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**Oregon Historical Society Lecture “True Tales of the Old West” Features  
Noted Author Christopher Corbett  
-January 23, 2011-**

**Portland, OR – January 6, 2011** — The Oregon Historical Society is proud to kick-off its 2011 Sunday Lecture Series with author and scholar Christopher Corbett. His lecture, appropriately titled, “True Tales of the Old West”, discusses his book, *Orphans Preferred: The Twisted Truth and Lasting Legend of the Pony Express*, on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the fast-mail service, and his latest book, *The Poker Bride: The First Chinese in the Wild West*.

The Pony Express is one of the most celebrated and enduring chapters in the history of the United States. No image of the American West in the mid-1800s is more familiar, more beloved, and more powerful than that of the lone rider galloping the mail across hostile Indian Territory. No image is more revered, and none is less understood. *Orphans Preferred* is an authoritative and entertainingly written history of the Pony Express that, for the first time, attempts to ascertain the truth about this beloved but myth-laden piece of Western Americana, and, in the process, exposes how the myth came to be. In *The Poker Bride*, Christopher Corbett uses a little-known legend from Idaho lore as a lens into the world of 19<sup>th</sup> century Chinese immigrants, who came to the West Coast during the Gold Rush on their way to seek their fortunes. Both books paint a powerful picture of these two pieces of Western American history, with the craftsmanship of a skilled storyteller.

“Americans are often amazed to learn that the Pony Express was only in business for 78 weeks and never made a dime,” Corbett said. “In the national memory it remains iconic – one of the most romantic chapters of the history of the Old West even if most of the saga is not true or greatly exaggerated.”

Author Douglas Brinkley writes, “Deconstructing folklore and unearthing new facts, Christopher Corbett has written a first-rate narrative history about the famed Pony Express riders. *Orphans Preferred* is one of those rare books that sets the record straight. And it's a marvelous read to boot.”

A former news editor for the *Associated Press*, Corbett has authored multiple books and since 1995 has written "The Back Page" for Baltimore's *Style* magazine. Corbett, a Baltimore, Maryland resident, has won awards for his editorial writing, and his journalism has appeared in major American newspapers including *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*. He currently works in the English Department at the University of Maryland Baltimore County.

The Oregon Historical Society began the Sunday lecture series in 2010, and it has quickly grown in popularity. Members of the Society are admitted free to these lectures, and nonmembers are welcome to attend with the cost of regular museum admission. Join Christopher Corbett on January 23 at 2 PM at the Oregon Historical Society for this featured lecture, where you will have the chance to purchase signed copies of his two books. Please call 503.306.5214 to RSVP if you are interesting in attending.

### **About the Oregon Historical Society**

The Society has served since 1898 as Oregon's primary research collection and museum about Oregon history. OHS has an extensive collection of historical pieces, including over 85,000 artifacts and 3 million photographs and films. It safeguards and presents Oregon's history through a museum, research library, traveling exhibits, school programs and website content.