



Seal of the Provisional Government

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THIS ISSUE:

From the Library

The Story
Behind the
Manson Farmstead 2

Park News

New Look for
the Monument 4

Our Natural Heritage

Restoring
the Prairies 5

Saturday, September 29

Champoeg
Folklife Festival 6

In the Store

The Sibley
Guide to Birds 7

Plus

Board Matters 3

Champoeg Times

The Quarterly Publication of the Friends of Historic Champoeg

1st Annual Pioneer Farmstead Day a Great Success!

Over 800 people enjoyed the afternoon at Champoeg's First Annual Pioneer Farmstead Day, held Saturday, September 1. Visitors tried their hands at pioneer crafts and skills such as rope-making, butter churning and wheat processing. Children made wagon dolls and collect bags to take home and won prizes playing old-time games.



Volunteers Anna Ashby and her daughter Rosanna were among those who dressed in period costume and demonstrated skills.

The Donald Manson Farmstead, which includes the restored 1862 barn and newly planted heritage garden, was the setting for the day. Volunteers and staff in period costume helped visitors step back in time to the days before electric machines did most of our work.

People were welcomed to the event with live music by The Old Time Fiddlers and freshly-squeezed lemonade. The Butteville General Store was on hand to serve up barbecued chicken and ribs.

The effort was the work of the Living History Action Group—an ad hoc committee of FHC board members, park staff and garden volunteers.

"It was a dream come true seeing all those folks enjoying the Farmstead," said Park Manager Dennis Wiley. "We had no idea this many people would attend, but thanks to the foresight of our volunteers and staff, we were ready for them." Dennis added that the partnership between FHC and the park

to make this event happen is a model on which to build future events.

Pioneer Farmstead Day cost FHC about \$200 to produce—a minuscule amount when compared to the number of families who enjoyed the day.

Many thanks to the volunteers and staff who made this day such a success!

Wes Alderson, Wheat Processing
Ashby Family, Rope Making, Wool
Carding

Sara Buckingham, Children's Crafts,
Butter Churning

Mary Brand, Children's Games
Judy & Larry Burman, Children's Games
Dale Colebank, Old Time Fiddlers

Loita Colebank, Quilting
Tom Leisy, Wheat Processing
Jan and Steve Mondl, Lemonade Stand,

JR Ranger Program
The Thurston Family, Butter Churning

Marie Van Patten, Chicken Keeping
Jennifer Wade, Children's Games

Grace Wiley, Wool Spinning

—Ann Snyder

From the Library

The Story Behind the Manson Farmstead

Now that the Donald Manson barn has been completely renovated and put to use for educational and interpretive purposes, it seems appropriate to tell something about the history of the man, how he came to settle at Champoeg, and something about the barn itself

As described in J. A. Hussey's book, *Champoeg, Place of Transition*, Donald Manson was one of the most colorful and prominent personalities on the Champoeg scene during the late 1850's and for two decades thereafter. Born in Scotland about 1798 or 1799, he had joined the Hudson's Bay Company in 1817, and he spent more than forty years with that firm.

After nearly a decade of various employment east of the Rockies, Manson came to the Columbia Department as a clerk in 1825. He visited Champoeg for the first time in May, 1826

but, except for joining an expedition to establish Fort Langley on the Fraser River (British Columbia) in 1827, he

arrived back at Fort Vancouver in October, 1828, where he married Etienne Lucier's daughter, Felicite,

During 1829 it is said that he visited the Willamette Valley again with Dr. McLoughlin, and had an opportunity to examine its agricultural possibilities. But Company duties kept him from taking advantage of the knowledge. His next tour of duty took him to Fort George at the mouth of the Columbia River where he remained until 1831. He



Manson's restored barn (left) is pivotal to the Farmstead project which includes an heirloom garden. Below is the barn as it appeared prior to the restoration.

was then assigned to the Northwest Coast, and, except for short visits and one tour of duty at Fort Vancouver (1839-1840), he did not get back to the Willamette Valley for more than a quarter of a century. After a furlough in Scotland in 1840 and 1841, which he referred to as "the great holiday of my life," he returned

to service on the coast and in the northern interior. In 1844 he was placed in charge of the important New Caledonia district in present British Columbia, and there

he remained for 14 more years.

Because he never rose above the rank of Chief Trader, Manson became increasingly restless and dissatisfied, and in 1856 he requested a "furlough," ostensibly to arrange for an education and the amenities of civilization for a growing family.

At about this time Robert Newell, then engaged with his mill and other activities, decided to give up large scale farming. It is uncertain how he and Donald Manson got together,



but sometime around October, 1857, the Chief Trader visited the Willamette Valley and agreed to buy the agricultural aspect of the Newell claim.

The farm which Donald Manson purchased consisted of 221.5 acres. It comprised all of the bottomland on the Newell claim except for Newell's portion of the Champoeg townsite and a strip of river bank land eastward to Champoeg Creek. A small tongue of hillside land south of Mission Creek was included in the Manson tract, probably to provide a building site. On October 6, 1857, Robert Newell and his wife concluded the property sale for the sum of \$6,500.

Manson and his family did not move onto their new farm at once. During his "furlough" much of his time seems to have been spent in British Columbia, with the intention of taking possession of his newly acquired farm during the summer of

"Manson was one of the most colorful personalities on the Champoeg scene."

1858. With this objective in mind, he asked the Company for an extended leave and for permission to retire. Both requests were refused, and on April 29, 1858, "having now given up all hope of further promotion in the fur trade," Manson announced his determination to resign and "to settle down in the Willamette."

As with all Champoeg residents during the flood of 1861, Manson lost most everything he owned. Yet, despite the hardships brought about as a result of that catastrophe, Manson managed to build another house which once stood on the site of the present day Park Visitor Center. Evidently, he recovered sufficient hand-hewn lumber left behind by the flood to rebuild a barn as well. He remained at Champoeg until his death in 1880.

The Manson house was destroyed by fire in 1931, but the barn was used for many years and it went through numerous alternations. It was restored to its original form in 1994, under the direction of Gregg Olson of Historic Building Repair. During the restoration he discovered that the barn may possibly be the oldest structure in the State of Oregon from the standpoint of the materials used to construct it. Though the barn was actually built in 1862, there is strong evidence that it may date as far back as the early 1830's.

If you happen to be one of those who has not seen the barn, its restoration was completed using the same methods that were employed in all such buildings during the early and mid-19th century. You owe it to yourself to check it out.

— **Wes Alderson**

Board Matters

New President Elect

Hello! I'm Ann Snyder, and I am honored to have been recently installed as President-Elect of the Friends of Historic Champoeg. Champoeg State Heritage Area has long been a special place to me and I've been fortunate to get to know the park intimately as a volunteer host for the last three years.

I come to the board with over ten years experience with nonprofit organizations and parks. I was the Executive Director of the Oregon Recreation and Park Association from 1990-1992 and hold a graduated certificate in nonprofit management. I've served on several park-related boards including six years on the Yamhill County Park and Recreation Advisory Board, four of which I served as chair. I've served on state-wide granting committees and small, local nonprofit boards.

One of the most important things I've learned through my years of experience is that the men and women who work and volunteer for parks are some of the most competent, dedicated people I've had the pleasure to rub elbows with. And the folks at Champoeg are no exception.

I look forward to meeting with you, our members, and listening to your ideas about how we can best serve this wonderful cultural and natural resource. I encourage you to attend our Annual Meeting, to be held Saturday, January 5. And please be sure to look for me at the Champoeg Folklife Festival on September 29!

Mark Your Calendar!
Annual Membership
Meeting
Saturday, January 5

2001 Board of Directors

| | | |
|---|-----------------------------|----------------|
| <i>The board meets on the second Thursday of the month at 7:00 p.m. in the Champoeg Visitor Center. All members and interested parties are welcome.</i> | Barry Freeman, President | (503) 585-4156 |
| | Ann Snyder, President-Elect | (503) 472-8460 |
| | Sara Buckingham, Treasurer | (503) 633-2237 |
| | Wes Alderson | (503) 581-1396 |
| | Orvin Erickson | (503) 537-1607 |
| | Nikki Freepons | (503) 399-0492 |
| | Gertrude Jette | (503) 633-2407 |
| | Mabel Zorn | (503) 678-5362 |

Park News

New Plaza Will Enhance Monument

The 2001 Founder's Day celebration marked the 100th anniversary of the unveiling of the Champoeg monument. The monument commemorates the founding of Oregon's Provisional Government in what some have called a "victory of the American spirit".

In the park's early days the monument site was known as the "Plymouth Rock" of the west coast.

One hundred years of park activities has taken a toll on the landscape surrounding the historic monument. Today the monument is often unknown, unappreciated and overlooked by park visitors. The setting no longer adequately communicates its significance in American history. In planning for the next century of park operations, it was decided to design a landscape around the monument that will enhance the prominence the monument originally held while

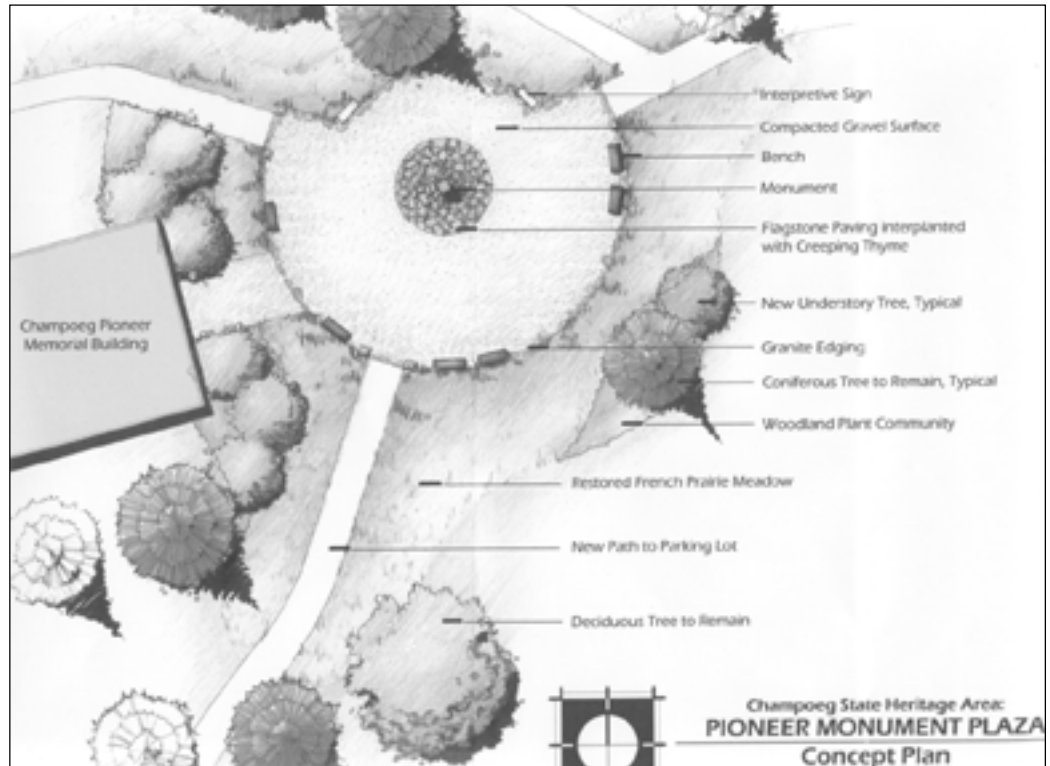
imparting a sense of reverence for the site.

Greenworks, landscape architects from Portland, completed the plan, which calls for the development of a crushed rock plaza to be installed around the monument. The plaza will be edged with cut granite, incorporate fixed bench seating, and have areas for interpretive panels as

well. In addition views of the river will be restored, harkening back to earlier times when the river played such an important role in the story of Champoeg.

It is anticipated that work will begin on the site this fall, although the current budget may not be able to complete all the phases of the work without additional funding.

—Dennis Wiley, Park Manager



Champoeg Times

We have a new look! We welcome your ideas, articles, photos, questions and comments. Tell us what YOU want to see in our quarterly publication. To contribute or to comment, please contact:

Wes Alderson (503) 581-1396
Ann Snyder (503) 472-8460

alderson@juno.com
avsnyder@attglobal.net

Trivia Question:

One of the names on the monument is backwards. The man's first name is last and his last name is first.

Who is it?

The first three members to give the correct answer at the Newell Museum Store booth at Champoeg Folklife Festival will receive a free gift!

Our Natural Heritage

Restoring Champoeg's Prairies

Once, the Willamette Valley was mostly prairie. The “wet prairie” was covered by rainwater through the winter and spring, and it supported its own special plant and animal species. The “dry prairie” (also called “upland prairie” or “grassland”) had better drainage. It supported a different ecosystem, and it looked different as well. Once, the area called Champoeg had both types of prairie.

As settlers moved into the Valley, they plowed and drained the land for agriculture. Today there is little prairie left, wet or dry, and we are paying the price in the number of different animals and plants we can see. Oregon's state bird, the Western Meadowlark, used to be as common in the Valley as it still is in eastern Oregon. Now it is

rarely seen. A few come to Champoeg in winter, but by nesting season they are gone. Other grassland birds are disappearing, and they could go onto the endangered species list. Restoring both the dry and the wet prairie is an important part of the park's management plan.

In summer 2000, a 10-acre hay field was plowed to make room for a new dry prairie. That fall several rare, native Willamette Valley grasses, such as Prairie June Grass, Tufted Hair Grass, and an Idaho fescue were planted. Why Idaho fescue? A native Willamette Valley fescue exists, but it is so rare we

couldn't get enough of it. The Idaho fescue is nearly identical.

By spring 2001, our dry prairie had germinated and was doing very well. So far, success. The question is, how well can we sustain this little bit of prairie over several years? There are some weeds—mustard, chickweed, some clover—that will probably get choked out and won't cause long-term problems. But there is also a little Meadow Foxtail, an aggressive,



Ten acres of hayfield is plowed to make way for dry prairie in the summer of 2000.

exotic grass that could push out everything else. Over the next few years we will watch and experiment.

It was easy to make Champoeg's wet prairie—just fill in the ditches that the farmers dug a century ago, and let nature take its course. Until this year the project that began in 1996 was spectacularly successful, with waterfowl and over 20 species of native wetland plants returning to the area without any help from us.

But drought came in the winter of 2000-2001, and our wet prairie did not do well. By spring, when ducks should still have been paddling about, the ground was dry and black

with dead water plants. Exotic plants were encroaching from the shore. Was it really a disaster? We don't know.

There has always been the occasional drought in the valley, yet in the long run the wet prairies survived. Perhaps our prairie was too young, and will have to start over when the rains return. Perhaps droughts are necessary to introduce more oxygen into the soil, and so our

prairie might come back, better than ever. We can only watch and see what happens.

Two years ago we were set to fill some ditches and expand the wet prairie by 15 acres. But park manager Dennis Wiley spotted a small, white flower that he identified as Whiterock Larkspur (*Delphinium leucophaeum*). It's an endangered species that shouldn't even be here, but somehow the seeds got into

Champoeg.

The prairie expansion was put on hold. However, we had a possible out. If our larkspur was a hybrid of two different larkspur species, then we did not need to preserve it, and we could move forward with our prairie plans. A study was done during the June 2000 larkspur bloom, to see if it is hybrid. Conclusion: 1. Can't tell from looking; 2. Needs a very expensive genetic study; 3. Can make no recommendation about moving it or propagating it.

In short, we need to look elsewhere if we want to expand Champoeg's wet prairie.

— Brian Snyder



Better than ever Champoeg Folklife Festival Organized by Butteville General Store

The Friends of Historic Champoeg are indeed fortunate to have the folks at the Butteville General Store, Cafe and Deli coordinate this year's Champoeg Folklife Festival. The event promises to be better than ever, with live music, authentic foods, pioneer skill demonstrations, numerous craft vendors and of course, a mountain man encampment.

There will be something for everyone throughout the day. Square dancing will kick off the main-stage entertainment. Join in and swing your partner to the lively tunes! The True West Band will follow with music that evokes a simpler time. Storyteller Ray Ballantyne will round out the day with tales of the west.

If you missed Pioneer Farmstead Day on September 1, now's your chance to try your hand at rope-making, butter-churning, wool carding and making apple cider. The wonderfully talented volunteers who made that day such a success will be demonstrating their skills from 1:00-4:00 p.m.

And don't forget the food! The Butteville General Store, Cafe and Deli is cooking up something special. "We're going to have foods that are reminiscent of life in the 19th Century," said Catherin Violante, co-owner of the business. "We'll have stews and chowders—simple, savory foods." FHC will sell pie and ice-cream as a fund-raiser, so please don't forget to eat desert!

The Arts & Crafts Marketplace will be the perfect place to begin shopping for the holiday season. Specialty vendors with exquisite wares will be on hand to encourage your gift-giving spirit. Be sure to check out the Newell Museum Store booth. Be sure to identify yourself as a member and receive 10% off all items. Heirloom pumpkins and seeds from the garden will be for sale, and garden produce will be available for a donation. Speaking of produce, there will also be a Farmers Market with fresh produce, plants and dried flowers.

There will be fun activities for specifically for children. They can have their faces painted, or turn the

tables and paint a pumpkin! There will be organized games and events for their enjoyment.

Champoeg Folklife Festival wouldn't be complete without an encampment. Come and wander through the authentic camps set up by dedicated re-enactors in period garb.

Tell your friends and neighbors and join us for the best ever Champoeg Folklife Festival!

Champoeg Folklife Festival
Saturday, September 29
11:00 a.m. — 6:00 p.m.

Will I see you at Champoeg Joe?

Wouldn't miss it Bob!



In the Store

The Sibley Guide to Birds

Anyone with even a casual interest in birds needs to take a close look at *The Sibley Guide to Birds* from the National Audubon Society. This beautifully illustrated volume has received high praise from a wide range of critics, including the New York Times, Scientific American, and the Boston Globe, to name a few.

Over 6,600 full-color illustrations depict birds in realistic poses accompanied by well-organized information. David Allen Sibley started drawing birds as a child and his goal in writing and illustrating this book was to produce the field guide he has always wanted. He certainly has succeeded in developing the field guide I've always wanted!

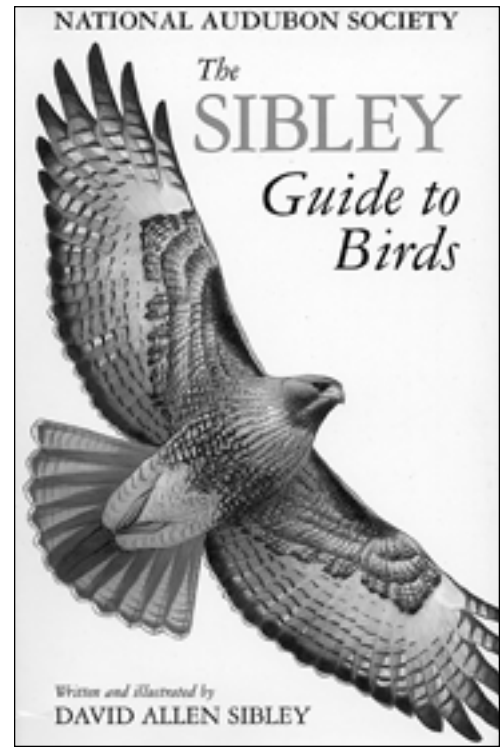
The first time I saw this book, I knew it would make an excellent

addition to my field guides. I'm delighted by how easy it is to use and how it has helped me identify birds I've wondered about for years.

Consider this book for yourself or as a gift. When you purchase it from the Newell Museum Store in the Champoege Visitor Center you not only get a ten percent discount, you also know that your purchase directly supports programs at the park.

—Ann Snyder

*National Audubon Society
The Sibley Guide to Birds
Written and Illustrated
by David Allen Sibley
A Chanticleer Press Edition
Alfred A. Knopf, New York
\$35.00 (\$31.50 for FHC Members)*



Are You a Current Member?

Dues are payable each January 1st. New members may prorate first year's dues. Members who join on or after September 1 are considered members through the following year. Make check payable to FHC and send to: Friends of Historic Champoege, 8239 Champoege Rd NE, St. Paul, OR 97137.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

email: _____

CIRCLE MEMBERSHIP TYPE:

| | |
|--------------------|-----------|
| Student/Associate* | \$6.00 |
| Individual | \$12.00 |
| Family | \$30.00 |
| Contributor | \$60.00 |
| Steward | \$100.00 |
| Patron | \$250.00 |
| Life** | \$1000.00 |

* No voting rights
** May pay over 10 year period

THANK YOU! As a member, you are entitled to a 10% discount on all books and other items at the Newell Museum Store in the Visitor Center; access to the Meek Library which has many hard to find historical resources; voting rights; and the right to serve on the Board of Directors. Perhaps the most important benefit is knowing you are supporting the cultural and natural heritage of Champoege State Heritage Area.

Upcoming Events

Champoeg Folklife Festival!
Saturday
September 29
11 a.m. — 6 p.m.

Champoeg Holiday Gathering
Saturday
December 1
1 p.m. — 4 p.m.

Annual Meeting
Saturday
January 5
Times to be announced



*Camas flower, the
symbol of Champoeg*

Friends of Historic Champoeg
8239 Champoeg Road
St. Paul, OR 97137
(503) 678-1649



Dedicated to interpreting the cultural and natural history of Champoeg