr 1918
- └─Andrew B Orrick m. 1850
- └─Alexander Barrentine m.28 Sep 1879
- └─**Mary Brewer** b.15 Mar 1820 d.14 Mar 1841
- └─**Mahilda Brewer** b.3 Apr 1823 d.31 Mar 1841
- └─**Luvisa Brewer** b.7 Dec 1825
- └─William Harrison Preston m.29 May 1842

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

**The Estate of Oliver Brewer, jr**

(6)

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Territory of Arkansas  
County of Hempstead

This day personally came Robert Melser, David Mayberry, and Absolom White before me, John Baird, an acting Justice of the Peace, in and for the Territory and County aforesaid, who being duly sworn, deposeth and saith that they are not interested or of kin to any person interested in the estate of Olliver Brewer, Jr., deceased, as "heirs at Law" and that they will truly and justly, according to the best of their skill and abilities, view, appraise and value the personal estate to them presented, belonging to the estate of Oliver Brewer, Jr., deceased.

Sworn and subscribed to	Robert Melser
before me this 6th	Absolom White
day of August 1832	David Mayberry

John Baird, Justice of the Peace

The following is a list of property produced to us and appraised by us, belonging to the estate of Olliver Brewer, deceased, to wit:

1 Sorrel Mare	55.00
1 Yearling Colt	55.00
1 Sorrel Mare	50.00
1 Bay Horse	55.00
1 Bay Horse	75.00
1 Gray Horse	75.00
1 Gray Mare	85.00
1 Gray Yearling	30.00
1 Sorrel Horse	60.00
1 Gray Mare and Colt	150.00
1 Stallion Horse	100.00
1 Gray Mare and Colt	60.00
1 Steer	6.00
1 Lot Cattle 6 Head	23.00
1 Do Do	30.00
1 Cow	9.00
1 Do	8.00
	<hr/>
	926.50



To account brought forward	
Brot over	926.50
1 Lot of sheep 13 head	26.00
1 Lot of Hogs 50 head	75.00
1 Cow	7.00
1 Handsaw	2.00
1 Hoe	3.00
1 Lot of Farming Utensils	10.50
2 Belts (bells ?)	1.50
1 Auger and Chisel	.62 1/2
Cash	40.25
A note on William Hickman & P.T. Hickman	314.50
Said note drawing interest at ten percent until paid	
A Note on A Madding	26.75
1 Note on Rice Stringer	10.00
1 Due bill on William McDonald	10.00
1 Note on Samuel Bradberry	12.80
1 Note on John Gollither	3.00
Account on Isaac Rainey	27.50
Account on David Mayberry	17.50
Account on John Hughes	10.00
Account on Reuben Madden	4.00
Account on John Chewz	8.00
Account on John Storey	4.00
1 Oven	3.50
1 Stew kettle small	1.50
1 Pot	2.00
1 Smoothing iron	1.00
1 Set of Plates & Pitcher	2.00
Knives, forks & spoons	1.00
1 Coffee Pot	.60
1 Churn	1.00
1 Case of Razors with Box	1.00
1 Wheel and Cards	4.00
3 Pails	1.25
1 Stand of Knit Curtains	5.00
1 Bed Quilt	3.00
1 Coverlet	5.00
	<u>1572.24</u> 1/2

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Brot forward	1572.24 1/2
1 Bed Quilt	3.00
1 Coverlet	5.00
2 Do	12.00
2 Counterpanes	3.00
2 Do	4.00
1 Blanket	2.75
1 Featherbed	15.00
1 Featherbed	25.00
The wearing clothes of the deceased	25.00
1 Table	7.50
4 Cows and Calves	36.00
5 Bells	4.50
1 Scythe	1.00
	<hr/>
	1715.99 1/2

We do hereby certify that the foregoing is a correct account of the amount of property by us appraised belonging to the estate of Oliver Brewer, deceased.

Recorded 6th  
 Sept. 1832  
 A. M. Oakley, Clk

Absolom White  
 David Mayberry

## The Estate of William Alexander Brewer

Inventory of the Property Belonging to the Estate of Wm A Brewer  
made and returned by Margaret I Brewer, Administratrix with the  
appraisalment of the same to wit

Note against I.E.M Briggs for \$ 203 Margaret I with \$40 endorsed.--	\$ 163
Note against Reese A Brewerr for forty-three dollars	43
An undivided half of a land claim in Douglas County, OR ---320 acres	799.99
One wagon	70
One plow	5.97
Six <sup>Two</sup> <del>ten</del> year old steers average	19.97
Thre (sic) two year old heiffers average	21.62
one red cow ten years old	92.66
do one roan six years old	99.50
one bay horse colt one year old	40.00
pale red cow six years old	88.50
dark red <sup>WHITE</sup> <del>white</del> face 4 years old	99.50
one red cow four years old	32.00
one red white face 4 years old	29.00
one red brindle six years old	37.50
One red white sided 3 years	29.00
one yoke oxen 10 years old	70.00
one yoke 14 years old	62.50
eight one year old calves average per head	10.66
do white cow seven years old	91.00
do red cow 8 years	81.00
thirteen head hogs per head	10.00
a lot of tools	16.50
grind stone	182
two hogs one year old each	2.16
two sows	p 66
160 acres in the state of AR not appraised	

Arkansas Pike County July the 9 day 1855  
Dear children through the grate mercy of that providence  
that rules all thing to his on will I am permitted to  
say to you that we ar all enjoying tolerble good health  
but galla was taken last night with the colery mor-  
bid and is now cler of it yet but I hope it wont hold  
him long I have had a heavy depic of it my self and  
lets a getting about I earnestly hope this lines will reach  
you and you will all be enjoying the best of health and  
your connection in that country your connection her is all  
times is and has bin four times harder in arkansas than  
ever was known since the first settlement was made in  
the country and now onley her but very states that we  
have herd from corn has bin from \$15<sup>cent</sup> to two  
dollars bason from \$15 to 20 and now note to be  
had atole at no price ther has now bin a botle run  
Red river - yes one and that is all since las spring year  
ther nint one sack of coffee in our country nor a  
sack of coffee nor wote be til it can be shaid up nor  
at the old sate works between her and the Choctaw  
River and I hop you ar a doing much better than  
what we ar and I hop you will try to be contented and  
pross for ever to do well through life if I see you a  
a gain I wish you all the blessing that life can  
send I assure you that you ar I nor my hearts as  
any child or children I have I retain you ar not of  
the out of my mind long at times I now I crave to see

you both and the baby than any thing in this life  
 but that impossible yet if ever it should be the case  
 in life so now none of the connection is married nor nor  
 ing strange task please but J. R. Stevens has sold his land  
 to his uncle Edmond Borrister and he has bought up on  
 the cler forks wher your uncle Oliver Borrister used  
 to live over crops this year as yet looks tolerble well  
 but we are very dry now and has bin all the year and  
 rain donts com quiet and a heap of it we cant make  
 nothing like a good crop and if this crop is as little as  
 the last crop was people cant two thirds of them  
 get bread for the winter and sure so if you are in a country of  
 plenty like lookouts Valley was when we lived there  
 and you in dry good health try and be contented.  
 I am sure you that I am determined to get from this  
 country soon whin but I am not finally decided  
 wher it will be I wote soon ther but I cant think  
 it wold be safe at all to under take it the Indians is  
 so hostile all of them from Fort Smith cler through  
 this hole route the Kansas country country is a setting  
 war fast and ther has bin a grate discovery of gold  
 on the arkansas river and on the Wichita mountain  
 about three hundred miles from her and the people  
 is in a mighty stir and a going at a rapid rate and if  
 nothing take place strany ther will be by chancy  
 ther will be fifty thousand men in the mines by that  
 time with out doubt ther is large companies going  
 every day and the say ther has never bin richer  
 prospects ever found in the Island of America

Tho' the good stimulates the people in general but  
 I a sure you the times of the times gratefully compels  
 us all to think about how our substance come and  
 wher from der children keep your mind and hearts desir  
 to that grate been who has power cutt our bread  
 and water from us all in a very short space let us nee  
 or for gete him for all the grate prospects of gold or  
 Rubis for I tell you now the gratest hapinnes man and  
 woman can have in this life is to have good water and  
 and land and make a plenty to live on and do so and then  
 you ar a saping the sweet Juiss of the earth in a bundle  
 and so full filling your cours throug this unfortunatly  
 world now my der children you say you hav note had  
 but one letter from me since you left I surley have  
 have note four before this and wold ove note this but  
 J. R. and galka and the gurlis was a writing of tin  
 I think we have gotte 8 from you and from J. D. I think  
 a bute 18 or 20 so I a sure you both the reson of my note  
 rating of tin - it was note for hard feeling serting a gainst  
 ether of you sertin as I told you in my hous I wold ve  
 bin glad you edd ive found a cuntry that you all  
 edd ove bin satisfied closer to me I asure you I wold ve  
 bin ther long before this time surtin so you say to me  
 you ar both satisfied so I say to you that satisfe  
 me much better that to now you wear hir a suffering in  
 this cuntry I asure you ther is one fourth familly in  
 this cuntry has gotte one pound of eggys or salt in  
 ther hous it wants the pore aloud not Rieck it is al  
 nor a gallon of Molase meat and bread and milk and butter

yes Margretts I like to for get to let you both know  
 that the governor of Georgia had to call the counties  
 to gether for the purpos to give grain for the people  
 bread that cold not get it at all til he took up. The  
 you grandmothe and uncles Jella and the children was  
 well this Spring. I tell you now I hope that kind  
 providence that has watched over all over me and my in  
 this life will still continue with us all through all  
 this unfriendly world and finely stand by us all in the  
 brittle hour of death and finely receive us all to him  
 self wher grief and sorrow will banish away for  
 ever so that will be a nuf for us and tell that little  
 darling of a pup that she has got a grand and he wold  
 like to see her certain and grand mother and uncle and  
 aunts and I reckon if she was her a little while she  
 wold not think us friends bute we wold like to see the  
 site so I dontes now what more to say I for you will  
 never get it bute I will start a nother swon David  
 Bruer & John Bruer is a riding and surely you will  
 hear from us do we all send houldy to you all from  
 the kinder of our hartes every one love us so we remain  
 your Father's Mother Brothers & Sisters all through life

John A. Glendon &

Sarah Stevens to

Oliver Bruer

Margrett Bruer

**Transcription of 1855 handwritten letter from John A. and Sarah Stevens  
to Oliver P. and Margaret Brewer**

Arkansas Pike County July the 9 day 1855

Dear children Through the grate murey of that providenc that rules all things to his on will I am permitted to say to you that we ar all injoying tolerable good helth but galla was taken last night with the colery morxxx and is note cler of it yet but I hope it wont xxxxx him long I have had a xxx xxxxxx of it myself and ar juste a getting about I ernistely hope this lines will rech you and you will all be injoying the best of health and all your conniction in that country your conniction xxx xxxx was times and has been four times harder in arkansas than ever was known since the first settlement was made in the cuntry and not ondley by her but every state we have herd from corn has bin from from \$150<sup>cents</sup> to two dollars bacon From \$15 to 20 and now note to be had atall at no price Ther has note bin a bote run Red River – yes one and is all since las spring yea. This winter one sack of coffee in our country nor a sack of xxxxx nor weont be til it can be made up her at the old salt works between her and the Chockto xxxx and I hope you ar a doing much beter than what we ar and I hop you will try to be contented and près forward to do with through life if I never see you a gain I wish you all the blessings a that life can a ford I a sure you that you ar a nir my hart as arry child or children I have xxxxxxx you ar not ever out of my mind long at a time I now I crave to see you both and the baby than any thing in this life but that imposable yete if ever it shod be the case in life So now non of the connection is married nor nothing strange took place but T. R. Stevens has sold his land to his uncle Elmond Forrester and he has bought up on the cler fork wher your uncle Oliver Breu er uste to live our crops this year as yete looks tolerable well but we ar vary dry now and has bin all this year and rain donte com quick and a heap of it we cant make nothing like a good crop and if this crop is as lite as the last crop was people cante two thirds of them git bread sartin and sure so if you ar in a cuntry of plenty like lookout vally was when we lived thir and you injoy good health try and be contented. I a sure you that I am deturmed to get from this cuntry som whir bute I am note finely desided when it will be I wont com thir bute I cant think it wont be safe at all to under take it tho Indians is so hostile all of them from fort Smith cler through the hole routs the Kansas country cuntry is a setting

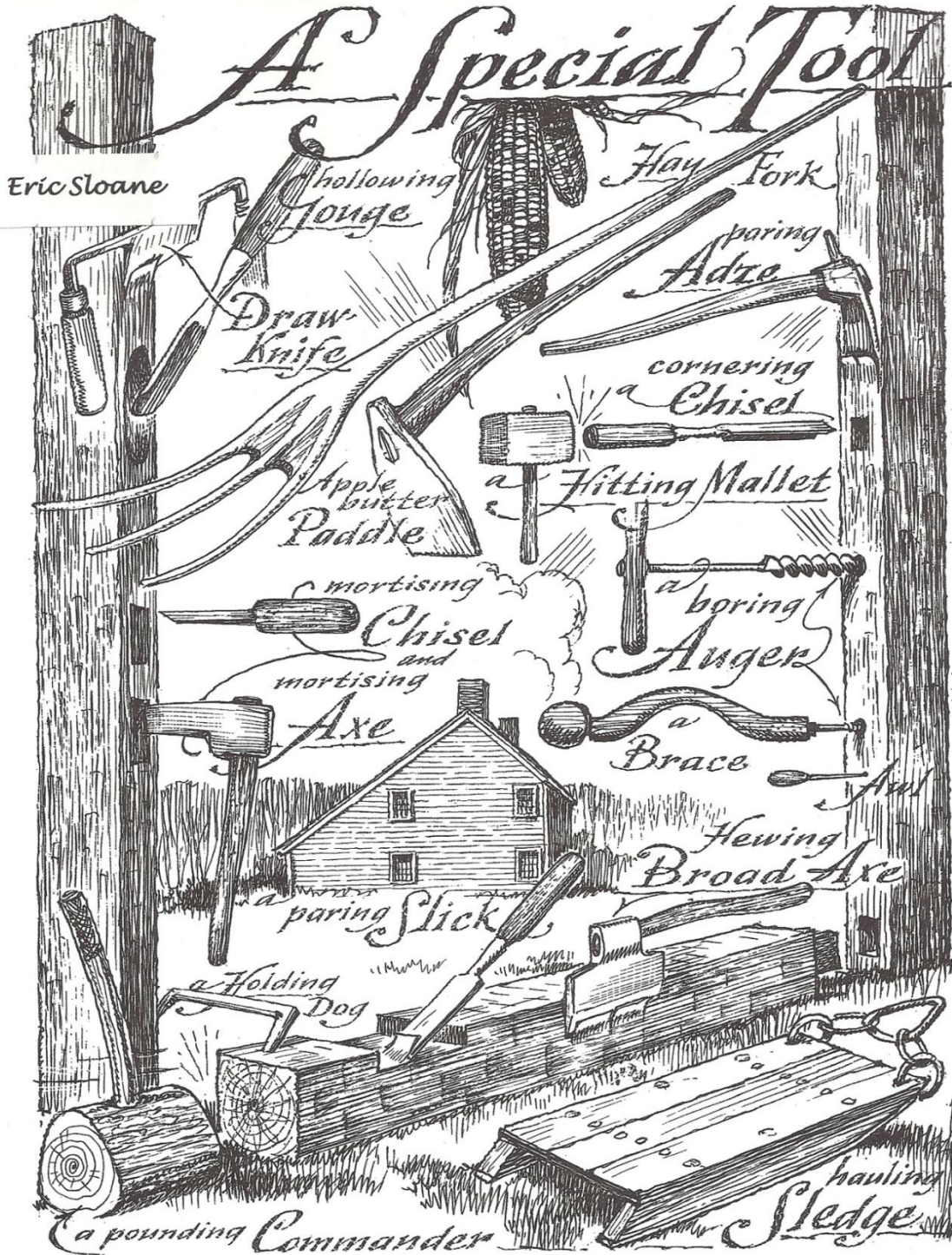
is in a mity ster and a going at rapid rate and if nothing take place Vary faste and thir has bin a grate discovery of gold up on the arkansas river and on the witch xxxxxxx about three hunder x miles from hir and the peo- ple strange thir will be by xxxxxxx thir will be fifty thousand men in the mines by that time with out a doubt thir is large companies going xxxx day and xxxxxx thir has never bin richer prospects ever found in the island of America.



Tho the gold stimatates the people in ginerle but I a sure you the sines of the times grately compels us all to think about how ouer subsustance com and wher from der children ceep your mind and harts desire to that grate been who has power cute over bread and water from us all in a vary short space let us never forg gete him for all the grate prospects of gold or Rubis for I tell you now the gra- tis hapinnxx man and woman can have in this life is to have good water and land and make a plenty to live on and do so and this you ar a saping the swete juis of the earth in a bundle and so full your cours through this unfriendly world now my children you hav note had but one letter from me since you left I surley have have note four before this and xxxx xxx rote tim but T. R. and Jaka and the gurls was a writing of tim I think we have gote 8 from you and from T D I think a bute 18 or so I a sure you both the reson of my note riting oftener- it was note for hard feeling serting a gaint either sertin as I told you in my hous I xxxx xxx bin glad you cold ave found a country that you all cold ave bin satisfied closer I a sure you I wold ave bin thir long before this time surtin do you say to me you ar both satisfied so I say to you that satifise me much beter that to now you was her a suffering in this country I a sure you ther is one fourth family in this country has gote one pound of coffey or salt in ther hous it arnte the pore alone nor Rich It is all nor gallon of molass meat and bread and milk and buter yes Margrett I like to for gote to lete you both now that the governor of georgia had to coll the country together for the purpose to gete grain for the people bread tha cold note gete it at all til he took up the you grandmother and uncle galla and the children was well this I tell you now I hope that kind providence that watchrd over miandozing in this life will still continue with us through all this unfriendly world and finely stand by us all in the critiff hour of deth and finely receive us all to him self when grief and sorrow will banish away forever so that will be a nuf for us and tell that little darling of a pup that she has gote a grand and he wold like to be her sertain and grandmother and uncle and aunt and I reckon if she was her a little while she wold note think us frends bute we wold like to se the site so I donte now what more to say I fer you will never gete it bute I will start another Swan David Bruer & John Bruer is a riting and surely you will her from us So we all send houdy to you both from the senter of ouer hartes cary one of us so we remain your Father & Mother brothers & sisters all through life.

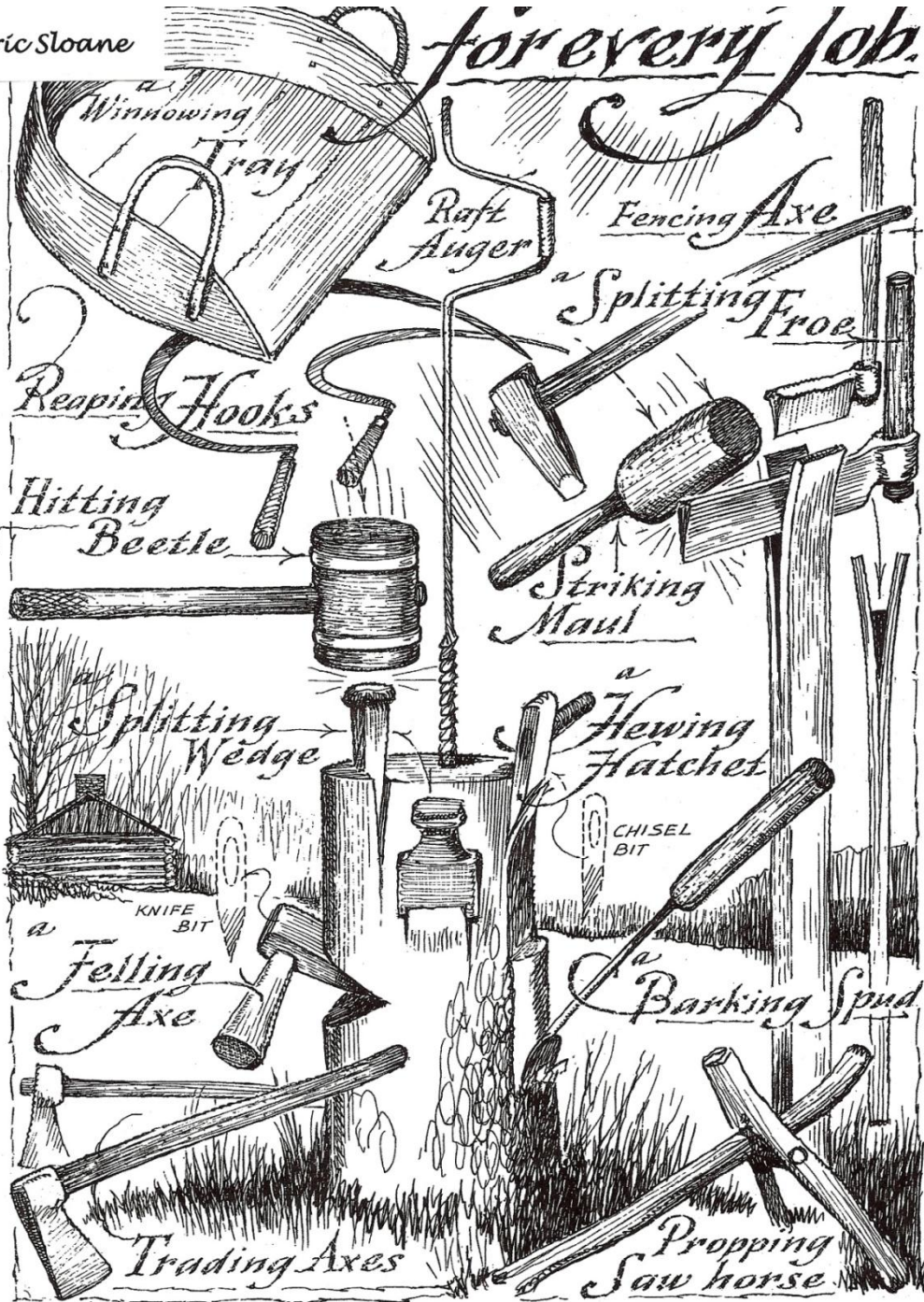
John A. Stevens &  
Sarah Stevens to  
Oliver Bruer & Margrett Bruer

Old Time Tools



Eric Sloane

# for every job.



## The Darning Needle

*The women who trekked across the plains on the Oregon Trail often kept their precious seeds for starting a new garden and a couple darning needles in their apron pocket just for safe keeping. The Darning Needle Story has been told so many times that it is now considered Oregon Folklore and is retold here as written in the book, "Treasures of the Trunk".*

Grandmother Drain had a darning needle, and it was the only darning needle among the settlers in Pass Creek Canyon, Willamette Valley.

The folks that lived in Pass Creek Canyon had come across the plains by wagon train. By the time they got to the top of the Cascades, they were so eager to end their journey they settled at the first likely spots as they went down the west slopes. Every natural clearing close to water was the site of a land claim. Pass Creek Canyon was quite thickly settled, at least there were ten or fifteen families living within a few miles of each other, and they neighbored back and forth, sharing what they had. In those days families had to get along with each other. No one knew when he might need help.

Grandmother Drain's darning needle was one of the most cared-for possessions in the community, because it was the only one, and clothes had to be patched and mended until new ones could be secured, and who knew when that would be? The women learned to make pins out of slivers of dogwood, but for mending nothing was so handy to use as the darning needle.

Women in the lower canyon shared the needle for a day or two, then women up farther would take turns catching up on the family mending.

All went well until the day Mrs. Chitwood sent the needle back to Grandmother Drain's by Jimmy.

Jimmy was eight years old, and he was a responsible boy---boys had to be responsible and do their share of the work.

Mrs. Chitwood put a long red raveling through the eye of the needle and knotted it, then she put the needle into a potato so that Jimmy could carry it safely to the Drain cabin.

Jimmy walked through the canyon trail in the spring morning sunshine which filtered through the tall firs. He paid no attention to rabbits and squirrels that crossed the path in front of him. He scarcely looked up when bluejays scolded. He stopped for moment when a doe raced a few yards down the trail as though being chased, but he did not leave the trail. He was on an errand with the only darning needle in Pass Creek Canyon.

But when a mother bear with two cubs came into sight, he jumped from the trail and hid behind a serviceberry bush to watch them. He was not afraid, he said to himself, because bears didn't harm, but of course a mother bear was different when she had cubs. No, he was not

afraid, but it was best to hide just the same. He stood behind the bush, then stooped down. It would be nice, he thought, if Father were here to see the bears, too. He was not afraid, but he wished the bears would hurry along on their way. And after a bit they did.

Jimmy stood up again and went back onto the trail. He walked a little, thinking of the bears and wishing that sometime he might have a cub all his own, without a mother bear.

Then he remembered the darning needle! He looked down at his hand. The potato and the needle were gone!

Oh, I lost it in the bushes, he thought. I'll have to go find it. He went back as fast as he could, but he could not find the serviceberry bush. Here are those bracken, and here was where I came out to the trail again, but where is the bush? What shall I do?

He ran down the trail as fast as he could and told his mother. Mrs. Chitwood was alarmed.

"Oh Jimmy!" she exclaimed. "To think it had to be lost when we had it. Well, we'll just have to find it. Go tell your father."

Jimmy ran to the edge of the clearing where his father and some other men were trimming logs. When Jimmy told what he had done, the men stuck their axes into the logs and went with Jimmy. "We'll have to help too," they said.

The men and Jimmy went to the cabin. Mrs. Chitwood had sent word to the other neighbors, and they all went up onto the trail where Jimmy thought he had seen the bears.

They looked for bear tracks and found one or two, but the earth was dry. They all looked for the serviceberry bush Jimmy had hidden under, but there were many serviceberry bushes, and where was that one?

Everyone was worried, but no one scolded Jimmy except his sister. She was ten, and she said, "You won't be a good woodsman if you can't remember landmarks. Don't you know you should always have landmarks?"

Jimmy was white and tearful, but he tried to show his mother exactly where he had been. After a while, he said "I know there was a stump under the bush. A funny stump."

All the men and women, and children, too, began looking for a red raveling near a stump under a serviceberry bush.

Suddenly Jimmy left the others. He said nothing but walked through a bramble of bracken. When he came out, he went straight to his mother and handed her the potato with the red raveling hanging from it.

"It was by the stump," he said.

Why Jimmy," replied his mother , "you are a woodsman, and a reliable boy, to find what you lost. Give it to Grandmother Drain. Quick! Before you lose it again."

Everyone, and that was about twenty-five people, came together to share the joy of finding the needle. Then the men went back to traimming logs, the women went home to get their sup-pers, and the children went back to their play.

The darning needle was found, and it was kept all that summer and into the fall, but one day when Grandmother Drain was sewing, the head of the needle broke off, and all the women had to make neat piles of clothing to be mended, hoping that before long, someone would come from Fort Vancouver or the East with a needle. Each time women were together they talked of their sewing and hoped that another needle would soon be provided.

One day, about Thanksgiving time, a peddler with a mule came over the pass and down through the canyon. The children playing school on some logs saw him and ran to tell their mothers a visitor was coming.

The mothers, one by one, hurried to see the goods the peddler had brought and to hear news of people to the east. Several hurried to buy combs. One bought a china doll's head. Two women enthusiastically bought dress goods before they thought of needles and thread to sew it with.

Then one of the mothers said, "Oh, do you have any needles? We'll have to have a needle."

"Oh," said Mrs. Chitwood, "how could we forget when it is the one thing we need most---a good needle with a large eye! We need one at least, now that Grandmother Drain's needle is broken." Mrs. Chitwood told the story of the lost darning needle, glancing occasionally at Jimmy who was stroking the mule's neck and pretending not to notice.

Those standing around talked, too, and the peddler listened. Then he reached into his inside pocket.

"My people do not celebrate Christmas, "he said, "but I suppose you good people will soon be having a holiday with presents. Are you going to give any presents, sonny?" asked the peddler.

Jimmy looked up quickly, "Oh, yes sir, that is, I guess I will."

"Well", said the kind faced man, "suppose you and I give the ladies of Pass Creek Canyon each a Christmas present right now, shall we?"

Jimmy looked puzzled. The peddler opened the thin package he had taken from his pocket. "Here are some darning needles, all I have, but I believe there will be enough for every family in the canyon to have one."

No one said anything for a moment, then there was a gasp of astonishment. The women smiled to each other, "He's a good man."

The peddler and Jimmy passed out the needles to those gathered around, and the next day Jimmy delivered the rest of the needles up and down the canyon. The peddler left and not one saw him again for many months, but that was just the first of many kindnesses shown the women in Pass Creek Canyon by Aaron Meier who founded the store of Meier and Frank in Portland."

*"The peddler Aaron Meier, born in Germany in 1831, came to America at age twenty-four to work in the store belonging to his two older brothers in the California gold fields. Part of his job was to make the long trips peddling their wares through the Oregon Territory as far north as the Columbia River. He carried his pack on his back as he walked the difficult terrain of the Cascade Mountains.*

*"After two years of this exhausting work, he decided to open his own store in Portland in 1857. Over the years, working with his wife, Jeannette Hirsch, and his son-in-law, Sigmund Frank, he developed Meier and Frank Company into one of America's great family-owned department stores.*

*Meier and Frank used the darning needle story in a full-page ad in The Oregonian, the state's main newspaper, on January 1, 1967. The headline read, "Have you ever heard the story of 'The Potato and the Darning Needle'?" At the end of the story was an invitation for all to come into Meier and Frank's Fabric Center to receive a complimentary needle." [Treasures in the Trunk, Mary Bywater Cross, pp 157-160.](#)*

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