

**St. Paul Mission Historical Society
P.O. Box 158
St. Paul, Oregon 97137**

Fall 2014

St. Paul Mission Historical Society Newsletter

Mission of Organization: Preservation of the history of early Oregon and the French Prairie region of the Willamette Valley. Preservation includes establishment of a historical trust for artifacts, written and spoken history of the St. Paul and French Prairie area, and publication of historical records of early Oregon.

We hope you enjoy the Fall 2014 edition of the St. Paul Mission Historical Society (SPMHS) newsletter. We welcome your suggestions for future articles. Please feel free to contact any of the board members with your comments and suggestions.

Greetings To All Our Members

The Annual Meeting of the St. Paul Mission Historical Society will be held on Sunday, October 19, 2014 at 11:30 a.m. at the St. Paul Fire District office located in St. Paul. A light brunch will be provided at no charge. In order to provide an accurate head count, please RSVP to mernst@mtangel.net or 503.845.6208 and leave a message.

On the agenda will be the Society's annual elections. Four Board positions are open for nominations and they are:

- Dr. David Brauner – 2014
- Don Koch – 2014
- Miguel Salinas - 2014
- Hunter Wylie – 2014

Jean Abderhalden (President) – 2015

Gertrude Jette (Treasurer) – 2015

Gerry Lenzen (Vice President) – 2015

Maureen Ernst (Secretary) – 2016

George Strawn – 2016

Monsignor Gregory Moys – 2016

Rosella McKay – Past President

BOARD VACANCIES –We now have vacancies on the board. If you are interested in hearing more about the position of board member, please contact President Jean Abderhalden at 503.633.2741 or e-mail: jeanfrank@stpaultel.com. We are a good group and guarantee you will enjoy the time serving on the board!



GUEST SPEAKER – Our guest speaker is Brenda Kirsch Frketich. Brenda has been chosen one of American's Best Young Farmers and Ranchers by Progressive Farmer magazine. Brenda farms 1000 acres with her father Paul Kirsch on historic French Prairie farmland in St. Paul.

"I'm a nut and grass farmer, EMT, Firefighter, world traveler, fisherman, hunter, and regular adventure enthusiast! I love a good laugh and a great adventure", says Brenda. "I started a blog to talk about farming, a tradition that has run in the blood of my family for generations. But then I found that life on a farm is more than just tractors and fuel, it's a way of life and one that I want to share.

On this journey I was lucky enough to marry the man of my dreams and we welcomed our new little son Hoot in May 2014. As we are cultivating the next chapter of our farm legacy we are also making our own home in this small little town that we love. It's a farm town and it has a lot of heart, and we wouldn't want to live anywhere else in the world!"

In addition to taking over operations on the family farm, Brenda is active with the St. Paul Fire District, volunteers with the Oregon Farm Bureau and advocates for farming on her blog, [**www.nuttygrass.com**](http://www.nuttygrass.com). Brenda is dedicated to making her farm prosper and thrive, now and for the next generation.



Champoeg: A Story Unfolds By: Maryanne F. Maddoux

In the mid-1850's, leaving a homestead is a difficult endeavor. However, with the threat of flooding, and living in close proximity to a growing town, Robert Newell and his family made the difficult decision to relocate to a more comfortable location on higher ground. As the years pass, it becomes apparent to the owners that the Newell's previous homestead made for a far better pasture than a home. Dismantling an entire house is not easy. Knowing that it is not safe to leave an open well or an unattended deteriorating house, one of the last chores associated with Robert Newell's former home would have been the dismantling of the firebox and infilling of the open well.

Led by Dr. David Brauner, students from the 2014 Oregon State University Field School in association with the Oregon State Parks are able to shed light on the experiences of early settlers at Champoeg. This particular homestead was part of Robert Newell's past, but it also dates back to the early 1830's with its first resident John Ball. The home site is believed to be the first American farm in the Pacific Northwest. Archaeological excavations have taken place on the Newell homestead since 1999. Prior year's research uncovered the homes brick hearth, brick

entryway, and outline of the home itself. The 2014 field season at Champoeg State Heritage Park provided Oregon State University archaeologists and students an opportunity to gain a better understanding of both the functioning of the well, and the process used to infill the well with the bricks from the home's old firebox, prior to abandonment of the home site.

Although the dismantling of the home occurred more than 150 years ago, once beneath the first few layers of sediment, the archaeological record captures the homesteader's movements as if happening only yesterday. Minute details provide a clearer understanding of the past. The fragmented bricks used to infill the well are a record among themselves. The worn bricks reveal hand chisel marks and repeated heat exposure, which provide insight as to how the home site and well were constructed. Further, the particular bricks used in the construction of the well are identified as the surplus and disregarded building materials used in the construction of the St. Paul Church. Prior to being moved to Champoeg all the way from St. Paul, the handmade bricks often maintain the finger prints deposited by their makers. Uncovering the well was both exciting and informative for students. Visitors to the site were also able to view excavations each week during scheduled tours lead by Oregon State Park Rangers, providing all in attendance with a glimpse of Oregon history.

About the author: Maryanne Maddoux as the SPMHS Intern at OSU. Maryanne graduated magna cum laude, from Oregon State University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Anthropology in 2012. Succeeding graduation Maryanne gained additional field experience throughout Oregon and Washington while working at a cultural resource management firm; excavating and surveying a variety of archaeological sites. Maryanne is currently enrolled in the Masters of Applied Anthropology program at Oregon State University, where she focuses on historical archaeology.

2014 ACTIVITIES: Board members will report on activities this past year.

GRANTS: In 2014, we were awarded a \$7,000 grant from the Helen E. Austin Pioneer Fund of The Oregon Community Foundation. Project summary: Harriet D. Munnick was one of French Prairie's most prolific historians. Unfortunately, much of her work was never published and is unavailable to the general public. All of her research and documents were donated to the St. Paul Mission Historical Society and the Board of Directors decided that the next step in their on-going preservation project is indexing, digitizing, and cataloging of all material in a PastPerfect database. Oregon State University graduate students have been transferring all documents at the OSU Historical Archaeology Lab where the material is being organized, scanned and entered into a database. The end goal of this endeavor will be a digital collection of all of the Munnick research that will lend itself to both academic and public use.

We are very grateful to the Helen E. Austin Pioneer Family for allowing us to continue our research and preservation of French Prairie History. In 1976, Helen Austin, Catherine Zorn, and Joe & Rosella McKay formed the SPMHS. These community leaders recognized the importance of preserving history that included valuable documents and artifacts. And, preservation continues to the next generation!

WEBSITE www.spmhs.com : New! The website has been updated and now includes Facebook! **New!** We are receiving a very large interest in our photo collection and historical reference directory so the photos are now easier to locate. People are interested in studying their genealogy and the website is a great place to start your searches! **New!** Noted Genealogist Connie Lenzen is writing "French Prairie Pioneer Biographies".

Connie is certified by the Board for Certification of Genealogists and a past president of that organization. She has served as a National Genealogical Society Director (NGS). She authored the NGS Research in the

States guide, "Research in Oregon" and has written articles for the award-winning NGS *Quarterly*. She authored the "Twentieth-Century Research" course for the National Institute of Genealogical Studies (NIGS) and is currently working on the "Putting Your Ancestors Into Historical Context" for NIGS.

THANK YOU: A special thank you to Bernice Davidson Brown for donating the lawn mowing services this year. The lawns around the museums have been mowed and are well tended by Bernice's crew.

COMING EVENT: The Oregon Catholic Historical society (OCHS) is holding their Fall Event and Annual Meeting on Saturday, October 11, 2014 in St. Paul. Guest speaker is Shawna Gandy: Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur and the Female Seminary schools. Six Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur arrived in Oregon in July 1844 and established two Female Seminary schools, one in St. Paul, and one in Oregon City. Shawna Gandy will compare the schools, and tell us about the Sisters, the students and the impact the schools had on Oregon.

The presentation is free, but registration is required since seating is limited. There is an optional lunch for \$15.00. Register by September 25 at ochs.blanchet@gmail.com.

DUES: Lastly, it's time for our annual dues drive. Below is a membership application form. Simply complete and return it with your annual dues. If you are LIFE MEMBER OR BENEFACTOR, please update your membership information so we can keep our files current. Many of our Life Members continue to donate to the society and we thank you for your support. ***Our sincere thanks to all of our members for supporting Oregon history.*** If you would like to contribute to the restoration of our museums, your additional donation would be greatly appreciated. See you on October 19 at 11:30 a.m.

Maureen Ernst
Secretary & Board of Director
e-mail: mernst@mtangel.net
Evenings: 503.845.6208

Name: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
Phone: _____
Email Address: _____
____ Individual: \$15
____ Senior: \$10
____ Family: \$25
____ Supporting: \$75
____ Corporate: \$200
____ Benefactor or Individual Life: \$500

St. Paul Mission Historical Society, P.O. Box 158, St. Paul, OR 97137. Thank you!!