



A Word From Your President...

As summer slips into fall I hope that this Newsletter finds you all well. It has been a good open season with our Faithful Docent getting to show off the museum to a record, albeit still a small, number of visitors. Of course, the mission of the Original Courthouse Museum extends beyond just preserving and opening the courthouse building to the public during the summer. In that regard this year has also been busy, what with another set of successful and well attended Verouteren History Forums in February, and our two special programs funded in part by a generous grant from the Wasco Cultural Trust Coalition, the one in July by Michael Helquist on Dr. Marie Equi at the Granada Theater, and the program that just took place during our Annual Meeting at the end of September by Mariah Rocker of the Oregon Black Pioneers entitled Oregon's Black History: 450 Years in 45 Minutes. All of these presentations help to enlighten us on the unique and important history that we all share here in the Gorge and in the state and nation as a whole. They help to connect us to our past, and show how such a connection is relevant to our present and our future. Anyway, you all know that history, and exploring and learning about the past is just plain fun in its own regard! As always, if any of you want to help with the operations and plans of the Original Courthouse by joining the board or have other ways that you would like to contribute, please feel free to reach out to any of the members of the board. Thanks.

-Eric Gleason, President

Annual Meeting

As Eric mentioned above, we just had our Annual Meeting to renew our membership numbers, elect any Officer and Board positions in need of filling and to present another bit of history for our edification. This year we had a rousing presentation by Mariah Rocker of the Oregon Black Pioneers entitled *Oregon's Black History: 450 Years in 45 Minutes*. It was a very informative and professional presentation, packed with facts and histories about a little covered but critical part of the Oregon story. And, in spite of the scope of the program's title, Ms. Rocker did manage to cover *450 Years in 45 Minutes*, all the while keeping us enthralled and leaving us all a bit wiser in the end. The event was well attended by the public and was yet another feather in our cap. Thanks to all who attended and we look forward to seeing you in February.

MISSION STATEMENT

It is the mission of the Original Wasco County Courthouse Preservation Corporation to preserve the Original Wasco County Courthouse; to collect, exhibit and interpret items related to the governmental/legal history of Wasco County; to provide a venue for presentations of local historical interest; and preserve and make available educational & research materials.

Never Let The Truth Get In The Way Of A Good Story

-Mark Twain

The delightful talk about Marie Equi last June got me wanting to know more about O. D. Taylor, the object of her anger in the horsewhipping incident. A quick dip into the internet pool revealed a great deal, all of it unsavory to say the least. The Reverend Orson D. Taylor arrived in The Dalles in 1881 as a representative of the Baptist Missionary Society. He was pastor for a time of the small Baptist church and a leader in church missionary work, but soon became notorious for a truly massive real estate swindle across the river from The Dalles. He sold worthless land in a basically imaginary town called *North Dalles*, where Dallesport now sits.

Now this was a time of caveat emptor style investments and a certain degree of “boosterism” was expected, but usually based on some sort of fact or at least community well being at its heart. Such doesn’t appear to be the case in the plans of O. D. Taylor... greed pure and unencumbered seemed to drive him. He bought useless scrub land, borrowing lavishly from local banks to finance his acquisitions, until by 1890 he held some 2,000 acres of land on the north bank of the Columbia.

Taylor's plan was simple. He proposed to develop "a great city", a "hive of industry," a metropolis to rival Seattle and Spokane.

In 1890 Taylor incorporated the Interstate Investment Co. in Portland, with a capital stock of \$150,000, under his personal direction as a general manager. The company was authorized to buy land from he and his wife and sell it to any and all as lots in the future city. Interstate Investment circulars began to appear in Oregon and mid-western cities and eventually Taylor drafted and published a “map” of *North Dalles*, showing fully fictional railroads converging on the city and locating the city within a stone's throw of the mouth of the Klickitat River, which actually spills into the Columbia nine miles downstream from the site.

“We deal only in facts,” one of Interstate pamphlets explained.

Appearing on the map were several parks where only a few scrub oaks were growing and arterial roads and boulevards where there was nothing but dry stubble and sand dunes. The map eventually even showed a non-existent bridge across the Columbia, complete with a trolley line. By this time Taylor abandoned the name “*North Dalles*” as too modest to contain his vision, and “*Grand Dalles*” began to appear on company literature.

To Taylor's credit as a salesman, he had gathered some \$9,000 from people of Wasco and Klickitat counties. These locals had only to gaze from their front porches to see the reality... “A drearier, more desolate looking array of shacks and rock piles and drifting sand banks, cannot be found in the Northwest. Not over a score of people living in the immediate vicinity of the *Grand Dalles*.”

Taylor built a large shoe factory in the imaginary town, stocked it with equipment and hired 50 skilled cobblers from back east. Production started up but within weeks it was revealed that the lumber and builders had never been paid, the equipment was still unpaid for and there was no money to pay the staff. The closed down shoe factory stood, abandoned, for years, a monument to the chicanery that was *Grand Dalles*.

It should be noted that Taylor never paid Marie Equi’s partner Bessie Holcomb the \$100 he owed her and he was arrested a few weeks later on 60 counts of embezzlement, got entangled with the courts for years and was sentenced to 6 years as a guest of the state of Michigan.

True to form he managed to beat this rap on appeal and stiffed his lawyers for their fee. He then returned to Oregon, settled in Baker City and faded into history.

If you google him there are no pictures of Taylor, (*his lifestyle might have made him a little camera shy*) but the pages are littered with photos of Marie Equi... It might be considered that Reverend O. D. Taylor spent his allotted “15 minutes of fame” under the blows of a horsewhip.



The shoe factory in its declining years



Our Hard Working Board of Directors

HOURS AND ADMISSION FEES

Thursday, Friday and Saturday
MAY 1st through SEPTEMBER 26th

11:00am -3:00 pm

Extended hours for group visits
by previous appointment

Adults	\$5.00 each
Family Rate	\$10.00
Youth 12-18	\$4.00 each
Children 6-11	\$2.00 each
Children under 6	FREE
Adult Groups	\$4.00 each
Youth Groups 6-17	\$3.00 each

And as always, remember that if you are current on this year's Museum membership you always get in for free!

Own A Slice Of The Story!



Just a reminder that we offer 40+ years of our February Forum talks for your listening pleasure. A chance to own a piece of our history and to help out the museum too.

Original Wasco County Courthouse Museum

History Forum Audio Recordings

each thumb drive - \$5.00

plus

1-9 programs - \$5.00 each

10-24 programs - \$4.00 each

25-49 programs - \$3.00 each

50-99 programs - \$2.00 each

or buy all of the series

165 programs for \$1.00 each

Eric Gleason: *President,*
Jacqueline Cheung: *Vice President,*
Linda Wilson: *Secretary,*
Sheila Dooley: *Treasurer*
sitting Board members:
Sherry Mumford,
Rodger Nichols
and
Carol Stace.

with

Trish Neal: *Internet support,*
Duane Powell: *Technical support,*
Chris Bolton: *Docent & Class Clown*

The Original Wasco County Courthouse is an Oregon Cultural Trust Partner. As a contributor to our organization you are eligible to participate in Oregon's Cultural Trust Tax Credit program. Donors who contribute to Oregon's cultural non-profits, including the Original Wasco County Courthouse, are eligible to make matching donations to The Oregon Cultural Trust and receive 100% tax credit for the Trust Donation (up to \$500 for individual, \$1000 for a couple filing jointly and \$2,500 for a Class-C Corporation).

Learn more at culturaltrust.org



Thank You For Your Support

Please help sustain history in The Dalles
by supporting the Original Wasco
County Courthouse
and our partner organizations.

Original Wasco County Courthouse
Fort Dalles Museum & Anderson Homestead
Wasco County Historical Society
The Rorick/Moody House
The Wing Hong Hai Building
St. Peter's Landmark
The Neon Sign Museum
The Veterans' Museum in City Hall
The Granada Theater
The Dalles Mural Society
District 21 School Museum
The Dalles Fire Museum
Columbia Gorge Discovery Center & Museum
Wasco County Pioneers
The Dalles Civic Auditorium

We need your e-mail address! No, we promise not to sell it to anyone. But once we have it, we can send you the newest newsletter *in full, postage free, color...* and with a few easy keystrokes you will be able to send it on to friends. Those of you without e-mail, please don't worry. We will continue to send the same information to you by snail mail. Remember our membership year runs from January 1st through December 31st each year. You can print this page separately, in black and white, and get yourself this snazzy membership application to fill out and mail in... And there is a second membership form just right for passing along to that friend you want to become a member too! Asking a friend to join with you helps us exceed last year's membership numbers, and filling in your e-mail address on your membership form is the easiest way to place yourself on the list to receive the full color newsletter, thereby saving yourself from a drab life in black and white...

Please take a minute and renew your membership and continue being a vital part of our historic preservation effort.



**ORIGINAL COURTHOUSE PRESERVATION CORPORATION
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

The Original Courthouse Preservation Corp. is a Federally designated 501(C)3 non-profit organization.
As such your donations & membership dues are tax deductible to the extent allowable by law.

(PLEASE PRINT)

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

MAILING ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

PHONE: _____ EMAIL: _____

MEMBERSHIP LEVEL
Please check appropriate box

Please mail this form and your check to:
Original Courthouse Preservation Corp.
PO Box 839 The Dalles, OR 97058

☐ \$20.00 Individual ☐ \$30.00 Family ☐ \$50.00 Sustaining ☐ \$100.00 Patron

☐ Additional donation _____ ☐ Donation in memory of: _____ ☐ in honor of: _____



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