

# Great Circle Friends and Family Tour

July 2009 – 2550 Miles



## Saturday July 12, 2009 Chico to Brookings

The first part of my ride takes me through familiar country as I ride to Red Bluff. At my first gas stop, a fellow motorcycle rider is admiring my trailer and I notice that he has a patch on his vest that says “Christian” and before we part, I dig out a [Herald Times](#) (HT) to take on his trip to Canada. After fueling up, I find Hwy 36 W and head toward the coast. At first the landscape is typical east side (of the valley) grass and oaks on jumbled hills which are also dotted with Digger Pines. Once and a while, I am afforded wonderful vistas of the dry areas with a view of the mountains beyond. As I leave Platina, the the landscape changes to forest with pine and some fir trees which offer a green relief from the dryness of the grass lands. The road is not

a fast one and it is necessary to stay vigilant as I motor along. After a while, I sense a coolness as the temperature is being affected by the coastal influence. After I notice the temperature slowly falling, I stop to don another layer to keep me comfortable. Soon I can smell the fragrance of the ocean and what a lovely smell it is. After fueling up near Fortuna, I continue heading up the coast to Eureka where I will eat my main meal for the day. It is a bit foggy on the coast road with occasional misting, not really too cold to activate my electric vest. Arriving at Eureka, I followed the GPS's instructions to what was supposed to be a seafood place but no longer. In the parking lot, I asked a random elderly couple if they could recommend a local seafood restaurant and they suggested one around the corner. The lady gave me a booklet and said they are writing a book and as I looked at the booklet, my eyes discovered that their booklet had a Christian message. I reciprocated by giving them an HT. The restaurant was a bar and restaurant and very noisy. When dining alone, I always take a book with me so I am not just sitting there staring while the food is being prepared. I ordered the fish and chips and a cup of clam chowder and both were wonderful. The fish was a huge serving and cooked so nicely that little chewing was required, it could be mashed with the tongue very easily. After finishing my meal, I went to the bike and preparing to leave when I heard someone behind me say, “nice bike.” It was a couple of teenagers and they were from Placerville, visiting the coast for a little get a way. They had many questions and seemed to be hanging around so I fished out another HT, and gave it to them after explaining to them what it was. We talked a bit more then parted. After that I headed toward Brookings Or, where I would hopefully find a campsite.





## Monday, July 13<sup>th</sup> Veneta to Salem to Waldport



The day dawned overcast but dry, thankfully. My friends took me out to breakfast at a little church that had been converted to a restaurant. The breakfast was nice as was the company and soon it was time to leave and we said our good byes and I left. I headed toward Mapleton where my dad lived for about 3 years. This small hamlet is right on the Siuslaw River and my mission was to try to find the place along the river where Dads, stepdad built a foot bridge many years ago. When I was probably about 16, we visited the place and dad showed me where holes had been bored into the rocks to provide anchorage for the bridge. First I traveled on the road east of the river (where an acre will cost 250K) and had no luck finding the place. Dad said there was an abandoned sawmill behind

their house and due to the geography that narrowed down the place because most of the area south of the river is very steep except for one area. Finding nothing I could recognize on the south side, I tried the north side and climbed down onto some of the river rocks to see if I could find the bore holes. I didn't.

After giving up, I headed to Florence and I arrived there just after lunch so I went to MO's to eat. On the way to the restroom, I saw that they still had soldier's photos up on the wall and they had done the same a few years ago for Evan and sure enough, there was his photo. I contacted the manager and ask if I could take the photo down since Evan was out of the army. Soon we pulled the pins and relieved Evan of his bathroom wall detail. Back when they posted Evan's picture, the manager bought the whole dinner for me and my 3 biking chums, one of the nicest things a stranger has ever done for me. My meal at MO's consisted of blackened salmon, a cup of clam chowder, small dinner salad with a plop of shrimp as well as mashed potatoes. Everything was real good except the potatoes which were made from powder, with that funny taste. After my meal, the day had warmed up nicely and so I pecked away at the laptop while seated on the dock overlooking the small marina. I plan on letting my food settle a bit more then off to Starbucks where I can send this email. After coffee, I rode up to Waldport where I found a tent spot at the Beach Campground. As I pulled into my space, an older small man appeared and said he sure liked my bike, soon his daughter, (a daughter he didn't know he had for 50 years) appeared at his side. They both spoke with a southern twang and eventually I gave them a Herald Times, and they pretty much said that they were "believers." This morning while I was still waking up, I thought I heard "Bobby" using the Lords name in vain, so, I hope some of what I told them about "right living" will be heeded. After setting up camp, I went for a long walk along the beach which shoals off gradually here. I walked with a couple from Vancouver and their soon to be adopted son. The boy aged 8, was born missing a chromosome or two and as a result, was totally deaf and his general health outlook and longevity expectation was poor. Another visible feature was that his fingers were tapered. The boy had been neglected and did not know how to sign or even use the potty. This couple had been helping him a lot and he was making some progress. He seemed like a loving kid and I admired this couple for the challenge they were taking. I did not share the gospel with them, they seemed to me to be living it. After returning to my camp, I did some reading until dark and went to bed.



**Tuesday July 14, 2009 – Waldport to Salem**

I slept in until 815 this morning and as I opened up the tent flap, the sun was shining which was a welcome sight. I took my time enjoying coffee and was rolling about 1015. This morning I am heading toward Corvallis on Hwy 34. This highway is one of the nicest ones I have ever road, smooth and wide with enough curves to make it interesting. Scenic as well as the road followed the Alesia River with its occasional small hamlets and eventually farms. On arriving at Corvallis I found a fish restaurant named McGraths. I had the lunch plumb halibut and it was

really a wonderful meal along with strawberry lemonade. I was astonished that the total bill came to \$13.18 That it, we are moving to Oregon!

Next I explored some roads that went to Falls City and the countryside is so pretty. I ended up in Dallas at where else, Starbucks and I have reserved a tent site tonight at Premier RV Resort 7400 Salem - Dallas Hwy. The manager said there was another “biker” camped there, might be interesting.

Then RV resort was really the nicest one I had ever seen as witnessed by the majority of high end RV’s there. The tent area was equally nice with a screened off pea gravel area for the tent. When I took a shower, I noted that the shower stalls were twice as big as the normal ones and there was no standing in a wet area while trying to put on your clean clothes like most of the other places I have visited. In talking to my neighbor, I found out that there was a pug dog in the RV on the corner so after a while, I went and paid the pug a visit. I think his name was Roscoe and he was a very heavy male. He sniffed me and did the normal pug things while I petted my surrogate pug while talking to the owner. The RV park also had a swimming pool, hot tub and pool room and to top things off, there was a copy of the morning paper at my tent’s doorstep in the morning. All this for just a bit more than \$22.00.

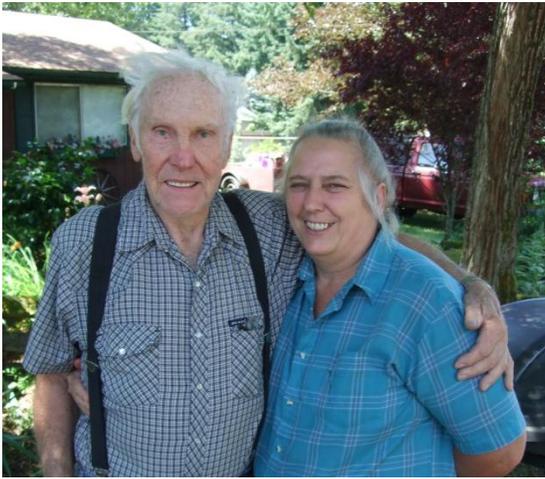
**Wednesday July 15<sup>th</sup> 2009 – Salem to Mill City to Champoeg Park**



The sun was beaming down pretty strong as I exited the tent. I did the normal things and started preparing coffee and my neighbor after saying good morning reminded me that they had a free continental breakfast until 0900. Checking my watch I saw I had about 45 minutes left so I thanked him for the reminder and headed toward the clubhouse. It was a pretty busy place but there was an open side of a round table occupied by a biker looking person. I asked him if I could share the table with him and he said sure. After gathering my food and coffee and the usual introductions, my new friend Gary, told me a tragic story. It seemed that just a couple of weeks previous, he was on his way riding to Alaska with one of his neighbor/friends. They had made it quite a ways up into Canada when there was trouble in the camp. Some sort of tiff between Gary and his friend which escalated into some harsh words between them. Apparently the mood continued into the next morning when

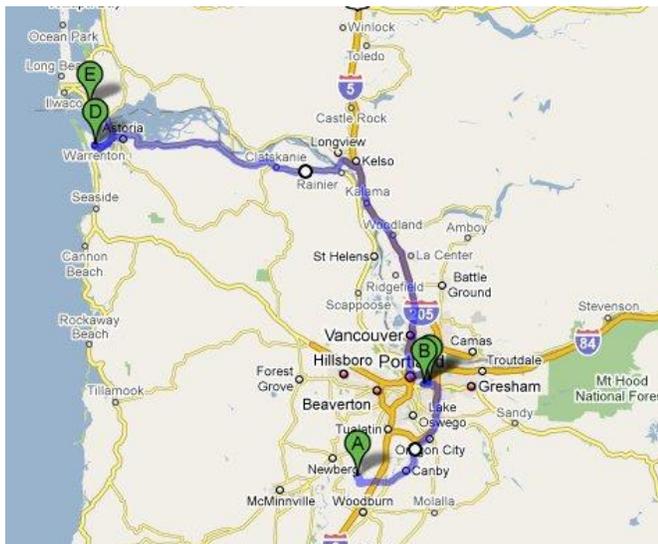
his friend harshly left instead of drinking the coffee that Gary had prepared for him. He told Gary that he was “heading up the road 25 miles or so” and with that, he abruptly left. As the events of the day unfolded it seems that somewhat short of 25 miles, his friend had some difficulty maneuvering through a road construction area and crashed his motorcycle which killed him.

This of course left Gary feeling that he contributed partly through his friends demise so in the process of healing, Gary was personally visiting the deceased friends wife and some of his friends. It was one of the saddest stories I had heard and I was not able to offer much to comfort him about his role in the situation. I did give him one of the HT tracts and I hope he finds comfort in the arms of the Lord.



Soon I was packed up and rolling again, this time to Mill City to visit my Uncle Steve and his wife Sam. Mill City is about an hour's ride east from Salem and it is a pleasant ride through the forest covered hills. I found their house with no problem and they both seemed pleased to see me. Uncle Steve looked a lot thinner than the last time I had seen him which was probably 8 years ago. Sam looks like she had not aged at all but the sands of time had taken their toll on Steve's memory. Steve likes to tell stories and he certainly has a lot of stories to tell but he cannot remember place names or other details very well. He will be talking along and suddenly get a puzzled look on his face as the detail he was telling about, vanished. Sam does a good job helping him with the details, she is very

sweet and real is a help to him. I guess that is one of the spin off benefits of marrying someone that is 19 years younger. She made beans and hamburgers for lunch and after we sat in the backyard and talked and played with the dogs. I discovered that Sam had learned a new skill since I had last visited, chain Saw carving. She makes Moose and Bears with a chainsaw. The bar on the saw is specially made and narrows down to about the size of a dime. Soon it was time to head toward Champoug State Park where I would spend the night. I shunned the interstate in favor of the highway bisecting the foothills on the east side of the valley going through towns like Sublimity and Silverton, which was a nice looking older town. I enjoyed riding through the countryside looking at the farm lands and homes. Arriving at camp, I was able to get a spot and set up camp and soon it was time for bed. I had an opportunity to get to know my neighbor a bit he was from NC and did not have many nice things to say about the south.



**Thursday July 16, 2009 Champoug Park to Chinook, WA**

Nice weather greeted me this morning as I enjoyed a leisurely breakfast and packed up my gear. When I was all packed up, I headed into the greater Portland area looking for a copy center where I could make some more copies of the Herald Times since I had run out. I found a place and made 20 more copies which should last me for the rest of the trip. I needed some special zip lock bags to hold the tracts and I was happy to find just the size I needed at the local Wal-Mart. After that I headed to Uncle Bob and Reta's house just to make sure of where it was.



I had a bit over an hour until I was going to meet Donna so I headed to Mt. Tabor Park which is set on a hill about 20 blocks to the east. The road to the top was now blocked off so I parked and walked the rest of the way. My plan for the time was to find a table and fold the tracts I had copied and put them into the bags, all I needed was a table. Wouldn't you know, on the whole park, I only found one table and it was in use. I also was disappointed that there was no functional rest room at the park. As I headed back toward the bike, the person using the table got up and moved so I scrambled to occupy it before someone else claimed it.

I got my work done and headed to Tom's Café where I was to meet Donna. Soon Donna showed up and we got caught up, I had one of the best French Dip sandwiches I have ever had. After about an hour and a half, we went to Rita's and had a nice conversation with her and Bob, well sort of. Bob

suffers from dementia and although he seems to be OK in his world, he has lost nearly all it takes to have a conversation. One example of his disability is that for some reason, Bob said I needed a fork. Donna asked him if we were going to have something to eat and the matter seemed to rest. A few minutes later though, Bob shuffled into the kitchen and returned with a fork for me. I did not know what to do with it so I set it down on a nearby table. We had a nice conversation and soon it was time to head toward Astoria where I would be spending the night. I enjoyed the ride to Astoria, stopping along the way for some coffee.



My first mission was to try to find Aunt Lena's house on Smith Lake. The GPS unit took me to the street and I slowly moved along until I spotted a house that looked the right vintage. I spotted one and I knocked on the door and asked the owner if that was the first house on Smith Lake. He said he didn't know and I told him that I think this was my Aunt's house but I didn't remember her married name. He said the only name associated with the house was Boyle and that jarred my memory. That was her married name, this was the place. The current owner said he bought the house about 30 years ago.

I took some photos and then headed to the state campground. The campground was full so I stopped at the KOA nearby and was shocked to learn that the fee to have a site was \$43.00. Thinking that I was about to be robbed, I decided to move on and I headed across the Astoria bridge as it got dark. Soon I arrived in the town of Chinook, WA. Spotting a fire station, I noticed that it had a long in the back of the building and I pulled around and parked fully out of sight. I pitched my tent and blew up my air bed and tried to go asleep. The only problem was the highway was nearby and it was pretty busy. Normally, I would have used earplugs but if someone was going to attack me, I wanted to hear it so I did without them. As a result, I figure I only got about 4 hours sleep that night.





## Friday July 17, 2009 - Chinook, WA to Freeland, WA

I woke up about 6 am and loaded up and headed toward Raymond, WA, along the coast. I stopped at Raymond which is a big Oyster town and had a really good breakfast at a downtown café. My ride this morning took me through heavily forested areas and salt marshes. There were some vistas out toward the morning sun which were simply spectacular, I probably should have stopped to take some photos but it is just too hard to stop and fight with the gear to take a photo or two. I did enjoy seeing the beautiful scenery nevertheless.

Next I headed toward Tacoma where I would find my Aunt Sue. I found my Aunt's senior housing unit but the man that seemed to be in charge said she had left 20 minutes before to go shopping at Fred Meyer which was just across the street. I thought it would be fun to spot her at the store so I walked across and wow, there sure were a lot of older women in that store and after not seeing her for

over 30 years, I figured I would have a hard time spotting her, I did. I bought a bouquet of flowers and headed back her housing unit. After about 15 minutes, a lady approached who I was Sue was my aunt. I said "Ma'am, could I get your opinion? I have bought these flowers for someone I care about and would like to know if they are good enough flowers?" She said they were and I said "I bought these for my aunt Sue that I hadn't seen for a long time." Her eyes widened and she said I must be one of Bill's boys. I gave her a hug and carried her bags to the second level where her apartment was. We had a nice conversation as we caught up on life's events. After seeing Sue, I went to McDonalds for lunch and went to find my homeless friend Pat.



to

Pat used to live in an old Colmbo Bread Truck but now



Whidbey Island.

lived in senior housing. I called his apartment but there was no answer so I went to the rec room and he was not there either.

I checked in the office and they could not help me so downhearted, I headed back to the bike. I said to the Lord, I guess you didn't want me to see Pat. As I neared my bike, a car pulled up and a man was being let off and I was amazed to see that it was Pat. He was surprised to see me and we walked to his apartment which was a mess, and we talked about old cars and motorcycles for about an hour. When it was time to go, I gave him a copy of the HT. I thought it was neat that the Lord had controlled the cadence of my day to make sure I would see Pat. After that I headed to Port Townsend to catch the ferry to

Since I did not know the way, I used the GPS but found that it took me to a ferry alright, the wrong ferry.

I reentered the info into the GPS and arrived at Port Townsend. I had about an hour and a half for the next ferry so I made some phone calls and soon the ferry arrived. Although I was a night early, Tom invited me to come and spend the night at their place. The ferry ride was nice and not too rough and after disembarking, I road in the dark about 30 minutes to Tom's house. After arriving, I took a shower and after a bit of conversation, I went to bed because I was tired.



#### **Saturday July 18<sup>th</sup> 2009 – Freeland, WA**

I woke about 700 and did some writing on the journal. Soon Tom and Penny were up and Tom and I went for breakfast at a local café. After Tom showed me around Freeland and we returned back to the house where we picked up Penny and then we spent most of the day looking at some of the towns and forts on the island. For dinner we ate at a Mexican restaurant at Oak Harbor, the largest town on the island. The dinner was real good and we headed back home where I washed the bike and trailer and got caught up on this journal. Tomorrow, I will get up and ride to Bellingham, WA. I am looking forward to the ride.

#### **Sunday July 19<sup>th</sup> 2009 Freeland, WA to Bellingham, WA**

I headed up the highway toward Deception Pass passing forested rolling hills and farms and such. After a while I arrived at Deception Pass. The early explorers thought this narrow passage with its swirling waters went somewhere but in fact, it was a dead end.



As I looked down, the tide was coming in briskly and my mind went to the time when we were down in those turbulent waters in the 18.5 ft cabin cruiser my dad made. For some bizarre reason we had motored through the pass and now it was time to escape its watery grip. The 40 hp motor seemed to be running strong as we battled the incoming tide, with the motor wailing, we made some progress when all of the sudden, the motor quit. Now were drifting back into the clutches of the gorge without the ability to steer.

The scene before me quite clear even after all these years. There was dad, the cover off the top of the motor coiling the starting rope and yanking the rope to spin the motor repeatedly. There I was looking at dad, then the whirlpools and rocks then back to dad. Finally, the magic combination of choke and prime paid off and the motor roared to life, we were saved! Now the "Sea Walker" as our boat was named, mocked the incoming tide as we sped westward. The view off the bridge is impressive and I took the time to walk the length of the bridge on one side and back to where I was parked via the other side.

After that I continued toward Bellingham as directed by my faithful GPS. I stopped at a restaurant in Anacortes to have some lunch, I had the combination baskets with fish, one prawn, one fried oyster and a handful of clams. Not bad it even came with coleslaw and a piece of grilled toast and fries. I ate most of the meal except for ½ the fries because I am trying to cut back. On the road again which took me east to I-5 where I turned left toward Bellingham and stopped once to make some phone calls. Arriving in Bellingham, I stopped to call Genie and saw that she had tried to call me while I was riding. I called and let her know that I was about 10 minutes out and this is where things went wrong. As I pulled up to the road that I was to turn left on, I noticed a blue porta-potty on a construction site just ahead and I had the brainstorm that I would utilize it so I would not have to make a bee line to a facility at Genie's house just after arriving.



I saw that someone had spread some rather large rocks at the drive's entrance and I noticed that the road smoothed out about 15 ft in from the paved roadway. What I failed to see was that there was a cable blocking the entrance between the really rough area and the smooth area. I crossed the road rather briskly because cars were coming and had to make an abrupt stop when I finally saw the cable. Now I was in a pickle, it would be difficult enough to maneuver the motorcycle by itself without flopping it down let alone while it was attached to the trailer. The only shot I had was to disconnect the trailer and manually push it back to the side of the paved road and move the motorcycle separately. Adding to the stupidity of the situation, it was hot and I was sweating like a stuck pig, as they say. With the trailer now separated, I pushed it back to the side of the road without much difficulty. The bike was more difficult to turn around on the very uneven ground but I managed somehow. I got reconnected and guess what, when I arrived at Genies, I had to make a bee line to the bathroom to not only use the john, but to wash my filthy hands too.



The whole family was there Genie, her husband Doug and three children, a girl (13) and two younger blond boys. Genie's mom Doris and her friend Jack were there also. There house is very quaint and large complete with a beautiful swimming pond with island, sandy beach and diving board. Above the pool built around a large tree was a rustic cabin/tree house complete with wood stove and built

in bunks. My comfortable quarters were in the basement/ 1<sup>st</sup> story next to the theater which seated 10 or 12.



We had coffee and soon a meal was whipped up of barbecued salmon and white fish and some squired shrimp which I hope to replicate at home some time. Genie is an interesting person that has had her share of heartaches in her 40

years. Her first husband died in a hunting accident when he fell off a cliff in Alaska. The good news is that Genie had led the former Mormon to Christ just a week before his demise. Genie exudes energy and she has a wonder enthusiasm for reaching people with the Gospel. We spent a fair amount of time talking about Biblical things which I always enjoy. We turned in around 2230 hrs and I had a somewhat fitful night's sleep complicated by the watering sprinkler hitting my window about 0400 hrs.

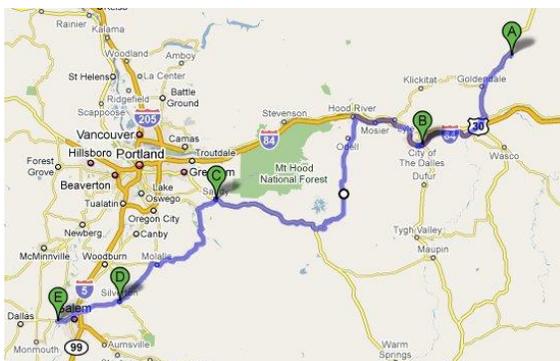


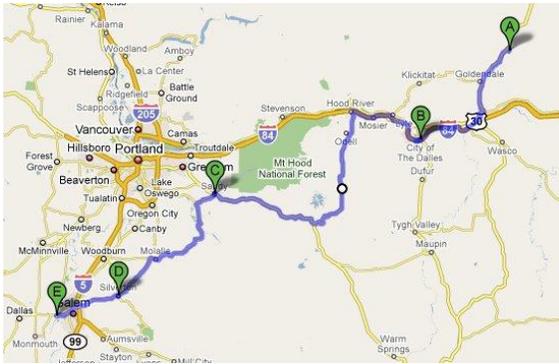
### Monday July 20<sup>th</sup> 2009 –Bellingham, WA to Brooks State Park

In the morning, we shared some more about the Bible, and after a cup of coffee and a smoothie, I said farewell and headed toward Leavenworth. The ride to Leavenworth was a long one and I was having difficulty finding a comfortable position for my rear end. There are some impressive mountains along the way and the road is good with plenty of passing lanes. As I get close to Leavenworth, it is like someone turned up the heat, I suppose I was at least 90 degrees when I hit the town. The town reminds me of Solvang with the Bavarian theme and the score of shops. I had pastry and coffee on my mind and soon found a shop and made a selection. The pastries I selected were good but I can't say I was

impressed, Solvang had a much better selection. The coffee "Seattle's Best" was very good though. I did take a couple of Advil's to help make my seat more tolerable. I headed toward Yakima where I fueled up then continued another 55 or so miles to my campground named Brooks Memorial State Park. Wow the air quality is sure poor here on the east side, probably smog from Seattle and Portland I set up getting pushed east by the winds. I found the campground and set up camp, read for awhile, heated a can of chili and ate a sizable portion of kettle corn before settling down to typing some more on the journal. After this journaling thing, I am going to take a shower and maybe after a bit more reading, it will be lights out. Tomorrow I am supposed to try to find my Great Aunt Ruby in the Dalles. I don't know, like on most of my trips, I think I am getting a case of "get-home-ites." Will have to see how I feel tomorrow, it is tempting to ride all the way home tomorrow but it really is probably a bad idea, just too far. I

am thankful to the Lord for having the ability and means to take a trip such as this. The trip is winding down but it sure has been fun. I am glad that I have a nice home and great wife at the end of this ride otherwise; I would certainly feel lonely and melancholy.





## Tuesday July 21, 2009 – Brooks State Park to Salem, OR

I enjoyed a good night's sleep and the morning has dawned warm and clear. I rode toward The Dalles and saw a sign that said Sam Hill's Property. It seems that in the 1900's, Sam Hill bought a few thousand acres of property on the north side of the Columbia River.

He must have been a man of considerable wealth because he set about building a town with all the necessary buildings and paved the first roads in Washington state. One of the things he built was

a full scale replica of Stonehenge. Unlike the towns buildings which burned in a fire, the Stonehenge, made of concrete is still there. I looked around a bit and there was a local art class busy doing photography and making drawings. The area offered some nice views of the river which has had to work very hard to carve its way through the Basalt. Soon I was on the road again and heading to Starbucks in The Dalles. I turned on my phone since I am now in cell range and got the timely message of the whereabouts of my great aunt Ruby.



I was able to find my Aunt Ruby's housing unit via the internet but I did not want to visit her during lunchtime so I went to the local museum. The main part of the museum is housed in the old forts surgeon's house dating back to 1853. Before entering, I struck up a conversation with a woman named Linda who was tending the flower garden. Linda is an American Indian from Alaska. We had a nice conversation that continued after we moved to some chairs in a shaded area because it was pretty hot in the sun. I ended giving a HT to her which she seemed to appreciate. At the museum, there were many interesting items and old photos of the Dalles area on display. I learned that The Dalles, is a slang name, probably Swedish for "the rapids." Equally interesting was a squared log home and barn that was originally about 14 miles from its

present location. The construction was Swedish and I was impressed with the large size of the rooms. After that I went to Ruby's housing unit which was really nice. For 96 years old, I found her to be very sharp and capable and I thought she looked a lot like my mom and even sounded like her. I enjoyed our time together and she said she was not religious but that "Jesus was her Savior" and that she prayed every night which was nice to hear.

After our visit, I called home and got caught up on the news. I also decided that it was just too hot to continue down the east side of Oregon so I turned west and headed down river. At Hood River I fueled up and headed toward Salem by way of Mt. Hood and back roads. At one point, I stopped along the road to consult my map and within one minute, a biker in a truck stopped to ask if I needed help. I ended up talking to Steve for about 15 minutes and gave him a Herald Times before we parted. One thing about bikers, they take care of their own. I called ahead and reserved a place to stay at the same RV Park I stayed at about a week ago. There were lots of pretty vistas and some nice views of Mt. Hood and also vistas of orchards and fields along the way. I drove through the town of Silverton and it seemed like a nice place.

I arrived at the Premier RV Resort just west of Salem and set up my camp and ate a couple of tins of fish with a few crackers. For desert I had some kettle corn left from the farmers market in Whidbey Island but I needed something to drink. I searched for a soda machine but none could be found. I ask a rather rotund lady that was exiting the pool area if she knew where one was and she thought there was one in the laundry room, which there was not. She remarked that if I could not find one to stop at space 58 and she would have one for me she said that they had some sodas that were not likely to use.

So that is what I did. She ended up giving me 3 cans and some ice cubes and would not accept my offer of payment. While I was typing this, a family of 4 on sport bikes parked in the space next door. They are from Canada and they made a quick run, down to Crescent City and now they are heading back. Well it is time to shower and head for the bed. Not sure what I will do tomorrow. I am leaning right now on heading home down the I-5. We'll see.



Sunday July 22<sup>th</sup> 2009 – Salem, OR to Chico, CA

After a nights rest, I felt better and at around 7:00, headed down I-5 toward home. In Grants Pass, I stopped and visited with Neale my cousin. The rest of the trip went without incident but it was sure hot when I got back into the valley. Over all, a great trip and I thank the Lord.