

Siuslaw Pioneer Museum

A Book Worth Reading...

I've been slowly working my way through a slender paperback book titled ***Oregon Trail; Last of the Pioneers*** by **Rick Steber**. For those of you who have done any hiking during your life, Steber is a master at describing the landscape and emotions that make the reader feel like they are right there with him on the trail.

I backpacked a good portion of the Rogue River Trail in my 30's while living in Grants Pass, Oregon. (Grants Pass is similar to Florence in that it is a historic town situated along a major river, The Rogue, and has mining history.) Reading Steber's book took me back to a time when my group camped along the river's edge and walked a steep narrow trail that many miners and pack mules had traversed over the last century or longer... parts of which were used by indigenous peoples in the area over the last 9,000 years

Steber writes in his forward:

I walked the Oregon Trail from Fort Boise to The Dalles, a distance of nearly 500 miles, to gain a perspective of what the pioneers endured. I discovered that in many places the Oregon trail is still visible. As I walked in the ruts, carved into the earth by wagon wheels and eroded by weather and time, I found many relics: horseshoes, ox shoes, iron rims, bits and pieces of wagons. Once, coming into the Grande Ronde Valley of Northeastern Oregon, at a spot where the pioneers had tied trees to the back of their wagons to act as anchors and rough-locked the wheels to slow their descent, I found ivory piano keys scattered down the steep hillside.

Hiking over the timbered ridges of the Blue mountains the changing of seasons was evident everywhere; in the crispness of the morning air, the vibrant color of cottonwood trees living the streams, the flurry of squirrels gathering food, and day and night, the steady march of Canada honkers passing high overhead, migrating south.

It's a must-read that I highly recommend!

www.ricksteber.com

Merilee Mulvey, Editor
Siuslaw Pioneer Museum/KRL



THANK YOU!!!

We want to thank those of you who have set up your FRED MEYER REWARDS \$\$ to benefit Siuslaw Pioneer Museum! It means so much to the museum to have supporters do this to help fund the museum and its programs.

If you would like to set up this type of benefit for the museum, just contact your local Fred Meyer Store to learn how or go onto your Fred Meyer account and designate SPM as a recipient for rewards monies.

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Diving Into the KRL Research Records!

The Process of Gathering Family Information

The KRL has one whole wall of file cabinets, where archival records are kept. In the A drawer of family names, is a folder for a family from the Florence past. The subject is Frank Alexander. Only two small news articles were in the folder and I wanted to find more information. This is the process I used to find more information about this family.

The first thing I did was go to my Ancestry.com account online and I looked up his name. A public family tree appeared that closely matched information in the obituary article in our folder. This was a good start so I messaged the owner of the tree to see whether they might wish to share information with me! It's always smart to verify records you find online to make sure you have the correct person. Many family trees do not have sources associated with their listings of family members and names are often incorrect. Verifying facts with documents is crucial to creating accurate ancestry trees and stories.

Research on Ancestry.com brought up general records indicating birth information for Frank and his future wife, Teresa Saphonia Blakely...

Frank Hopper Alexander was born on 13 May 1852 in South Bend, St. Joseph County, Indiana. His parents were Robert Alexander (1818-1875) and Phebe Ann Tutt (1834-1855). Teresa was born on 26 Nov 1858 in Camanche, Clinton County, Iowa. Her parents were Lyman Bishop Blakely and Mary Mandingo.

I was able to find many bits of resource information for Teresa and Frank. Teresa's death certificate was found online; Frank's birth listing was found; several decades of U.S. Census reports showed their migration from Iowa/Indiana to Oregon (after they married in 1881); Frank's occupation beginning as a farmer and then evolving to a carpenter. By 1900 the couple had been married 19 years and were both in their mid-forties. They had three children, aged 13-17, all born in Oregon. They owned their house free and clear and lived in the Florence Precinct. They were listed on sheet number 4 B of the enumeration district Number 220 on 6 June 1900 by enumerator Charles Horwood. One family tree had a death date for Frank as 9 Feb 1912 in North Bend, Coos Bay, Oregon, but no verifying document was found to prove the date... There may be more information about this family in our research files and books in our library, just waiting to be found with further research.

There are literally hundreds of informative YouTube genealogy research instruction videos online to watch and learn how to be a better researcher to find your ancestors' records and stories. There are other good genealogy organizations like Familysearch.org, MyHeritage.com, GenealogyBank.com, U.S. National Archives, The Library of Congress, USGenWeb.org, Newspapers.com and more that are either free or paid sites devoted to family research. And don't forget your local and regional historic societies and museums!

Now our file on the Alexander family has about a dozen bits of information and newspaper articles about the family, waiting for a potential descendant to visit us at the museum and ask the question... *"Do you have any information on my ancestor Frank H. Alexander?"* ***We'll be ready to help that person begin their research journey!***

Join me in future issues as we investigate more topics and techniques. Email us if you have a question!

Merilee Mulvey- Volunteer Research/Newsletter Editor

First Settlements on the Coast

Excerpts from a Story by Robert W. Oliver in the Oregon Coast Magazine, dated Sep/Oct 1997.

In the mid- 1980s archaeologists dug into a mound near the boat ramp at Tahkenitch landing, just off Highway 101. ...Tahkenitch-1, represented by the deepest layer atop undisturbed soil, most likely began as a seasonal hunting and fishing camp.... Bones of fish and animals, including harbor seals and mule deer, are plentiful. The excavators found only a few artifacts such as stone hammers and scrapers.

Early settlements at Tahkenitch Landing had been abandoned for two or three thousand years before explorers of European origin came to Oregon. The region around Tahkenitch Lake was inhabited by people who spoke dialects of the Siuslawan language. They could understand tongues being spoken by the Alseans to the north and by the Coosans to the south. What they had in common was a lifestyle oriented toward the coast.

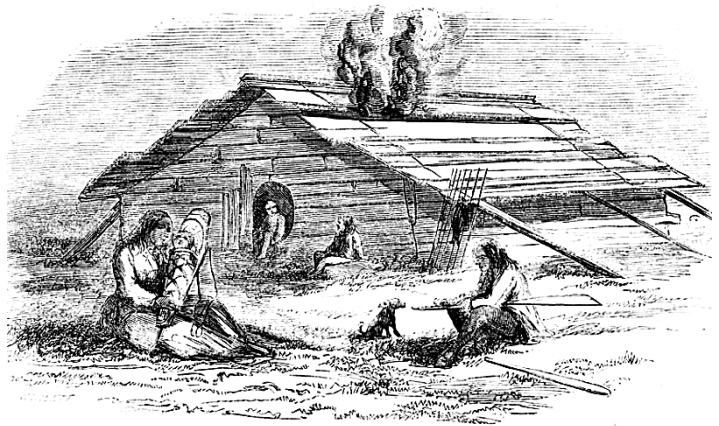
These coastal tribes shared similar customs, manners, and beliefs. Villagers lived in cedar plank communal houses up to 50 feet in length, and half as wide. Center posts supported a strong ridgepole from which rafters sloped down to each side. The interior walls were lined with reed mats, while partitions separated family units. Mats or hides covered the dirt floors. Structures were built for storage and other special purposes, including sweathouses.

Women were responsible for making clothing, and they wove mats from reeds and cattails and baskets from spruce root and cedar bark. Men fashioned weapons and other gear for hunting and fishing. In that respect there was a strict division of labor. There is evidence that women occasionally were chiefs among the Siuslawans. Many villages had shamans or religious leaders.

Many photographs of Coastal Indians who survived into modern times show them attired in splendid regalia, sometimes fashioned of leather and decorated with feathers, shells, and beads. These were worn on occasions of social importance. In cold weather everyone put on capes or robes of cattails or shredded bark, sometimes wearing dressed hide leggings and moccasins. Adults of both sexes were tattooed.



A major tool in woodworkers' kits on the South Coast was a stone adze and adze blade. "Native Peoples of Oregon's South Coast", a traveling exhibit from the University of Oregon Museum of Natural History.



WINTER LODGE OF THE UMPQUA INDIANS.

This engraving was prepared from a sketch made in 1857 by an unknown artist. It appeared in *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, April 24, 1858, accompanying an article titled, "Scenes and Incidents of Oregon Territory."

The lodge that is pictured represents a typical lodging among the Lower Umpqua Indians, who spoke a dialect of the Siuslawan tongue. They lived in winter villages along the lower reaches of the Umpqua River and Smith River, Tahkenitch Lake, and Winchester Bay, with seasonal camps farther inland.

The winter villages included houses built of cedar planks, from 20 to 50 or more feet in length and ten to 25 feet in width. A house was built over an excavation of from three to six feet in depth. Two or more center posts supported a ridgepole, and rafter poles extended down either to the ground—as shown in this illustration—or to side supports. The planks were held on by lashing, and the boards near the top could be moved to allow smoke to escape from the interior fire pits. Entry was through a rounded doorway at one of the gable ends.

Despite wide differences in tribal customs and language, family lodges of similar design and materials were used by Indians along the entire Oregon Coast and in the western river valleys: Chinook, Kalapuyan, Tillamook, Alsean, Siuslawan, Coosan, and the various Athapaskans of the southwestern corner.

Source: Oregonhistoryproject.org website

THE WEST SHORE. Sept 1883

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The completion of the Northern Pacific Railroad line from St. Paul and Minneapolis in Minnesota to Portland in Oregon and Puget Sound in Washington Territory, opens to **Land Seekers, Settlers, Farmers, Lumbermen, Cattle-men, Miners and Emigrants GREAT OPPORTUNITIES** to better their condition.

The Northern Pacific Railroad Company now offers for sale in **Washington, Oregon and Idaho,**

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8,000,000 acres of prairie lands contiguous to timber, the greater part lying in the **FAMOUS WHEAT BELT** giving large and sure crops every season, having a soil of remarkable fertility, favored by an **UNEQUALED CLIMATE.**

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For full information respecting the advantages and general features of the country, the Railroad and Government Lands, address

PAUL SCHULZE,

General Land Agent, Western District, Portland, Oregon--or,

CHAS. B. LAMBORN,

Land Commissioner, St. Paul, Minnesota--or,

E. D. EDGAR,

General Agent, 52 Clark Street, Chicago, Illinois.

Source: The Caxton Printers, Ltd.
Booklet Early Oregon Days by Edwin
D. Culp. Copy of booklet is in the
research files of the Kyle Research
Library at SPM.

Edwin D. Culp was a graduate of the University of Oregon. He worked in public relations for one of the large rail carriers in the Pacific Northwest.

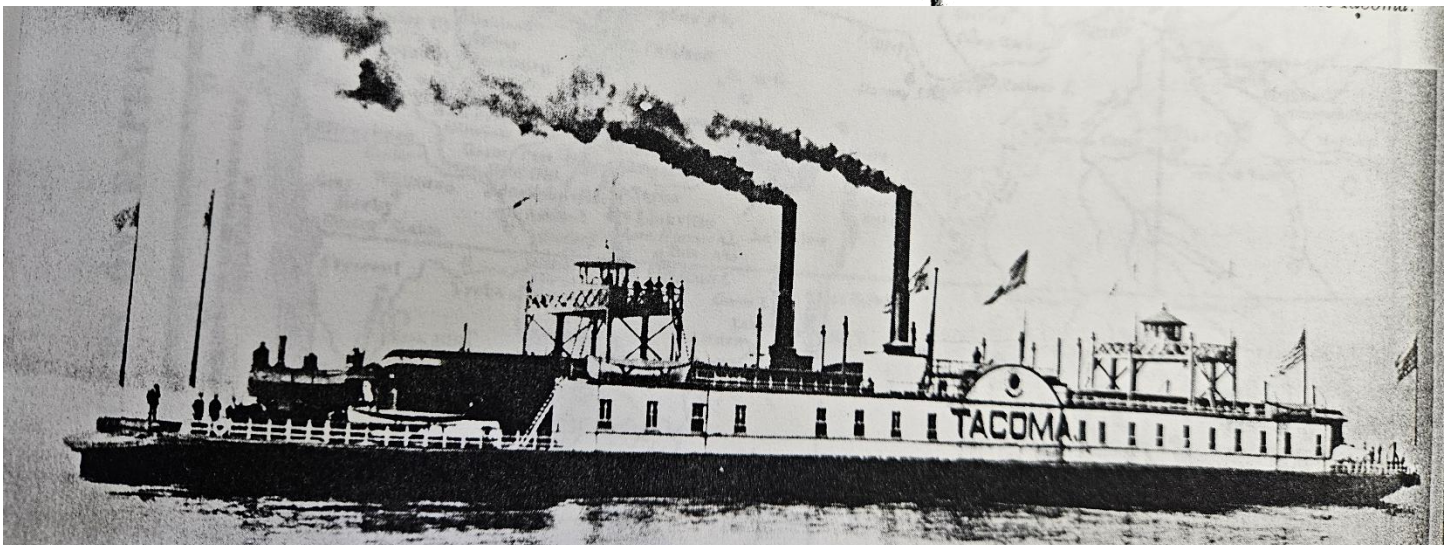
His grandparents came to Oregon by covered wagon shortly after the Civil War. Mr. Culp lived in Portland, Oregon.

This image left is advertising land available through the Northern Pacific Railroad Company's Western District Land Department. The date on the advertisement is Sept. 1883.

We will be investigating the history of the railroad through the Siuslaw Valley in the near future to learn about how it transformed this area.

Merilee Mulvey, Editor

This image from Culp's book shows the steam train ferry TACOMA carrying trains and their locomotives across the Columbia River from Goble, Oregon to Kalama, Washington in 1888.



Upcoming Events

October – December 2026

Oct 12 Board Meeting at museum
Nov 9 Board Meeting at museum
Dec 14 Board Meeting at museum

Keep abreast of happenings at the museum...
Visit us at:

Library e-mail library@siuslawpioneermuseum.com

Newsletter e-mail: siuslawpioneermuseum@gmail.com

★ **website** www.SiuslawPioneerMuseum.com

<https://www.facebook.com/Siuslaw-Pioneer-Museum>

Endowment Fund

An endowment fund in the Museum's name has been established with many financial gifts from our members. Donors who wish to contribute to this fund should make their contribution payable to:

"Western Lane Community Foundation"
and specify
"Siuslaw Pioneer Museum Endowment"
on the check

Mail check to:
Siuslaw Pioneer Museum
P. O. Box 2637
Florence, OR 97439

Please keep in mind that checks specified to the endowment fund are to be used as specified by the endowment maker for special projects or the general endowment held by the foundation.

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Make Check Payable to: Siuslaw Pioneer Museum Member year runs Jan 1 – Dec 31

MAIL TO: Siuslaw Pioneer Museum, PO Box 2637, Florence OR 97439

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Family	\$40.00	Sponsor	\$95.00	Lifetime	\$1,100.00

If you wish to pay by credit card, you are welcome to go to our website membership section

Additional Gift amount for the SPM General Fund: \$ _____



P.O. Box 2637

Florence OR 97439

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Newsletter Printing contributed by the Florence Branch, Banner Bank

SIUSLAW PIONEER MUSEUM



The Siuslaw Pioneer Museum is located on the corner of 2nd and Maple streets in Old Town Florence.

Our location address is:
278 Maple Street

Our mailing address is:
P.O. Box 2637
Florence OR 97439

Meet our Board of Directors and Trustees

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Board meetings are held the 2nd Monday of each month at the museum. These meetings are open to all members. Call ahead for space availability.