

*The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute
in Central Oregon presents:*

OPEN HOUSE

An Oregon Chautauqua Program from the Oregon Council for the Humanities

**True Stories and Other Fictions in
Northwest Oral History**

Tom Nash

Wednesday, February 13, 2:00 p.m.

Bend Senior Center, 1600 SE Reed Market Road

Where does history end and folklore begin? **Tom Nash** looks at the elements of folklore embedded in supposedly nonfiction stories of frontier Oregon and the West. His material is drawn from Oregon oral histories that were recorded primarily in the 1930s and '40s, and are now held at the state library in Salem. These oral histories reveal the hand of the interviewer in both subtle and bold ways. Literalists took down every hiccup and expletive along with the story, while wordsmiths perked up dull recitations and fictionalized uneventful details. Collaborators became so involved that their own narrative visions interacted with the story being told in the interview.

When oral histories reveal the threads of legend, the stories undoubtedly become more engaging. Are we duped by elements of tall tale and legend, or do they reflect the dynamic interplay between events and memory? And what, ultimately, is the role of fiction in history?



Tom Nash, Southern Oregon University professor, specializes in linguistics and folklore. He is a graduate of the University of

Oregon and is the author of three books, including *The Well-Traveled Casket*, a collection of Oregon history and lore. He is currently completing a fourth volume – tentatively titled *Oregon Trails, Oregon Tales*.

Join us for this open event in our **Year of Oregon Discovery**. Invite a friend or neighbor to join you—OLLI-UO Open Houses are a great introduction to the program.

True Stories and Other Fictions in Northwest Oral History is made possible by funding from the Oregon Council for the Humanities (OCH), an independent, nonprofit affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities that is dedicated to the belief that knowledge and ideas are fundamental to the health of our communities.

