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## The Oregon Bicycle Ride

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## **The Oregon Bicycle Ride Custom**

**Informant:** Jason Swan is my father and is the youngest son of Susan (Sam) Swan. Jason was born in Tacoma, Washington but was raised in Eugene and Bend Oregon. When he was 8 years old his mother, Sam, got re-married to a man named David Swan. Jason was an excellent student and loved to ski. He Graduated high school in 1988 and then came here to Utah State to study history. He switched his major several times, and finally graduated in 1998 with a bachelor degree in Instructional Design. He continued his education and gained a masters in Instructional design in 2001. He married Jamie Swan in 1993 and together they have 5 children; 4 daughters and 1 son. I am the second eldest. He now works for a company called L-3 Communications, which has brought him and his family to live in North Carolina for several years and now to Arlington, Texas where they have been for nearly 7 years. Jason is a proud father and is a wonderful provider and patriarch of the home. Family is his everything, and traditions among family are something he holds very dear.

**Context:** I interviewed Jason last week over FaceTime. As he lives in Texas so it is hard for me to visit all the time. He was wonderful enough to agree to FaceTime me to help me collect this piece of folklore. I was in my office at work when we started the call, and he was at his home in Arlington in the living room. We chatted a bit about traditions and one tradition that was really memorable when I was younger was that of the Oregon Bicycle Ride. This was an annual bicycle ride founded by my Grandpa Dave and a few others. For several years we would all drive up to Oregon from Logan, UT and help out with the ride. We made many memories and had a grand time as a family.

**Text:** M: Can you tell me about the Oregon Bicycle Ride?

J: okay yeah. Wow I don't even remember how long ago that is. Maybe back in \*clears throat\*

1980-89-1990 sometime. Maybe earlier. Grandpa Dave and 2 other people go together and

created a bicycle tour to ride bicycles, take a week and ride bicycles form the eastside of the

state to the west side of the state straight across. And when I got home from my mission (91)

no, yeah summer of 91, I started helping grandpa Dave. I did that for 13 years and every year I'd

go back and I would drive the sag wagon they called it , the supporting gear it was usually a

minivan or some kind of SUV that we would usually every day before people got in the road and

wed drive along to give people water and wed carry these atomic fireballs they would apparently help people get over the tough hills. And occasionally wed stop and pick people up and give them a ride up hill, or take them to camp. You know if they got injured or if there just too tired to go on or something. I did that for about 13 years.

M: that's awesome

J: yeah

M: so, what are some of the memories that you have of the bicycle ride with us as your kids.

J: well, usually mom would bring you out to visit me for 1 or 2 days to camp. Y'all would camp with us. Usually my friends at camp would love to see you every year because you'd always grow up and all. So, they'd kinda get to check in on you and see how you were growing. It was nice to make memories that way. There was time of course when we did our bicycle ride. We extended the Oregon bicycle ride and created a second ride or they did in Idaho and the organizers in Idaho a bicycle ride in Idaho or something. They went in cache valley as a kind of circular route um then into Idaho and into Wyoming into Utah and back into Idaho. and uh as we were going through cache valley you guys set up a lemonade stand and I think you guys made like 200 bucks I think... it must've been every single cyclist stopped for lemonade and a rice Krispy treat. That was a real-

M: oh my gosh

J: that was a really good idea \*laughs\*. Uh kids and that bike yeah. so that was about it. it was good memories. I mean it was a good time for me and grandpa to be together and it was always nice for you guys to come out. He always proud of his grandkids and he would let you get to meet all of his friends.

M: hmm. I miss him.

J: I do too.

M: well I have a lot of good memories too. I remember everyone falling at our feet cause were so cute.

J: yeah. You guys were adorable., everybody loved the swan girls.

M: yep. And I remember um, cuz we had the red van at that point?

J: grandpa did.

M: grandpa did yeah. We as in us, all of us, but I remember doing the stand. The lemonade stand and all the rice krispies. Didn't we do it every year or was it just the one?

I: uhh... I don't remember if you did it twice cause the route wasn't the same the second year.

SO, I'm not sure, I can't remember.

M: I don't know. I remember riding in the van with you picking up the riders and stuff and walking through the main camp or whatever where it all headquartered had their RVs and bikes, and food stands, and it was a good time.

J; yep. \*laughs\*

M: \*laughs\*... Do they still do it?

J: yes, they do.

**Texture:** At the beginning of the interview call we laughed and joked with each other for several minutes before actually getting into the questions. He was sitting in his favorite armchair and wearing his "old man" glasses he despises so much. It has gotten to the point where he needs them to even see my face as we video chatted with each other. From the angle of the camera I got a perfect view of his "silver chin". He wears is facial hair as a goatee and his wisdom (not age of course) has turned his normally raven black hair to silver with spots of white in the center of his chin. We often tease him about it, but truthfully it is something that endears him even more to us. Throughout the interview he clears his throat a lot, he may have caught a bit of the December bug. This story is special as my paternal grandfather who started this tradition has since passed away in recent years. The OBR was definitely something that

brought us all together and created a lot of love for the Swan Family. So as my dad discussed this memory, the fondness and longing in his voice tells me he misses my grandfather more than words can say. And as do I.

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