

SEPTEMBER  
1990

# NEWS FROM THE PLAINS

THE OREGON-CALIFORNIA TRAILS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

P.O. Box 1019, Independence, MO 64051-0519 (816) 252-2276

CONVENTION  
HIGHLIGHTS  
AND PICTURES  
IN THIS ISSUE.

NEXT ISSUE:  
HIGHLIGHTS THE CHAPTERS  
OVER THE PAST  
FEW MONTHS. SEND YOUR  
CHAPTER EVENTS,  
TRIP REPORTS,  
PICTURES, ETC., TO  
THE EDITOR BY  
NOVEMBER 15.

## A PIPELINE THROUGH SOUTH PASS?

by Ron Lund, Wyoming Chapter President

Southern California needs natural gas in large quantities, and Canada has it. The cheapest way to get the gas from Canada to southern California is through Wyoming, and, as OCTA members so well know, the easiest way over the Wyoming mountains is through historic South Pass. A Canadian company, Altamont Gas Transmission Company, proposes to lay a 30 inch diameter high-pressure gas pipeline with a one hundred foot right-of-way through the actual summit of South Pass and through the relatively pristine area bordering the pass. The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) will decide sometime in September whether to approve the proposal or not.

Several alternate routes are under consideration, and the Wyoming Chapter of OCTA has been active in attempting to persuade Altamont to utilize one of these other routes. The least disruptive alternate would be along a utility corridor near Jeffrey City, to the east of South Pass. Altamont states that this alternate would be prohibitively expensive, adding about 30 miles and \$30 million to the cost. The Wyoming Chapter of OCTA has suggested, as another alternative, that Altamont consider the corridor along

State Highway 28 which already contains two pipelines, power lines, and disruption by recent mining operations. By Altamont's estimate, this pathway would add about one mile more than for their favored route. Mike Sullivan, Governor of Wyoming, has formally requested that Altamont consider all of the major alternatives in its Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

It is noteworthy that all of the alternates will require that the emigrant trails be crossed at least twice. Altamont has demonstrated concern for the integrity of the trail environment by indicating that the pipeline will bore underneath intact trail sites. Native grasses, specific for the site, will be used for revegetation, rather than the standard crested wheat grass so commonly used by contractors.

It seems likely that the pipeline will be constructed and that the Oregon-California Trail will be crossed several times. Some portions of the trail are of more historic significance than others. It is the position of OCTA that the pipeline should avoid sites of high historic value and sensitivity. The South Pass summit and its adjacent pristine environment is such a site. We hope that Altamont will come to accept this point of view.



LEFT: PIONEER WOMAN, by Juan Lombardo-Rivera. This statue stands in the courtyard of the National Frontier Trails Center in Independence, Missouri.

# PRESIDENT'S CORNER

by Bill Watson

The Omaha Convention was a grand affair with great programs, good outings, delicious food, comfortable facilities and lots of good fellowship. On behalf of all of us, many thanks to:

-Convention Chairman Bob Berry and his committee: Charlie Martin, Sr., Estaline Carpenter, Dorothy Dustin, Jim Denney, Sandi Harmes, Ken Krabbenhoft, Coleen Mayo, Robin Mayo, Kim Naden, Roger Reeves, Helen Sundell, and Betty Scheinost.

-Other Nebraska Chapter members and community volunteers who helped in many ways.

-The four panelists in the Symposium on Trail Outfitting, Ross Marshall on River Crossings, Merrill Mattes on the Northern Route of the Non-Mormons.

-Rock Creek Station staff demonstration on hitching-up a team and the Bill Hill family cooking over a buffalo chip fire.

-Joslyn Museum, Fort Atkinson and the Bertrand Museum for their pre-tour orientation sessions.

-Winslow gravesite headstone cutting demonstration with the duplicate soon on display in Independence.

Congratulations to all of OCTA's 1990 award recipients including:

-Charlie Martin, Sr., Distinguished Service Award for his many years of trail research and his dedicated service on the Board and as Vice President.

-Elaine McNabney, first recipient of the new Distinguished Volunteer Award in appreciation of her dedicated and diverse activities at OCTA headquarters including assisting the OVERLAND JOURNAL editor.

-Friend of the Trail Award to landowners for their efforts to preserve and protect historic trail sites:

-Louis E. Schumacher, Kansas City, MO

-Edwin Boddy & Family, Fairbury, NE

-Don & Jean Rowlett, Ashland, OR

Our deep appreciation to Board and Officers whose terms expired:

-Merrill Mattes, Founding Board member has been designated Director Emeritus for Life in appreciation for his years of dedicated service.

-Karen Rennells, six year Board member has been designated Landowner Advisor to the President and continues to Chair the Friend of the Trail Awards.

-Susan Doyle, after two busy years as Secretary, continues as Board member.

-Frank Tortorich, one year Board member.

Congratulations and a warm welcome to new term Board and Officers:

-Larry Jones, Director, second 3 year term.

-Lee Underbrink, Director, 3 year term.

-Rose Ann Tompkins, Director, 3 year term.

-Bill Bullard, Director, 3 year term.

-Ross Marshall, Vice President-President Elect

-David Bigler, Secretary

During its August 7, 1990 meeting, the Board approved the new budget which included funds for:

-a part time assistant in the headquarters office.

-a new agreement with the OVERLAND JOURNAL Editor.

-publication of:

-Bob Berry's Emigrant Trail map.

-Reg Duffin's Graves & Sites book.

-an Emigrant Diary.

-issuance of the Board approved Convention Manual.

-production of 500 OCTA pins.

-moving the OCTA archival material to headquarters.

The Board agreed to send a resolution supporting the Wyoming Chapter's recommendations on routing of the Altamonte Pipeline. They gave Salt Lake City initial approval for the '94 convention.

During the afternoon, the Board held brain-storming sessions on:

-How to encourage members and others to submit articles to the OVERLAND JOURNAL.

-Ways to stimulate membership growth.

-Long Range Planning. During September, each Committee Chair and Chapter President will be asked for their thoughts.

By now, you should have received our letters urging you to write to your Senators and Representative in support of HR-1109 to designate the California Trail and the Pony Express Trail as National Historic Trails. We only have until the mid-October adjournment to get House and Senate versions merged and passed. If you have not yet done so, please write today and ask their support for speedy passage of a joint bill to:

Senator (name)

Senate Post Office

Washington, DC 20510

Representative (name)

House Post Office

Washington, DC 20515

Merrill Mattes' plans to donate his library to OCTA are proceeding on schedule. The appraisal process is nearly completed. Within the next 60 days, one-half of the collection will be boxed up and transported to Independence. The remainder of Merrill's collection will be donated next year. As OCTA progressively receives the collection, the books and papers will be placed on permanent loan to the National Frontier Trails Center where they will establish it as the Merrill J. Mattes Research Library.

## ROSE ANN'S TWO TRACK

This issue of NFP completes my first year as editor. It has been a learning experience, and hopefully I am getting better at the job. I would like to thank everyone who has sent me material. The idea is that you are better informed all the time about what is going on in OCTA. Please continue to send in your items.

Tom Hunt told me that he has begun to ask one participant in any outing that he leads to write up the trip for NFP. Of course, this is a great idea and I hope all trip leaders will copy Tom.

This issue is traditionally the convention issue and you will find quite a bit of coverage. I appreciate those who contributed to the coverage, and you can see that the newsletter is not written by the editor.

**Deadlines** for the next few issues are as follows:

**November 15 for the  
December issue  
February 15 for the  
March issue  
May 15 for the  
June issue**

The next issue will concentrate on the Chapters. Some of you have sent Chapter items already and they will appear in the next issue.

Send your human interest stories; trips reports; pictures; chapter newsletters, news, & calendars; etc., to me. If you would like to read about it in NFP, then maybe everyone else would too.

I appreciate your confidence in me to represent you on the Board of Directors.

Rose Ann Tompkins  
1125 W. Mission Dr.  
Chandler, AZ 85224  
(602) 963-3565

## MULES VERSUS OXEN

*In order to promote free exchange of ideas in the newsletter, a new column is starting, called MULES VERSUS OXEN. This name comes from the two viewpoints concerning the best type of animal for pulling wagons over the trails to the west. Both sides had their advocates, and such issues remain with us today. If you would like to debate a trail issue with more than one viewpoint, here is your chance. Please indicate that it is for this column, since the editor does not pretend to be an expert and cannot always identify multi-sided issues. Pauline Fowler has submitted the following to the column.*

In response to the article in the last issue of NEWS FROM THE PLAINS concerning the omission of the Cave Spring Interpretative Center in the National Park Service Management and Use Plan which was developed as the guideline required under the 1987 National Historic Santa Fe Trail Act, I wish to submit another viewpoint.

The following quote is from a National Park Service directive: "Trail segments, historic sites, or interpretive programs on nonfederal land will be officially recognized and included as part of the Santa Fe National Historic Trail only if they are certified . . ." Further, all claims must be well documented and certain other criteria met in order to obtain certification. These requirements form the basis for the Cave Spring Center omission.

No proof has been offered that Cave Spring or "Barnes Place" (now being advocated as a change of name) was ever a trail campground. Even the 1843 township map (the earliest map yet to be found) does not show a spring located there although the surveyor did plat another spring in a different section of the same township.

Susan Magoffin (p. 2) often quoted in support of a campground there, says:

" . . . We left the little village of I[ndependence] for the residence of Mr. Barnes, a gentleman some ten miles this side of that place. Here we procured a night's lodging preparatory to a final departure . . ."

Although one Jesse Barnes owned the acreage on which the spring is now located, his "enclosure" on which his home was located, was about one-half mile south of the spring location in a different section, same township.

There would be no controversy, and probably will not be, when historical references are found which support the claim of a trail campground at that site. This is not to say it was never used as a campground; only that no proof has been found that it was. In the event acceptable proof is later discovered, then indeed Cave Spring can apply for admission to the list, be approved and entered into the NPS Management and Use Plan for certification. Until that time, in my opinion, however, the National Park Service position is a correct one.

Pauline E. Fowler  
Member of the Santa Fe National  
Historic Trail Advisory Council

# OMAHA CONVENTION REPORT

by BOB BERRY, CONVENTION CHAIRMAN

The 1990 OCTA Convention in Omaha, NE began with the Board of Directors meeting on Tuesday, Aug. 7. The meeting was streamlined by requiring all Committee Reports to be submitted in writing in advance. As a result, the meeting concluded that afternoon.

Tuesday evening an Orientation program for new members and attendees was held. It was well attended and seemingly was well received. The Board members and Officers were present and introduced — hopefully to make them better known and approachable.

Wednesday morning a Symposium on Outfitting was presented. From all reports it was an excellent program — interesting, informative, and entertaining. It was apparent from the presentations that a great deal of research had been done by all the participants.

Mike Capps, Historian with the National Park Service at the Jefferson Memorial, led off. He covered such things as the selection of a wagon, animals, and equipment. He was followed by Bill Hill, historian and author, who discussed food and other provisions which were so vital, as well as the equipment and methods used to prepare the food. Gail Potter, Curator of Museum Collections at the Nebraska State Historical Society, then talked about the clothing available to emigrants and she highlighted her presentation with examples of such clothing which she held up for all to view. She was followed by her equally learned husband, Jim Potter, who is the Historian for the Nebraska State Historical Society, and a black powder enthusiast. He dealt with the types of weapons emigrants took with them, how they operated, and the hazards connected with their use and handling. He exhibited many examples of the weapons he discussed. His talk ended with a bang — when he unexpectedly popped off a percussion cap on one of his rifles and made just about everyone jump off

their seats. Last, but not least, was Dr. Peter Olch. His topic was medicines utilized by the emigrants, the nature of their illnesses, and the remedies and dosage taken to cure what ailed

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**TOP:** The registration table was a busy place as Bill Watson, Greg Franzwa and Susan Doyle lined up early. Helping (from left): Margaret King and Coleen Mayo.

**BOTTOM:** Bill Hill addressed the convention in emigrant garb, as Jim and Gail Potter waited to speak and Convention Chairman, Bob Berry, looked on.

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them. He handled the subjects in his usual expert style. He had with him examples of medical tools and medicines to spice his remarks. Many of the presentations were enhanced by the use of slides.

It is hoped the entire Outfitting program can be presented in a special issue of the OJ so those who missed it can still benefit.

Joe Porter, Curator of Western Studies at the Joslyn Art Museum, presented a very informative orientation about the paintings of Alfred Jacob Miller and Karl Bodmer — how they came to be and what they depicted. The first stop on the afternoon bus tour was the Joslyn to view the paintings.

Following that stop, the tour moved through downtown Omaha to the bridge over the Missouri River. The bridge is located in the landing area of the Middle Ferry which carried emigrants and their wagons across the Missouri from Iowa commencing in the 1850's. The highlights of old Kanesville (Council Bluffs, IA), the Mosquito Creek camping area, and old Bellevue, NE were afterward toured. Then, those inclined, which turned out to be the great majority and many more than had signed up for it, hiked in what is now called Fontenelle Forest, near Bellevue. This group saw the site of the old fur trading post and Indian Agency and Sarpy's Lower Ferry site, which Bodmer had painted. Trail ruts leading up from the river site were also seen.

That evening a Reception was held and the Archaeology Workshop was presented. Both were well attended.

Thursday opened with another excellent talk. Ross Marshall talked about river and creek crossings and the techniques used in doing so. Again he used many slides to enhance his portion of

**TOP:** Quilting conversation at the Wednesday evening reception. L to R: Marge Peterson, Omaha, NE; Helen Smith, Sacramento, CA; Charlene Olorenshaw, Soda Springs, ID; and Nancy Elig, Bethel, OH.

**BOTTOM:** Why are these tour participants standing in the middle of a highway? The highway is an original brick portion of the Lincoln Highway near Elkhorn, NE.



the program. The topic was considered apropos due to the fact that in the Omaha area there are a number of rivers and creeks which had to be conquered, such as, the Missouri River, the Platte River, the Elkhorn River, the Big and Little Papillion Creeks, and the Rawhide Creek. Appropriately, the tour busses were named after these rivers and streams.

Next came Merrill Mattes's stirring speech entitled, "The Northern Route of the Non-Mormons: Rediscovery of Nebraska's Forgotten Historic Trail." In essence Merrill emphasized the fact

that the route along the north side of the Platte and North Platte carried significant numbers of emigrants and thus was as important an avenue in the migrations as the other better known routes. Thus, the "Council Bluffs Road," or the "North Side Route," deserved a high place in the history of the westward expansion and should no longer be overlooked. He pointed out that it actually was the first route to be used by those going overland from the Missouri. Explorers, fur traders and mountain men, missionaries (the Whitman

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party, for instance), as well as Indians, used this route before the others were established, and the Stevens party in 1844 followed it in traveling to California.

The Convention was then addressed by Steve Elkinton, of the National Park Service, in Washington, D.C., about the National Historic Trails Act and the pending legislation regarding the California Trail and the Pony Express Trail.

A paper of Gail Holmes, Mormon Historian, was given at this point in the proceedings. Gail very effectively dealt with the presence of the Mormons in the Omaha/Council Bluffs area, the routes they used, the settlements they established or furthered, such as Winter Quarters and Kanesville, and the ferries they operated.

The afternoon bus tour went to the site of Winter Quarters and followed the route taken by the Mormons and many others in traveling to the Elkhorn River crossing site. Unfortunately, a demonstration of the use of a raft in crossing a river had to be scratched due to recently flooding of the Elkhorn which rendered the planned location inaccessible. Maybe next time! (A not so faint UGH! was heard from the Convention staff. Ha!)

Thursday evening the Awards Banquet was held. The filet mignon dinner according to all reports was very good. More importantly OCTA presented significant awards that evening. But first Allen Beerman, Secretary of State of Nebraska, made a very humorous presentation of Admiralships in the Great Navy of Nebraska to the Officers and bestowed honorary citizenship in Nebraska on the Board members.

The first ever "Volunteer of the Year Award" was given to a most worthy and well liked recipient, Elaine McNabney, for her outstanding contributions in "maning" OCTA's then new headquarters in Independence and in continuing to devote many hours in the furtherance of OCTA's affairs. Elaine was caught unawares and shed a tear or two as a result of being so recognized and thanked.

Louis Schumacher received with the thanks and appreciation of all OCTA



**ABOVE:** Elaine McNabney received the first "Volunteer of the Year" award given by OCTA.



**ABOVE:** Charles W. Martin, Sr. received the "Meritorious Achievement" award.

**BELOW:** Louis Schumacher received the "Friend of the Trail" award from Missouri. He is shown receiving his award from Dr. James Lee, President of the Trails Head Chapter. L to R: Larry Jones, Awards Chairman; Dr. Lee, Mr. Schumacher, Bill and Jeanne Watson.



members the Friend of the Trail Award from Missouri. Don and Jean Rowlett were not present to receive their Friend of the Trail Award from Oregon. The Friend of the Trail Award from Nebraska was to be presented to Ed Boddy and family when the Friday bus tour

visited the site of George Winslow's grave.

The "Meritorious Achievement Award" was most deservedly given to an Omahan, Charles W. Martin, Sr., better known as "Charlie", for his many,

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many years of sustained excellence in furthering matters involving the Trails in Nebraska and for his service to OCTA as a founding Director, as its Vice President, and as an advisor. His numerous talks about the trails and the emigrants have earned him the unofficial title of "Mr. Oregon Trail" in Nebraska.

Friday involved an all day bus tour to the Kansas-Nebraska border to pick up the Oregon-California Trail and follow it through most of Jefferson County, NE. A big stop was made at Rock Creek Station State Historical Park, where the trail crossed the creek and left many deep and lengthy scars on both sides of the creek. At the West Ranch of Rock Creek Wayne Brandt and his staff presented living history demonstrations and explanations dealing with wagons (of which there were several), oxen (of which there were two on a yoke), wagon components, construction and functions, and what broke and how repairs were made.

Bill and Jan Hill had set up an emigrant camp on the East Ranch and demonstrated how spoon bread and salt pork was cooked using buffalo chips and

cooking equipment used by the emigrants - a dutch oven with a flanged top, a fry pan with a long handle, camp pot and tripod, and a coffee pot and grill. Dressed in period garb, the Hills were believable and delightful "emigrants".

Wayne Brandt then told the assembled throng about the Hickok-McCanles shoot out that occurred at the



*ABOVE: At Rock Creek Station, the emigrant's view of things was possible.*

*BELOW: Bill Hill, kneeling, demonstrates emigrant cooking to members at the East Ranch of Rock Creek Station. The West Ranch is visible across the crossing in the background.*



site of the east ranch in 1861. He no sooner finished when to everyone's surprise the OCTA volunteer thespians presented a most professional re-enactment right before their eyes. Jim Denney portrayed the unlucky McCanles and when shot, spun around from the impact, staggered, and finally thumped to the ground, his arms outstretched and his hat a-flying. The trigger happy Hickok, played by sedate Kim Naden, had plugged McCanles from inside the manager's cabin with his rifle (now on exhibit in the Museum of the Nebraska State Historical Society in Lincoln, NE).

When McCanles' two companions (Woods and Gordon, played by Chuck Martin III and Jim Budde) heard the shot, they came a-runnin to see what was up. Hickok drew his revolver and shot and wounded both of them. Woods was supposed to run around the opposite side of the cabin and fall, but in the excitement of the moment (you get what you pay for) he stopped in front of the cabin door and looked at his prostrate friend, McCanles, and his son, Monroe, played by Bill Ancell, leaning over him, and was there further plugged twice more by the impromptu (is there such a word?) Hickok. Thereupon, Woods did another Academy Award spinning

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flop to his eternal reward. As a consequence, when the station manager, Mr. Wellman, came running out of the cabin with a grub-hoe in hand, expecting to finish off the wounded Woods on the other side of the cabin, he found he had no body to work on and thus was totally frustrated. Roger Reeves, Curator at the Douglas County Historical Society, nevertheless gave a convincing performance for someone running around holding a hoe and shouting, "Let's kill then all!" In the turmoil that existed, Wellman forgot to attack young Monroe and let Monroe dodge the attempt and flee when Mrs. Wellman, played by Tammy Taplin, the California bombshell, came to the doorway of the cabin and shouted, "Kill him! Kill him!" Oh, well!

Gordon, who was supposed to limp off into the brush only to be later caught and shot daid, just kept going and never stopped. But if he ever shows up again, he'll undoubtedly get what's coming to him.

Other than those few modifications of the "script", we expect a strong nomination for independent production of the year.

After the festivities at Rock Creek, the bus tour continued to follow the trail and soon arrived at the site of George



*ABOVE: Bob Berry, Nebraska Chapter Chairman, presents the Friend of the Trail Award from Nebraska to Ed Boddye and his family. The George Winslow gravesite is on the Boddye farm.*

*BELOW: At the Winslow gravesite, a local stonecutter works on a replica of the Winslow stone while members watch.*



Winslow's grave. An unexpected surprise was the preparation of a replica of the Winslow grave marker by the stone cutter in Fairbury, NE. He was asked to finish the last few letters while the tour was there, which was done. The stone was found by Estaline Carpenter in the approximate area where the original was and she arranged for the cutting. The stone was taken to Independence to be put on display in the Museum there.

Kim Naden then told the group about poor George's demise and burial and dedicated the new OCTA marker

which had been placed earlier by Randy Brown.

Next, Bob Berry, Nebraska Chapter Chairman, presented to Ed Boddye and his family the Friend of the Trail Award from Nebraska. Mr. Boddye and his family have preserved the Winslow site with its four trail ruts running across it for over one hundred years. All OCTA is in their debt. Besides Mr. Boddye, his

daughter, Judy, and his sister were present. Mr. Boddye and his family were very touched by the designation and appreciated it very much.

The return trip to Omaha would have been uneventful if an accident on Interstate 80 hadn't delayed everyone. It didn't involve our group.

That evening there were two workshops —COED and MET (mapping). Both were well attended. Kathy Roubal and Don Buck handled COED and Tom Hunt the mapping.

Saturday morning Leslie Perry Peterson, Museum Curator, the Bertrand Collection, gave an interesting and educational talk about

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the artifacts recovered from his steamboat — most of which were typical of what emigrants had available to them. This was followed by a movie entitled, "Two Routes West". It dealt with the overland and water routes in the westward expansion.

John Slader, Superintendent of Fort Atkinson State Historical Park, then discussed the early day developments in the Omaha area, including, Fort Lisa, Cabanne's Post, Engineer Cantonment, Lewis and Clark's Council site, and Fort Atkinson itself and followed that by showing the movie from the Fort Atkinson Visitor Center.

Lunch was served at Fort Omaha and Roger Reeves, Curator there, gave a talk about the history of the Fort.

Two buses headed out to Fort Atkinson, stopping on the way at the sites of Cabanne's Post, Fort Lisa, and Engineer Cantonment. At the Fort most found the displays in the Visitors Center interesting and one especially quite unique. On hand at the reconstructed Fort was a blacksmith, barrel maker, and soldiers in uniform who demonstrated some drilling and fired their weapons and answered questions.

Afterwards, these buses traveled to the Bertrand Museum and viewed the many items on exhibit and also the site of the Bertrand itself. The Staff there has done an excellent job in preserving and displaying these artifacts.

The other two buses were to go to the Bertrand site first and then to Fort Atkinson. Unfortunately, one bus was delayed at Fort Omaha due to a faulty battery. But Roger Reeves came to the rescue and let the folks on the bus go through the General Crook House and gardens while waiting. Only requirement — they had to take their shoes off to get into the house since it had been cleaned up for a showing that night. Thanks is due Roger for his quick thinking and generosity.

Saturday night everyone seemed to enjoy the meal, the terrific weather, the entertainment by Bob Manley, and the Raffle, as well as the visiting and relaxing.

Sunday morning the Annual Meeting of the Members and the Board were

held. Newly elected Board members participated for the first time. They are, in alphabetical order: Bill Bullard, Larry Jones, Rose Ann Tompkins, and Lee Underbrink.

All of the officers were re-elected with the exception of the office of Sec-

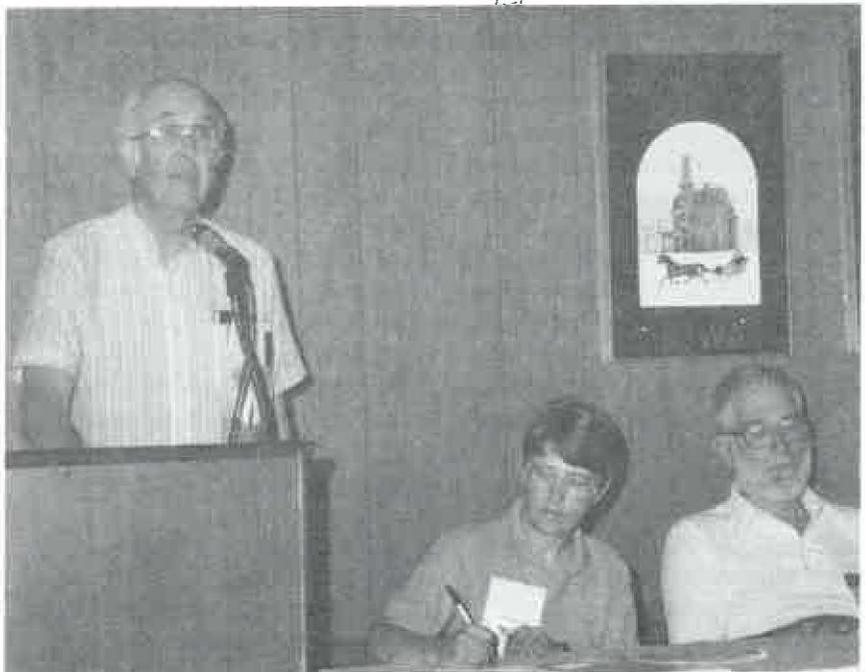
retary. Dave Bigler was elected to that post with the blessing of our former Secretary, Susan Badger Doyle, who remains on the Board. Ross Marshall was also elected President Elect, as well as Vice President.

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*ABOVE: Dr. Robert Manley entertained after the informal dinner on Saturday evening. His songs and humor were enjoyed by all.*

*BELOW: President Bill Watson presided over the Annual Meeting on Sunday morning while Secretary Susan Doyle took minutes and Director Charles Martin looked on.*



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From the favorable comments made and notes received, everyone enjoyed the convention and was very complimentary about the quality of the talks and the tours. This made the Convention Staff very happy to know their efforts paid off in a successful meeting.

So that these folks will get some measure of thanks and appreciation, it is most fitting to name again those who contributed so much of their time and talent. And it should be remembered that due to the small number involved, everyone had to double up and work on more than one aspect.

Colleen Mayo and her son, Nathan, helped put together the Registration materials sent out and then she entered all the information in the computer (very time consuming), helped put together the convention handout (tedious), manned the Registration desk, and arranged for the lunches, pop, and water and set ups at the field locations. Otherwise she was the friendly, helpful person to whom many turned for assistance.

Robin Mayo, Colleen's husband, set up the computer program for handling registration and the reports for the different activities. He did a great job for us and we owe him a great deal of thanks.

Charlie Martin and Dorothy Dustin worked very hard on the local tours and the very well enjoyed and informative scripts for them. They also trained the Tour Guides and served in many other ways, such as Charlie leading the local tours and assisting in making local arrangements and decisions and Dorothy working as a Tour Guide.

Ken Krabbenhoft helped by making the arrangements at Fort Atkinson and the Bertrand and the talks by Leslie and John.

On the Jefferson County tour, Kim Naden, with his vast knowledge of the trail in Nebraska, helped with the marking of the trail and planning the tour itself and was a well informed Tour Guide, too. He also told the story of George Winslow and dedicated the New OCTA marker at the grave site.

Estaline Carpenter of Fairbury is responsible for prodding the Nebraska

Game and Parks Commission into undertaking the development of Rock Creek Station State Historical Park. For this we owe her a great deal of thanks. She also helped with local arrangements for the Jefferson County tour and in contacting the Budde family about the new marker and the Friend of the Trail Award. Then, too, she searched for and found the stone used to make the reproduction of the Winslow grave marker and arranged for the local stone cutter to make the reproduction. And last, but not least, she "collected" the buffalo chips used in the cooking demonstration by the Hills.

Some of the book dealers commented that the arrangements at this convention were the best so far. They particularly liked the large space allotted for this purpose. They have a charming and well organized lady to thank — Helen Sundell. But after Helen had the bookroom arrangements completed, she offered to do more. As a result, she helped with the tedious job of putting the convention handout together and then did yeoman work at the Registration desk, along with Colleen, and assisted in many other ways. Our hats are off to Helen for her fine contribution.

Betty Scheinost, ably assisted by her buddy, Sandi Harms, did a great job on the Raffle. Their display of the wonderful prizes was great. And their quiet, non-pushy sale of tickets proved to be very successful. As usual, the Raffle itself was great fun for winners and non-winners. But OCTA was the beneficiary. Thanks to all who participated.

Joe and Lois Fairfield volunteered to serve as Official Photographers of the Convention. From past experience I know they did a great job. They were assisted by Olive Donaldson on the Jefferson County — Rock Creek — Winslow grave tour.

The quiet one, Jim Denney, handled our publicity and also found his calling as a Tour Guide (I understand he was Mary Lou's favorite) and as an eager thespian in one of the title roles of our brilliant melerdrama. He also contributed by attending our Committee meetings and in arranging the Admiralships and honorary citizenships for the Officers and Board members.

Roger Reeves was mainly responsible for the outstanding photo exhibit of early day Omaha — which was in the Bookroom. The exhibits were great and the manner of presentation excellent. Roger also worked as a Tour Guide, an actor, and arranged things and his talk at Fort Omaha.

Our many signs and bus names were prepared by Sandi Harms, who also was in charge of the garbage detail and handed out plastic bags. She was an integral part of the handling of the Raffle, as previously mentioned, and undertook on her own to direct people to the side of the Saturday night festivities.

We owe a big thanks to the Lady Westerners who volunteered to act as Tour Guides and to assist at the Registration desk. They all did a great job. They include Kira Gale, Lois Tapero, Lou Oberg and Margaret King.

Also helping on the tours were members of the infamous Martin clan: Julie Videon, Chuck Jr., Chuck III, and Bill Ancell; and Dick Dustin, Dorothy's fun loving husband.

My sincere thanks and appreciation for their tremendous efforts goes to all who made my job easier and to whom the Certificate of Appreciation from the OCTA Board really belongs.

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All photos in this issue were taken by the editor.

#### NEWS FROM THE PLAINS

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Rose Ann Tompkins, Editor

# REFLECTIONS OF A "FIRST-TIMER"

by BEA PARKS KABLER  
MADISON, WISCONSIN

Having grown up hearing stories of my great, great grandparents and six sons going west in 1848 on the Oregon Trail, I was delighted to join OCTA, and then finally fit into my schedule, attendance at my first OCTA Convention.

I expected most people attending to be kin of emigrants or miners but found to my surprise, professional historians, serious archaeologists, preservationists, researchers, writers, and lots of nice folk who are passionately interested.

Because of my slightly early arrival, I was able to "gallery" most of the pre-convention Board of Directors meeting. I found the organization of the Board unique in my over thirty years of serving on volunteer boards and elective public office. The hours of observation contributed to my understanding of OCTA and the broad range of issues being addressed. I was most favorably impressed by the dedication and work of the individual board members.

The field trips were mostly enjoyable, some better than others. I believe I will never forget the magnificently sad statue at the Mormon cemetery — the bumpy, jarrrrrrring ride in the covered wagon — the "museum behind glass" collection of "stuff" from the river steamer, Bertrand, and much much more.

I have owned and read "The Great Platte River Road" since 1970, and a fair amount of other reading. As a child I was taken to see Chimney Rock, Scotts Bluff, etc., and I added Ash Hollow and took my children to see the ruts where their kin folk had gone. In spite of that background, the best of the convention was all the new information about the emigrants and the trains. Granted, as a newcomer, I had and still have, lots to learn, but the morning presentations exceeded all expectations. As a result of the COED training, I am eager to get started on my first diary.

As to meeting people, after a bit of a slow start, I introduced myself to two

women who were friendly and kind throughout the next days. My friend and former neighbor of nearly twenty years, Sharon Manhart, arrived and with Sharon's assistance I met many wonderful folk, with whom I look forward to renewing acquaintance next year. Special care of new people is really important and appreciated.

A personal high point was meeting a California OCTA member who actually knew first hand of Parks bar on the Yuba River and the Parks Bar Bridge, of which I was previously unaware. It carries the name of my kin who settled down and panned quite successfully in that area. I am seeking further information of David and Catherine Parks, who set off from St. Joe in April, 1848 to homestead in Oregon. On hearing of the gold, they split off from the train and went to California. Son number seven was born in the three year time they stayed and was named Yuba River Parks!

To end, if the dear readers are members who have never attended a convention, I hope I have conveyed my pleasure with my first and we will meet you in California next year. I must go see that bridge!!

## PRESERVING OUR HISTORIC OVERLAND TRAILS:

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Written by OCTA's Historian, this soft-cover book tells the story of the founding of OCTA and the growth and preservation activities during the first five years.

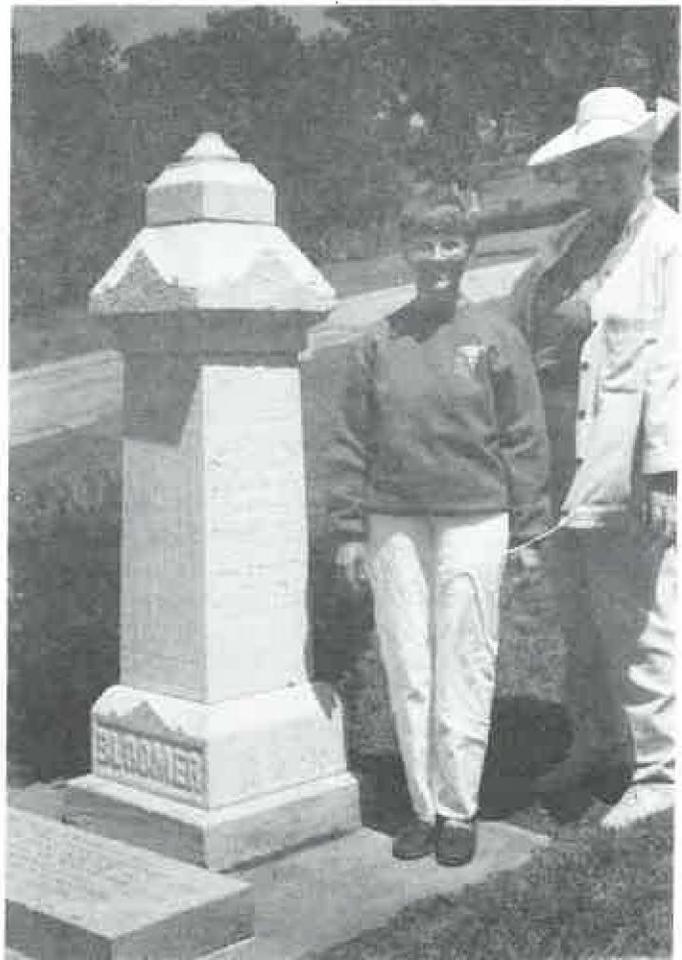
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*BELOW: At the Council Bluffs, Iowa grave of Amelia Bloomer, are two present day advocates for women, Susan Doyle and Bea Parks Kabler.*



# CHUCKLES FROM OMAHA

by MARY LOU LYON  
CUPERTINO, CALIFORNIA

I was asked to watch for amusing incidents at our last meeting in Omaha. There are always some where people gather, so I consulted and looked around. You were mostly a sober bunch, or else I missed something.

Merrill J. Mattes, the venerated dean of the trails, seemed offended that no one in a piece he had written nor in the speech he gave on the percentages of Mormons vs Non-Mormons using the north side of the Platte would challenge his findings. He missed the heated discussions of those holding the opposite views heretofore given in numerous books and articles, but who among us would do anything to his findings except to say, "Amen"? None of us is as well grounded in the study nor have we begun to scratch the surface of the great amount of time he has put into studying the trails. I'm sorry, Merrill, we will have to argue about something else.

Secretary of state for Nebraska Alan Beerman is also in the running for the funniest incidents. His conferring of officers in the Nebraska Navy done seriously with sharp salutes was bordering on the hysterical. We laughed until we cried. It may be an old Nebraska practice, but the thought of a NAVY in that land locked state was so incongruous that it was marvelous. It was also just the right amount of speech to go along with awards which sometimes seem to drag on forever as everyone except yourself gets one.

Rock Creek State Park was well done. I think everyone enjoyed the nice picnic spot, the exhibits inside and out, Bill Hill and wife cooking over buffalo chips across the bridge near the log cabin. Some of us even ventured to try a mouthful. Some of us wandered down the hill while others were in the museum and began talking to the ox cart driver. It was not hard to talk him into taking us for a short ride before he was supposed to, so we loaded up the wagon and I got to sit with him on the box and take pictures of the back end of the oxen as we jolted along. Of course, there were many more there with cameras when he helped me to dismount over the front

wagon wheel and hub. He loaded the wagon again, then the ranger came to talk about the oxen and wagon while the passengers found out about the airless confines of the wagon. Some were red-faced for a good while after. Finally, someone shouted, "We're burning up, take us for a ride", and they jolted away, finding out why so many pioneers elected to walk beside their wagons.

Perhaps the funniest incidents was when we were at Fort Atkinson and Rich Nolf became so entranced with Botany out alone in the field of tall grasses that he didn't hear the buses nor see us queuing up again to board them. The leader on our bus was just sure he had fallen into the river and drowned and become irrecoverably lost — no one thought he had been captured by Indians — but the Ranger spotted him and went out after him to come along with the rest of us. We wondered if he got chiggers or if Missouri blood was as tasty as California to them. What flowers were you studying Rich? We also found out that the Winnebago Indians never gave any trouble, and we all knew why, they were busy building large motorhomes.

The Bertrand Museum was awe inspiring, that so much could be recovered so long after the sinking. The only thing funny about it was that those adventurers who did all the work came out on the short end of the stick, and I bet they found no humor in it.

Most of us did not get to go inside the General's house at Fort Omaha, but pity was shown those who chose to stay with the dead bus, and they were allowed in if they left their shoes outside, since it was being readied for a big shindig the next day after we left. Picture the rows of hiking boots out on the porch in neat Dutch order.

Robert Manly's cornball rendition after the barbeque was also hysterical, especially when he made remarks about the inadvisability of educating women. Here we were, nearly all women there, educated, I couldn't help but get into the act by shouting to "ride him out of town on a rail!", (since I'm always shy and

retiring). He never blinked, but just carried on. When he asked, "Does your mother know you are out tonight?" and I pointed to her sitting beside me, he did a double take, but came right back. We teachers have long ago learned not to be thrown by comments and questions from the audience. He later apologized for picking on me, but I didn't mind, it made it all the more fun for us all.

How come Jean Watson's tickets were so much luckier than the others? She claims she was holding some for friends who had left, but Bill was obviously uncomfortable. When will people stop shouting, "Shake them up!" which does not mix tickets. They only rise and fall. Only a thorough mixing with a hand and unsticking of those torn together, stirring and stirring will give a good mix. Poor Tammy never won a thing.

It began to be almost funny when we had to line up for everything, from breakfast to bathroom, buses to lunches, but the long lines for one bartender at the outdoor barbeque was almost too much, especially when some cut in to be with friends, or cadge a drink, then get in the rear of the line, finishing the drink while talking in time for their next turn.

I asked Charlie Martin about his lack of imagination in naming his son Charles Martin, also, and found out there were 4 more Charles Martin's in Omaha and that the IRS also confused them, calling him in to ask about deals all the others had made. It is a funny story. His daughter also told me he was an amateur magician when she was growing up which made for great fun at birthday parties and other gatherings. A little slight of hand would be interesting.

One woman complained to me that every time she looked at someone's badge to find out where they were from, all she could see was the sticker I had placed on nearly everyone touting, "Sacramento, 1991". She said in a wounded voice that I had certainly been doing my job as publicity for California next year . . . See you all there. We will have more fun with our "Rut-nut" friends.

# RAFFLE DONATIONS

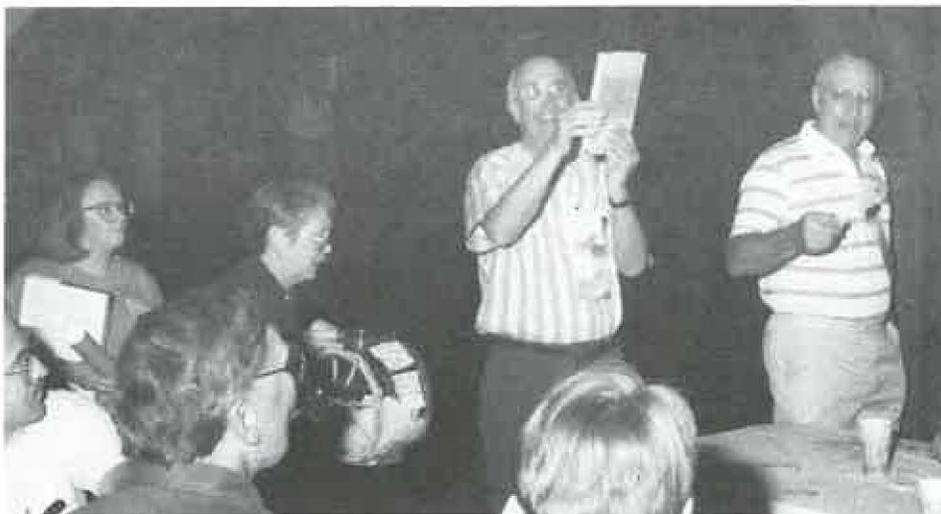
We would like to thank the following for their generous donations to the OCTA raffle. The raffle was a great success and we hope you enjoyed it. The Nebraska Chapter of OCTA

- **Bonaventura Books:** "The Great Salt Lake Trail" by Inman & Cody; "Ordeal by Hunger" by George R. Stewart
- **Patrice Press:** "Historic Sites Along the Oregon Trail" by Aubrey Haines
- **Shann Rupp:** Five packages of "Emigrant Trails" stationary
- **Trails West Books:** "Off at Sunrise: Overland Journal of Charles Glass Gray" and "The Prairie Traveler" by Capt. Marcy, US Army
- **William Hill:** "The California Trail, Yesterday and Today" by William Hill
- **Helen Holmes:** Cross-stitched framed picture
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- **Edgar W. Stanton III:** "The Trek of James MacDonald" by Edgar W. Stanton III
- **Library Archives Center of the Historical Society of Douglas Co.:** "Early Pioneer Trails and Their Impact Upon the Omaha Area" by Charles W. Martin
- **Joy Cassidy:** Nine watercolor paintings of Idaho Trail Scenes
- **OCTA:** Three Jackson Prints framed by John Holmes
- **Nebraska Trail Goods:** Great Platte River Road T-shirt
- **Kieser's Bookstore:** "Karl Bodmer's America" and "A Century of Photographs 1846-1946"
- **Historical Society of Douglas Co.:** "General George Crook - His Autobiography" by Martin F. Schmitt
- **Dorothy Dustin:** Cabanne's Post Print
- **Harold R. Wilkins:** Elkhorn River Ferry Painting and Four prints of "Sinking of the Bertrand"
- **Cottonwood Press Books:** "Ground Afire: The Story of the Death Valley National Monument" by Laura Nelson Baker
- **Donovan Yingst:** Twin Sisters Painting
- **Charles W. Martin:** Nebraska Territory Map, Old Oregon Trail Map and Bodmer Print of Sarpy Post
- **Oklahoma Press:** "Cheyenne Horse Soldiers" by Chalfant; "From the Pecos to the Powder" by Adams; "Historical Atlas of California" by Beck; "Historical Atlas of Kansas" by Beck; "Jessie Benton Fremont" by Herr; "Medicine Man" by Stratton; "Mountain Meadows Massacre" by Brooks; "Road to Virginia City" by Rolle; "Sagebrush Soldier" by Smith; and "Sitting Bull" by Vestal

## TRAIL BITS

Looking for location of the gravesite of Joseph McCully, age 10 or 11, who died in 1852 on the trail to Oregon. In one account, young Joseph was buried near Fort Kearny. Another account states near Fort Hall. We feel the Kearny location is most likely. The McCully train left New London, Iowa, on March 21, 1852. Joseph was the son of David McCully. His leg was badly broken in an accident while taking stock to water, and he died as a result. David's brother, Asa, returned the following year & erected a marker which was still visible in 1933 according to notes found.

Respond to:  
Alice Crane Verret  
3195 Wayside Lp.  
Springfield, OR 97477



**ABOVE: THE RAFFLE** was a success due to generous donations and many ticket buyers. It was also fun with lots of audience participation. Here we see Bill Watson displaying a book while Ross Marshall reads the winning number. Committee members at left are Sandi Harms (far left) and Betty Scheinost. They did a great job!

# ARCHAEOLOGY WORKSHOP REPORT

Nearly 70 people attended the Archaeology Workshop at the convention in Omaha. Led by archaeologists Craig Bromley and Jude Carino of the Archaeology Committee, the main subject attacked during the 3-hour workshop was Ethics of Archaeology.

An understanding of ethics is a basic requirement in all studies of archaeology, and as always it engendered a lively discussion. Surface collecting as a means of site destruction was contrasted with the "legal" collecting practices used with archaeological excavation. Extraction of information from such collecting, collecting to insure safety from non-scientific collection practices, ownership of artifacts, and storage of collected artifacts was covered.

In 1991, a new format for workshops will be used in order to accommodate hands-on participation. The survey and recording of sites will be the topics featured. Recording techniques, including field photographic instruction, will be covered. All elements of site recording will be illustrated, including preparation and filing of reports.

Future workshops will cover testing and excavation, dating techniques and stabilization of sites, collection and curation procedures.

Sharon Manhart, Co-chair,  
Archaeology Committee



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## EARLY ALERT REQUEST FOR PAPERS 1993 OCTA CONVENTION BAKER CITY, OREGON, AUGUST 11-15, 1993

Baker City, Oregon, on the banks of the Powder River, will host OCTA's 11th annual national convention. The new National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center at Flagstaff Hill, overlooking the old Oregon Trail, is scheduled to open in 1992, and is located seven miles east of Baker City. The statewide 1993 Oregon Trail Sesquicentennial Celebration will be in Full swing. This is OCTA's first convention in eastern Oregon. Convention planners are taking this early opportunity to request presentations appropriate to the setting. Some topics which have been suggested are:

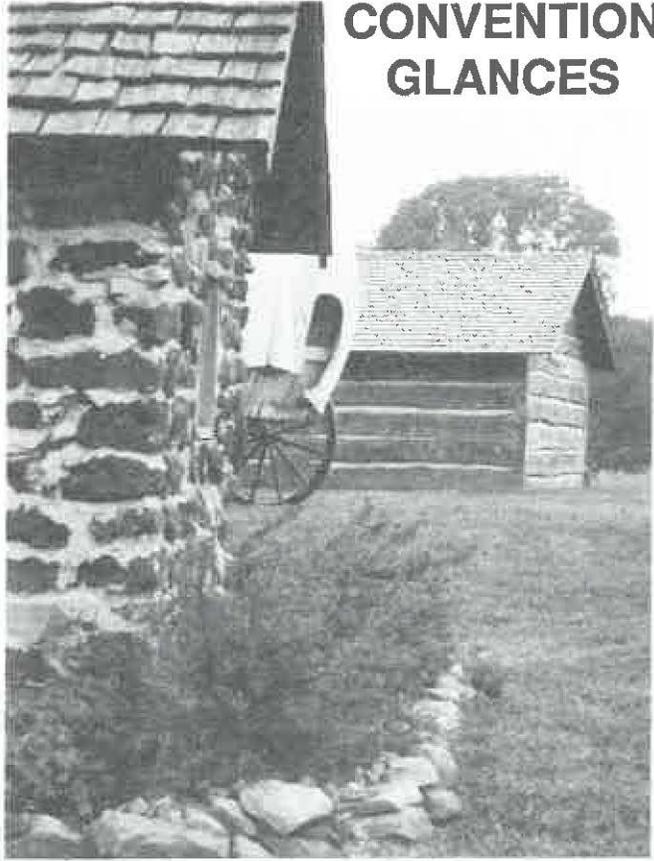
Origins of the Trail Through Eastern Oregon  
Early Exploration and Natural History  
The Blue Mountain Crossing  
Farewells and Final Snake River Crossings  
Eastern Oregon Alternate Trails and Cutoffs  
Emigrant Response to the Changing Natural Landscape  
Indian-Emigrant Encounters  
Forts, Missions, and Supply Stations: Assistance to the Emigrant  
Trail Experiences of Oregon's Notable Settlers  
Cultural and Ethnic Diversity on the Trail  
Eastern Oregon Gold Rush of the 1860s  
Early Settlements East of the Cascades

Outlines and abstracts will be requested at a date more immediate to the convention. The steering committee welcomes other proposals and suggestions relevant to the region. For further information, contact:

Mary Oman  
P.O. Box 743  
Baker City, OR 97814

or Richard Ackerman  
3027 Twin Oak Place NW  
Salem, OR 97304

# CONVENTION GLANCES



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