



Genealogists Christmas Tree

Exploring Your Roots

Another year has passed and the Genealogy Journey still continues. More family information has been found and this issue will concentrate on Sarah and Samuel Willson.

Flo Brown, Ashleigh Hobart and I did our "continental genealogy tour" of 5,000+ miles for two weeks in May "doing" the Oregon Trail. Read about our adventure later in the newsletter.

Read on & enjoy.....

Lucky Trip Finds:

- ⇒ Picture of Sarah & Samuel Willson & several of their children.
- ⇒ Found that Monroe Hodges (son-in-law of Sarah) was a founder of a town.
- ⇒ Johnson Creek is named after Sarah Wilson who remarried a Johnson



If you do not hope, you will not find what is beyond your hopes.
~St. Clement of Alexandria~

Who are Samuel & Sarah Willson?

Benjamin Delaney, our patriarch, had several children. One of which was Daniel, our direct ancestor, and another was Sarah. Sarah was born circa 1815-1817 in possibly Gallia Co., OH, where the family lived at that time.

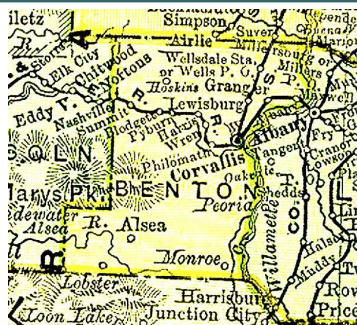
Sarah married Samuel Willson in Champaign Co., IL, on 15 Jun 1834. They had 6 children: William, Lewis, Rhoda, Sarah, Caroline,

and Josephus. They, along with her father Benjamin and siblings, migrated to Cass Co., MO around 1849-1850. Benjamin and Daniel (her brother and our direct ancestor) died between 1850-1851. Samuel Willson became the guardian of several of Daniel's younger children.

Samuel Willson's siblings seemed to have also migrated to Cass Co., MO about the same time.

Oregon Trail 1853

Probably in 1852, Sarah and Samuel decided to go to Oregon. They were guardians of two of Daniel's children and these children were sent to their Uncle William back in Ohio. At his time, there may have been other Willson family members on the wagon train, but it is unknown of who they traveled with.



The trip would have started out in the early Spring of 1853. Samuel was killed on the trail in August when reaching Oregon. Sarah continued the journey as a new widow with her 6 children, arriving 9/15/1853 in Corvallis, Benton Co., OR. The age of the children ranged from 18 to 7.

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Special points of interest:

- See www.specialtycorner.com for more family history.
- Next issue will continue to highlight new information found on the 2007 Genealogy Trip by Flo Ann Brown, Ashleigh and Sharon Hobart
- For original size copy of photos, contact Sharon at slhobart@sbcglobal.net or 817-306-9380.

The Killing of Samuel Willson

“...3 miles from us this morning a man of the name of Wilson was shot by a fellow emigrant (Jesse Varner). The had a quarrel and it ended in drawing pistols when Wilson rec’d 4 balls out of 5 fired at him and died immediately leaving a wife (who was present) and 9 children to lament his frightful death. Wilson’s pistol would not go off. They talk of trying the culprit tonight. Saw 6 graves 19 dead cattle” [John Fothergill diary entry 8/15/1853]

“...layed by and set wagon tiers. Varner Shot Wilson 5 miles back on Snake River” [George Bond diary entry 8/15/1853]

“...Saw 1 grave on Snake River today. Stated on it ‘murdered by a white man.’ ” [Maria Parsons Belshaw diary entry 8/24/1853]

“...We came in sight of Snake again at the mouth of Birch creek. Good camping and in two miles further we came on Snake river bottom again, here I camped. A very good place, a large dry creek comes in here which as got good grass on, we saw a new grave. The man was shot by another white man. Another man was shot by and Indian back about 50 miles.....” [George Belshaw diary entry 8/23/1853]



These diaries tell of the death and burial of Samuel Willson. The place in which he was died and buried is where the Snake River separates and the immigrants start following the Burnt River. This is Farewell Bend, OR, right over the border into Oregon after leaving Boise, ID.

When Sarah filled out her donation land claim for land, she stated “...Samuel died on Snake River on 8/15/1853...” and on another form she stated “...Samuel died on Burnt River.....”.

Sarah’s brother William in Ohio (who has the 2 boys that Samuel was the guardian of) recorded in a newspaper interview in 1875 that “...his sister’s husband was killed by a fellow passenger on the Oregon Trail. “

And so ends the life of Samuel Willson — recorded in history by fellow immigrants.

What Happened to Sarah Willson?

After Samuel was killed, Sarah continued the journey over the Oregon Trail and arrived at her final destination of Corvallis, Benton Co., OR, with her 6 children, the youngest being 7. The journey included going through the Burnt River Canyon, scaling the Blue Mountains which is one of the toughest ranges to cross, passed through the Columbia River Gorge and most likely had to go down the river through to Oregon City, and ending with the filing of her claim on Benton Co., OR for 60 acres of land. She arrived at the end of the Oregon Trail (Oregon City) one month to the day of her husband’s death.

Sarah remarried to Charles B. Johnson between 1855-1857 in Benton Co., OR. Charles was previously married and his wife died on the Oregon Trail in 1850 near Ft. Laramie, WY, of disease.

Charles died in Benton Co., OR, 10 Nov 1876. Sarah eventually sold her land in Benton Co. and moved to Prineville, Crook Co., OR, where her daughter Rhoda and son-in-law now reside. The land she purchased was in the Big Summit Prairie in which Johnson Creek is named after her.

Her eldest son William married and died 12 Feb 1876. He is buried in Juniper Haven Cemetery in Prineville, OR.



BIG SUMMIT PRAIRIE OUTSIDE PRINEVILLE IN CROOK Co., OR. THE SMALL CREEK IN THE FOREGROUND IS JOHNSON CREEK.

Genealogy Trip 2007 – Oregon Trail Adventure

Imagine experiencing the same sights and sounds the early pioneers experienced on their journey to the West. That's exactly what Flo Brown, Ashleigh & Sharon Hobart did on their 2-week Oregon Trail adventure. Their modern-day journey began in Texas, going to Nebraska, starting very close to where the early travelers began their journey from Independence, MO.



5/17: Ashleigh and Flo arrive in Ft. Worth.

5/18: Left Saginaw, TX, 7:15 AM and arrived at Kearney, NE, at 7:00 PM

5/19: Left Kearney, NE, at 8:15 AM and went to California Hill outside Ogallala and Bruie, NE, walking into the fields to see our first Oregon Trail ruts.

Next, we headed to Windlass Hill where pioneers descended down a steep mountainside into a valley, where ruts created a deep ravine with their tracks still visible today. There was also a group repairing a sod house which a settler had build and once lived.



Then we arrived at Ash Hollow where pioneers stayed for a few days to rest. This area is full of ash trees— the first trees travelers had seen for over 100 miles— with a fresh spring with cold, good water. There was a museum at this location which we toured through and at which we ate our picnic lunch with the wind.

Across the road was a grave of an 18-year old pioneer wife who died here in 1849.

The tombstone which was handmade was discovered and enclosed in glass.



Later, others were buried there from the community and now a little cemetery exists.

We drove on looking for Courthouse and Jailhouse Rock but didn't recognize them. We found Chimney Rock, which was visible for miles and is a huge formation with a tall steeple. This was a popular place immigrants would head for and stop. At the visitor center, we learned about the area and could have a good view of the rock.



We passed through Scott's Bluff, which was another stopping place for the immigrants.

We are now in Wyoming and stopped at an old wooden bridge that crossed the Platte River leading into Ft. Laramie. We toured Ft. Laramie with all its buildings. It is a wonderful location, still peaceful and quiet, with the Platte River easing around it. Many travelers stopped close to this location for fortification and supplies and was a marker to their journey.



Genealogy Trip 2007 — Oregon Trail Adventure, Cont.

We drove on to Guernsey, WY, to see the very deep ruts created by early travelers and were in awe of the magnitude of the journey and the number of immigrants who traveled the trail.



After viewing the Guernsey ruts, we headed on to Douglas, WY, for a night's sleep at a Best Western arriving at 10:00 PM. Imagine! What we did in one day would have taken over a month for the early travelers.

5/20: Started our day at 9:00 AM and drove to Independence



Rock and walked around the whole thing. It is an amazing site to see and you can almost envision the immigrants camped close by. A lot of travelers ended up here around 4th of July, hence the name of Independence Rock. Again, another awe-inspiring view in the middle of nowhere.

The immigrants carved their names into the rock and we even found R. E. Hobart chiseled into the rock. Someone has recorded all the names and here's what was found ... "A Reverend Randall Hobart was a member of the Wolverine Rangers from Marshall, MI.



They left Independence in early May 1849 and arrived at Lassen's Ranch in early November..."



There are ruts and cow patties (open range for cattle) and a small stream nearby. We enjoyed our picnic lunch with the wind blowing through our hair. It is a magnificent place and hard to imagine coming

to this place with horses and a wagon.

We had the luxury of our car, convenience of coolers and a selection of food, and the lingering time—something alien to the travelers in the 1800's.

Next we drove down the road and stopped at Devil's Gate which is another landmark for the weary travelers. It's a sight to behold and a river goes between the crevice.



We drove on to Kenner, WY, and tried to find a hotel room. It was a very small town and all the hotels were shabby looking and completely booked. But we found us a place because we were weary travelers.

5/21: We left Kenner, WY, at 8:30 AM and stayed on the road all day with our goal to make it to Oregon. We crossed the rest of Wyoming and all of Idaho and made our destination of Farewell Bend, OR. We felt like we had been on the road for 1 month but we finally reached Oregon 4 days later and we were elated!

We met Bill Wilson and his cousin Kay Kaufman at this location. See, there was a reason for our trip to Oregon. Sarah and Samuel Wilson made this same journey in 1853. And, on August 15, Samuel Wilson was shot and killed (murdered) by a fellow immigrant. More later in the newsletter about this but Farewell Bend is the location of his death.. Bill and Kay are fellow Wilson researchers and are aware of a marker of two old graves of

which the bones were reburied when the freeway came through. They showed us an area with ruts where the immigrants came across at Farewell Bend. They also showed us a place where a family was murdered by Indians with a memorial plaque to mark the location.

So they gave us a tour of the Farewell Bend area, showed us some ruts, and then we found the marker that the Highway Dept placed many years ago for the old bodies.

We felt like we made some very good new friends who took time out of their busy day to give us a historic tour of the area. We moved on "up" the road and headed on to Baker City, OR where we ate and stayed the night.



Genealogy Trip 2007 — Oregon Trail Adventure, Cont.

05/22: We left Baker City, OR, and headed for Corvallis, OR, which was our destination in the Willamette Valley.. We passed through Emigrant Hill and drove through the Blue Mountains where it began to snow with large flakes

We drove out of the mountains to very beautiful scenery and mountains. We then came to Echo Meadows and stopped at a place where emigrants camped by the river and walked into a field where there were ruts marking their passage. The walk into the field to see the ruts was over a mile.



We road through the Columbia River Gorge which is basically driving along the Columbia River which runs between Oregon and Washington State. It is beautiful and pristinely wild. We stopped and took some pictures of the views and the magnificent river.



We then drove on to Multanah Falls—what a sight — with water cascading down a mountain. Our drive followed the Columbia River and we could see Washington State across the river. We stopped and took some pictures of the sight. The Columbia River is how the travelers made there way to the end of the Oregon Trail which is by Portland OR.



We made it to Corvallis which is south of Portland to a hip college town, but this town is where the recent widow Sarah Willson and her children got their first land in Oregon. We got a hotel which was recommended that was right on the Willamette River.

5/23: Day dedicated to research in Corvallis. That evening we drove to Newport, OR, for a view of the ocean. Cold and windy, but still beautiful. Made it back to Corvallis to go back to sleep.

05/24: Morning dedicated to research in Corvallis and Their

grandson E. E. Wilson had a building at the University named after him. We then headed to Prineville, OR, to do more research. Prineville is nestled in a valley as you come off the mountain. We found a room at the Best Western and went to sleep....

05/25: We are now in Prineville, OR, and most of the day was spent on researching the Wilson's and Hodges' in that city. Sarah and Samuel's daughter Rhoda was married to one of the founder's of Prineville, which is Monroe Hodges. We found information on this family as well as pictures at the local Historical Society.

05/26: Spend some more time in Prineville doing research and we made our way through the mountains to Summit Prairie which is where Sarah Willson moved to after some years in Oregon. Summit Prairie is outside Prineville and a creek is named for her and we were able to find it.



We are now starting back to Baker City, OR, to begin our journey home. We drove through beautiful mountains and through Painted Canyon. We arrived in Baker City at 9:00 PM. All hotels were booked and we had to drive an additional hour to another town to get a hotel.

05/27: It was a cold and rainy morning so we started out slow and easy. We went to the Baker City Interpretative Center for the Oregon Trail. They had very interesting exhibits and a playroom for kids. We looks at the sights and headed to Ontario OR for the night.

05/28: We headed our way south and drove into Idaho and stopped at Bonneville Point where pioneers crossed. We then drove on to Three Island Crossing where the immigrants had to cross the Snake River. This was a dangerous crossing. We ate a picnic lunch there before heading on. We drove by Thousand Springs which are waterfalls coming out of cliffs in the mountains. We also stopped at Shoshone Falls which are huge powerful falls taller than Niagara falls. We stopped for the night at Burley, ID.

5/29: We drove to Salt Lake City, UT, and took in the sights of the Lake and the Mormon Temple. Headed on to Scipio, UT and spent the night.

5/30: We continued our journey through Utah. It is too beautiful to express, even in pictures. We went to Canyonland National Park . Stopped at many viewpoints along the way to see the sights. Stopped somewhere for the night.

05/31: Our journey back is long and hard going through Colorado, Texas and finally arriving home on 6/2.

Photos from the Past

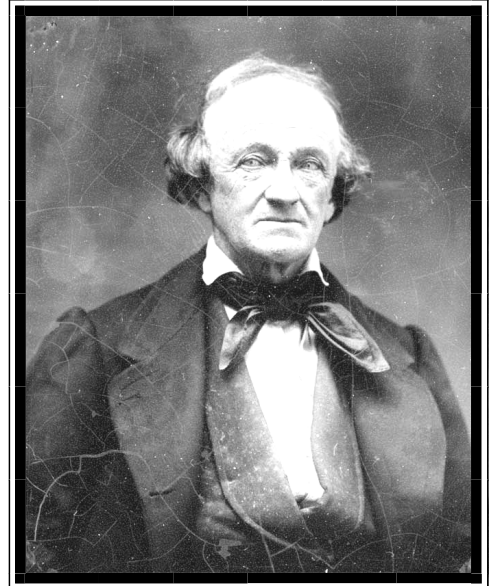
Spotlight Corner



← Sarah Delaney Willson
Johnson [1815-1880]

THESE PICTURES ARE
HOUSED AT OREGON
STATE UNIVERSITY IN
CORVALLIS, OR

Samuel Willson [1807-1853]
picture ca 1853 →



For original size copy of photo, contact Sharon Hobart [slhobart@sbcglobal.net]

Next Issue....

In the next issue, highlights of other interesting information found in past genealogy trips to Oregon and Virginia and West Virginia.

Hope you and your family have a Merry Christmas and a safe Holiday Season!



It is indeed a desirable thing
to be **well-descended**,
but the **glory** belongs to
our **ancestors**. Photark (16 - 1120 AD)