

Winter 2002

## Four Generations on the Land

When William Knotts stood for the first time on his Donation Land Claim, he saw a magnificent patchwork of land spread before him of wetlands, prairies, oak savannas and woodlands stitched together by streams running to the Willamette River. This was a beautiful sight for a family that had recently crossed the United States from Iowa. At this time in Willamette Valley history, the Willamette River and its tributaries were lined with dense riparian forests of Doug fir, Oregon ash, black cottonwood, alder, big leaf maple, western red cedar and willows. Typically one to two miles wide, these streamside forests were maintained by annual floods. Expansive bottomland prairie grasslands dominated by tufted hairgrass that grew tall enough to hide cattle stretched across the valley as far as the eye could see. These vast prairies had been burned annually by the Calapooia tribe for at

least 200 years prior to Euro-American settlement to prevent shrub and seedling invasion. Dotted the prairie and hugging the lower foothills were open savannas that contained Oregon white oak, madrone, Doug fir and some western red cedar.

William, his second wife Sylvia, and their two children arrived in Benton

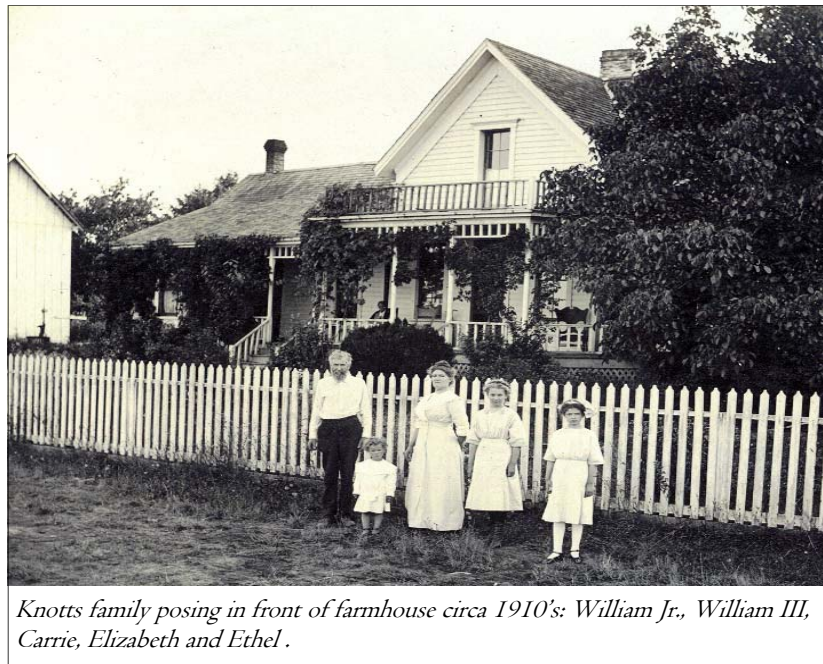
County in 1849, after spending a few years in Washington County. The year they arrived in the Oregon Territory, 1845, marked the largest immigration to Oregon than any before it. Many families left the Eastern U.S. to find a better life in Oregon. The Knotts, according to historians, found such a life. "More fortunate than

structure, constructed before the farmhouse, is made of large hand-hewn beams, mortise and tenon joints, and peeled pole joists.

In the 1880s William Jr. was given 347 acres of the land claim. This portion makes up most of the current Owens Farm property. The farmhouse, built by William

Jr., remains one of the county's best examples of a Gothic vernacular farmhouse. It is a one and a half story wooden frame house with four bedrooms and one bathroom. The steeply pitched gable roof with overhanging eaves, sash windows with cornice-style heads, and wide rake and frieze boards still found on the house exemplify the Gothic vernacular period. The Knotts planted pear and apple trees around the house, some of which still bear fruit today.

William Jr. became a highly respected farmer, "in all ways he has demonstrated a broad-minded



*Knotts family posing in front of farmhouse circa 1910's: William Jr., William III, Carrie, Elizabeth and Ethel.*

most of the early settlers, [Knotts'] land was mostly open prairie, and he therefore put in his first crop much more readily than did his neighbors in the timber." The oak savanna on their 640 acre farm provided shelter for a one-room log cabin, built just north of the current home site. William found a job as county clerk and in 1851, a third child, William Jr. was born.

William Knotts, Sr. died just three years after the birth of his namesake, at the age of 55. "Because of the father's large property and the good management which is sustained at the hands of his widow and older sons, the children were able to secure practical education at the public schools and at Philomath College." Sylvia and the children raised the barn themselves. This

and liberal tendency, equipping his property with the latest of modern machinery and conducting his enterprises after the approved plans." He also devoted most of his efforts to raising stock, particularly Red Polled cattle. Thomas Owens Jr. recalls standing on the front porch looking out over the fields and seeing only the red backs of the cattle just above the high grass next to the oak trees.

In 1898 William Jr. married Carrie Woods and was elected commissioner of Benton County, a position he held for four years. They had two daughters, Elizabeth and Ethel, and a son, William III. Elizabeth married Thomas Owens, an engineer/surveyor, in 1922. They had two children,

*(Continued on page 2)*

**Don't Forget!**  
**Send in your end of year**  
**membership donation**  
**to the**  
**Greenbelt Land Trust**  
**TODAY!**



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**Karlene McCabe**  
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*karlene@greenbeltlandtrust.org*

**Claire Fiegner**

*Outreach Coordinator*  
*claire@greenbeltlandtrust.org*

**Ellie Larsen**

*Americorps Member*  
*Conservation Assistant*  
*ellie@greenbeltlandtrust.org*

The Greenbelt Land Trust acts to enhance community livability by protecting open space.

For more information, to volunteer, make a donation and/or receive the newsletter on a regular basis:

Write:

Greenbelt Land Trust  
PO Box 1721

Corvallis, OR 97339

*info@greenbeltlandtrust.org*

Call:

541.752.9609

Or Go To:

*www.greenbeltlandtrust.org*

## Grand Opening of Snag Boat Bend Refuge

We are working in partnership with US Fish and Wildlife Service to open the Snag Boat Bend Unit of William L. Finley National Wildlife Refuge on Migratory Bird Day, May 10, 2003. In preparation for this grand opening we are working to put in trails, riparian plantings, and visitor improvements. The GLT is coordinating recruitment of volunteers to work on the following projects:

- Trail work around wetlands and along river inlets.
- Collection of cuttings and planting of riparian trees and shrubs.
- Installation of split rail fence around parking area.
- Construction projects: bird blind structure, wooden staircase, and boardwalk over wet areas.
- Professional quality photos of property.
- Development of bird and wildlife list.

Work days will be between December and April and will be held both on weekends and weekdays for your convenience. If you or a group you are involved with are interested in volunteering with the Snag Boat Bend project please contact Claire at the GLT at 752-9609 or *claire@greenbeltlandtrust.org*.



## Get Involved in Protecting Open Space

The GLT is looking for interested volunteers to participate in committee activities. These activities are integral to the work GLT does to preserve the open space we all want to protect. Get involved today!

- **Trail Committee:** Trail installation at Fitton Green (late spring and summer), and at Snag Boat Bend (Dec. – April)
- **Geographic Committee:** Participate in annual monitoring of the GLT's conservation easements. Research past OSU theses for natural resource data pertaining to the Willamette Valley.
- **Education Committee:** Assist with mailings of quarterly newsletters.

For more information or to sign up to volunteer, please contact Claire at the GLT.



## Volunteers Needed at Fitton Green

Currently improvements at Fitton Green are in the planning process. This 308 acre open space property located west of Bald Hill is owned by Benton County. The county has received a grant from Oregon State Parks Department to put in a new parking lot and access trails. The GLT will be coordinating volunteers to do this work in spring and summer 2003.

If you are interested in participating in trail work at Fitton



## Land (Continued from page 1)

Thomas Jr. and Virginia. William Knotts Jr. deeded the property and house to Thomas and Elizabeth Owens in the 1930's. Elizabeth Knotts Owens resided in the home until her death in 1984.

Thomas Jr. is the current resident of the house. Virginia became a nurse and currently resides in California. The Owens Farm, a registered Century Farm, now 310 acres, has about 200 acres of leased farmland, making it one of several farms in the county whose owners still farm a portion of the Donation Land Claim.

Thomas Jr. has retained a 10 acre life estate containing the house, barn and surrounding area. This life estate is part of the 131 acres purchased by the City of Corvallis. The GLT acquired 95 acres of the farm, an area of the property mostly containing oak savanna and wetlands. Good Samaritan Hospital bought 85 acres along the western property boundary, for future expansion of their hospital facilities. Stay tuned for our next newsletter which will give a history of the historical vegetation and agricultural activities on the property.

## References:

*Anonymous, Portrait and Biographical Record of Willamette Valley, Oregon. Chapman Publishing Co., Chicago, Ill. 1903.*

*Benton County Historical Society records. Fagan, David D., History of Benton County, Oregon. David D. Fagan and A.G. Walling, Portland, OR. 1885.*

*Hulse, David, Stan Gregory, and Joan Baker, eds., Willamette River Basin Planning Atlas. OSU Press, Corvallis, OR. 2002.*

## Ways to Give to the GLT

As you are considering your year end giving, keep in mind the following ways to donate to the Greenbelt Land Trust. Please contact the GLT if you would like further information, have questions, or would like to make a contribution.

### Monthly Donor Program

Give an automated monthly donation through your checking or savings account. This is a good way to increase your giving to GLT using a designated monthly amount. For example, only \$10 a month can increase your annual donation to \$120.

### Give Appreciated Assets

Giving appreciated assets is often a simple way to make a sizable gift to the Greenbelt Land Trust while avoiding capital gain and other taxes. Donate appreciated securities, real estate, personal property, or insurance policies outright. This means your gift is transferred immediately from you to the GLT.

Benefits of Donating Appreciated Assets:

- Immediate Tax Savings - Receive an income tax charitable deduction in the year you make the gift.
- Capital Gain Tax Savings - Avoid capital gain taxes you would have paid had you sold the asset.
- A Lasting Contribution - Make a significant contribution towards protecting open space.

### Estate Planning

You can include the GLT in your will. Gift planning is a great way to make a lasting contribution to the GLT while taking advantage of favorable federal and state tax laws.

Your gift can:

- Reduce your income taxes.
- Reduce or possibly eliminate capital gain taxes.

I'D LIKE TO SUPPORT THE GREENBELT LAND TRUST

## Membership Form

- General \$25
- Supporting \$100
- Guarantor \$250
- Patron \$500
- Millennium Club \$1,000
- Additional Gift  
for Land Acquisition \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I am enclosing a check for  
\$ \_\_\_\_\_  
for membership  
in the Greenbelt Land Trust.

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MAIL TO: Greenbelt Land Trust PO Box 1721, Corvallis, OR 97339

### Volunteer Opportunities

I am interested in participating with the following committees:

- Education/Public Relations
- Trails
- Finance/  
Fundraising
- Conservation

### More Information

- Please contact me about an educational presentation to my group or organization.
- Send me info. about the tax benefits of land gifts and conservation easements.
- Send me information about including the Greenbelt in my trust or will.



## Donate to the Greenbelt Land Trust with a Credit Card!

If you are interested in making a donation to the Greenbelt Land Trust by credit card we ask you to donate through the Network for Good Organization. It is now possible to make a charitable donation with the click of your mouse! Network for Good is a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization that will process and distribute your donation to the Greenbelt Land Trust.

Network for Good covers all transaction costs associated with collecting and distributing your contribution, including fees and commissions charged by credit card companies. You can be assured that the GLT pays no fees to the Network for Good and that we receive 100% of your donation.

If you are interested please visit [www.networkforgood.org](http://www.networkforgood.org). Click on 'Donate' located on the top title bar. Do an Organizational Search by typing in Greenbelt Land Trust. To donate to or learn more about GLT click on the organization name. Then click on 'Donate Now'.

Thank you for giving to the Greenbelt



### GLT Wish List

GLT is seeking in-kind donations for the following items:

- Digital Camera (4 mega pixels)
- Slide Scanner
- Color Laser Printer
- Digital Projector (for Power Point)
- GPS Unit

Look for our updated web site in the near future!  
[www.greenbeltlandtrust.org](http://www.greenbeltlandtrust.org)



## New Faces at the Greenbelt Land Trust:

Claire Fiegenger was hired as the GLT's Outreach Coordinator in September. She is excited to get to know more of Greenbelt Land Trust's members and is looking forward to getting members involved in the GLT and its projects. Prior to coming to Corvallis to work for the GLT Claire and her husband lived in Italy for almost a year traveling and working on organic farms. Over the years, Claire has worked with non-profits ranging in focus from family farming and biological farming, to hands-on science for children, to energy efficiency and sustainable living. She has also enjoyed working



a season at Yosemite National Park as well as spending 6 months extensively traveling throughout New Zealand working on organic farms.

Claire graduated with honors from Humboldt State University with a BS in Natural Resources Planning. She is delighted to have this opportunity to put her knowledge, skills and life experiences to work for the Greenbelt Land Trust.

Claire invites anyone to contact her for information or assistance. She can be reached at 752-9609 or [claire@greenbeltlandtrust.org](mailto:claire@greenbeltlandtrust.org).



Ellie Larsen started working for the Greenbelt Land Trust in September under Americorps as Conservation Assistant. In this position she will use her training and experience to help with Owens Farm restoration, mapping projects and other projects.

Ellie graduated from Oregon State University in 2000 with a BS in Natural Resources, specializing in Land Management and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) technology and a minor in English. While at OSU, she had the opportunity to spend a summer in western Colorado interning at the Mesa County Land Conservancy. She also worked for the OSU Department of Forest Engineering on a GIS project determining the effect landslides have on fish habitat.

After graduation, Ellie spent a few months traveling around Europe. She worked for the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board for a year and a half as a GIS technician. Ellie is happy to be back in Corvallis after a year in Portland, and is looking forward to helping the Greenbelt protect open space.

To contact Ellie please call or write to 752-9609, [ellie@greenbeltlandtrust.org](mailto:ellie@greenbeltlandtrust.org).

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- Volunteer Opportunities
- Ways to Donate to the Greenbelt Land Trust

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