



OCTOBER
1993

NEWS FROM THE PLAINS

THE OREGON-CALIFORNIA TRAILS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

P.O. Box 1019, Independence, MO 64051-0519 Phone and FAX 816-252-2276

Solving Mysteries Along the Trail

or, Randy has grave doubts

By Lee Underbrink

The fact that there were many deaths along the Oregon-California-Mormon trail is known by everyone. That an unusual amount of these deaths occurred in Natrona County, Wyoming is not so well known. Diarists of the trails wrote of seeing many graves at Willow Springs and near Devil's Gate. The largest loss of life in the county occurred with the 1856 Martin handcart company, who buried approximately 150 emigrants in the October snow.

With all this death along the trail in the area, it is unusual that until 1974 we knew of only one marked grave. Neighboring Converse County is said to have more marked and identified trail grave

reburied Quintina's remains with the help of his students on June 16, 1988. The class then built a fence around the gravesite to protect it.

Randy, chairman of OCTA's Graves and Sites Committee, is Wyoming's present day super sleuth of the trails. He had often wondered why T.P. Baker's name and the date "1864" were inscribed so low, and to one side of the large

"Randy was suspicious of how a dead man could have carved his name at a point further along the trail than his grave."

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sites than any other county along the trail system. The only identified grave site in Natrona County was thought to be that of T.P. Baker, whose remains were thought to lie at what we now call Rattlesnake Pass, near Devil's Gate and the Sun Ranch.

In the summer of 1974 the grave site of emigrant Quintina Snodderly was discovered on the north side of the Platte. The tombstone was uncovered when workmen widened the road. It was still readable. Katherine and Bill Fritts were the landowners at the time and they took it upon themselves to find out about Quintina. Eventually they found Quintina's 85 year old grandson in Scio, Oregon. He was able to fill in the story of Quintina's unfortunate demise. Quintina was run over by a wagon.

Randy Brown, an enthusiast of trail history and teacher in a one-room Converse County, Wyoming school house,

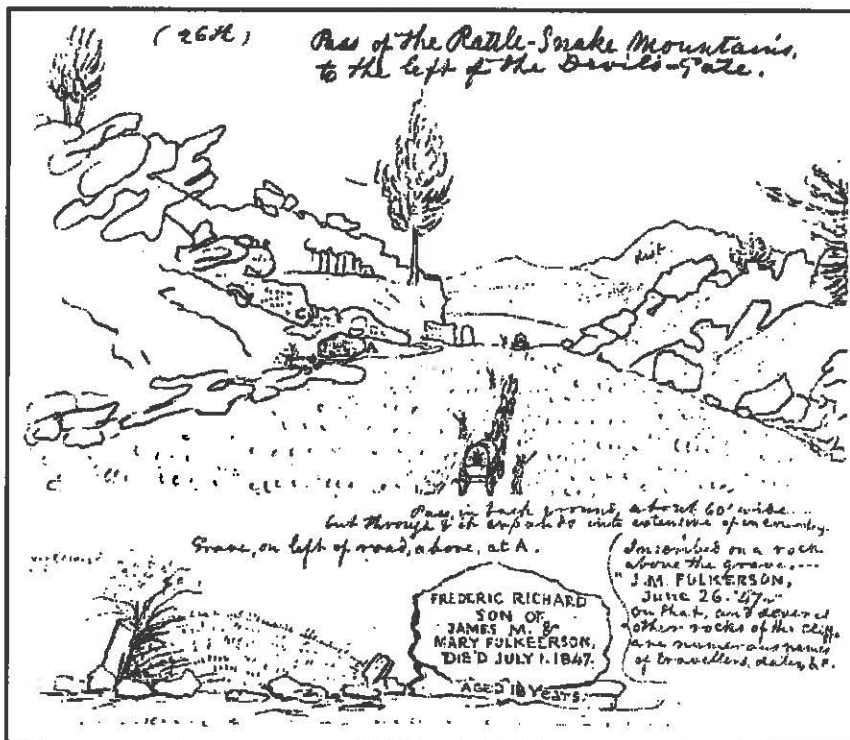
The January, 1994 issue of News From the Plains will concentrate on the OCTA Chapters. With summer activities winding down, please take time to write up chapter activities to submit. Photographs of the chapter in action are also welcome.

Members who do not belong to any chapter are also invited to submit articles about their trail related activities.

The two T. P. Baker inscriptions, showing their similarities. The top inscription is the one found in Rattlesnake Pass, the bottom one is found in Devil's Gate.

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Left: Adaptation of Bruff Drawing of Rattlesnake Pass, showing detail of Fulkerson inscription. Credit to Yale University, Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library

Nevada City, California. McClain noticed a set of inscriptions near the upper end of Devil's Gate. On the rock, fairly high above the river, he stated that he had found another T.P. Baker inscription. Randy was suspicious of how a dead man could have carved his name at a point further along the trail than his grave.

The indication that T.P. Baker was a healthy inscriber in 1864 would be more logical if the second inscription could be verified. After an hour's search, Randy found the second inscription "T.P. Baker, 1864." The style and size were exactly the same as that on the grave. The three parts of the puzzle were now complete.

Randy concluded that the paint on the Richard Fulkerson grave had worn off enough in seventeen years that T.P. Baker just thought it would make a good place to carve his name. It is more than probable that he was not buried before or after his second inscription at this location.

We reported the find to Bernard and Noleen Sun of the Sun Ranch. We had already noticed that earlier photographs

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headstone. Something seemed wrong because when pioneers had the time to carve a headstone inscription they usually put the date of death along with the name. They also centered the inscription near the top of the stone.

In 1849 J. Goldsborough Bruff traveled through Rattlesnake Pass and made a detailed drawing of the site. His drawing indicated a grave site with a very large stone with the painted inscription "Frederic Richard, son of James M. & Mary Fulkeerson (sic), Died July 1, 1847. Aged 18 years". This drawing of Bruff's bothered Randy because the rock was the same size and shape, and in the same location as our present day T.P. Baker inscription.

Bruff's diary mentions that J. M. Fulkerson painted his name on the rocks above the grave with the date June 26, 1847. The family must have been waiting for their sick son to recover or die. Bruff's diary also reports a grave 195 miles further along on the trail above Names Hill near LaBarge, Wyoming.

Right: Baker inscription as it appears today on rock that Randy Brown believes is the Fulkerson rock described in Bruff's drawing.

photo by Randy Brown

Its inscription was engraved "Mary, consort of J. M. Fulkerson, Died July 14th, 1847." So the mother and son both perished in their trip west.

We now have a suspicious inscription on a grave where someone else should be. But how can this be proved? Our detective of the trail, Randy Brown, discovers a letter in the *Overland Journal* that tells about Jim McClain of

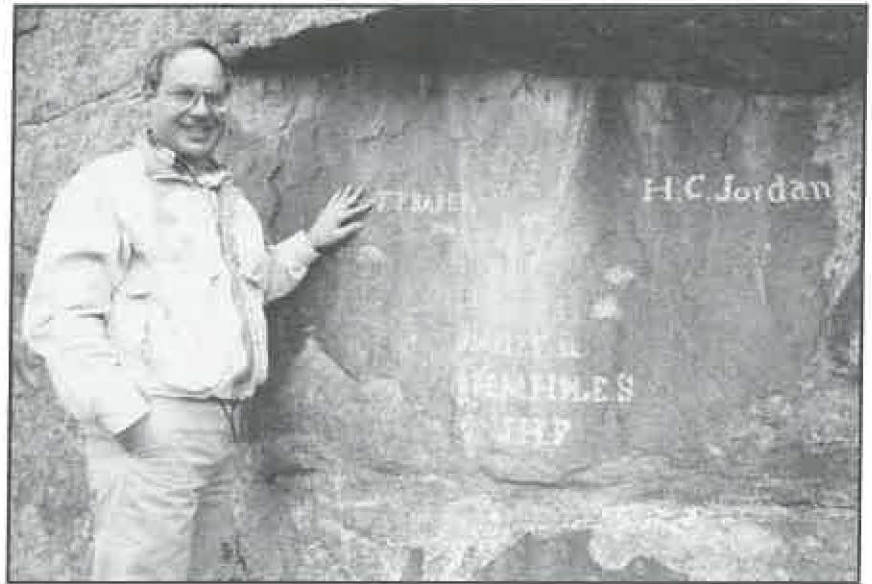


Right: Randy Brown points out the Baker inscription found in Devil's Gate, photo by Lee Underbrink

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of the grave had much fainter letters. Bernard replied "Now you are wrecking all the recorded history of the T.P. Baker grave, besides I've spent a lot of time up there deepening the inscription on the grave so it will last". This proves that there's a love of history in more people than we suspect.

Now that we are convinced that T.P. Baker is not in his supposed grave, a mystery still exists. Who was inscription carver T.P. Baker, and where does he finally rest?



PAUL HENDERSON MAPS DONATED TO OCTA by Merrill Mattes

Incidental to the OCTA Board meeting at headquarters in late March, time out was taken for a special little ceremony, the undersigned representing the Board to accept from Marge Waitman, OCTA member and the daughter of Paul Henderson, a fine collection of "working" Oregon trail maps left together with a collection of old historical magazines, many bearing trail

notations by Paul, a railroad freight conductor by trade, but in his off-duty time a gifted self-trained amateur Oregon Trail historian.

Paul's "thing" was, on his own time, to travel and explore hundreds of miles along the trail, all the way from Missouri to Oregon, identifying and making notes on trail landmarks and remains. (See the Spring 1984 issue of

the Overland Journal for my extensive article about this unique individual who was the source of inspiration to me and innumerable others who over the decades visited Paul in his Bridgeport, Nebraska home.) Ironically, Paul died before OCTA was conceived and organized, but he was remembered by us most dramatically in August, 1985 during OCTA's third annual convention, when we assembled at the Bridgeport cemetery where he is buried to dedicate our own granite memorial to his memory.

We again express our appreciation to Marge Waitman and her husband "Dyke" who took the trouble to pack and bring a heavy load of this material to Independence in their own "covered wagon" pickup. Thanks also to National Frontier Trails Center archivist John Mark Lambertson for his cooperation, and to Bill and Jeanne Watson for special courtesies extended on that occasion.

It should be noted that Paul Henderson's final set of Oregon Trail maps, along with the bulk of his large collection of emigrant diary copies, was earlier donated to the University of Wyoming Library at Laramie. We have been promised a copy of the complete final set of Henderson Oregon Trail maps.



Above, left to right: OCTA President Ross Marshall, Merrill Mattes, Marge and Dyke Waitman, pictured in the Merrill J. Mattes Library during the acceptance of the Henderson collection. A portion of the collection is on the table.

photo by Mike Bateman

UPDATE ON THE REP

The last issue of the NFP (July) contained a brief outline and a description of the three major funds (Endowment, General and Designated) which make up the Revenue Enhancement Plan (REP). A number of you contacted me at the Baker City Convention to inquire about the fund raising drive and to offer suggestions for other funds or special classes (Memorials) for providing funds to aid in preserving our trail heritage.

It was very encouraging to hear from Don Buck and Susan Badger Doyle that the Emigrant Trail Historical Study Series has been the recipient of over \$3,000 in just a few months. These funds will be used to offset some of the publication expenses for the first volume in this new historical series.

We are continuing our efforts to refine the plan and will share the details of our progress in the next NFP. In the meantime, if you have any questions about the plan, please contact me.

Jim Budde, Treasurer

HOWELL DIARIES WILL BE FIRST IN NEW SERIES

An update from Don Buck, Publications Chair and Susan Badger Doyle, General Editor of the

Emigrant Trails Historical Study Series

The new Emigrant Trails Historical Studies Series that we announced in the July issue of the *News from the Plains* is moving right along. The first book in the series will be an outstanding unpublished overland diary and journal, "The 1849 California Trail Diaries of Elijah Preston Howell."

Merrill Mattes, in his *Platte River Road Narratives*, has awarded the Howell journal his highest rating of five stars, commending its "superior quality for the extent of its revealing detail as well as literary competence."

So far we are very pleased with the contributions to OCTA's new Special Publications Fund that has been established to finance the historical studies series. By the end of the convention at

Baker City, close to \$3,500 had been donated with several pledges in the offing. It is gratifying to see members supporting this endeavor and we extend wholehearted thanks to them.

However, we need to reach our goal of \$10,000 to make the series financially self-sustaining. If you are thinking of making a contribution to OCTA, please consider the Special Publications Fund. You can make the Emigrant Trails Historical Studies Series a reality. Thank you very much. Send your check to:

OCTA—Special Publications Fund
P.O. Box 1019
Independence, MO 64051-0519



From the Editor

Eastern Oregon is certainly a beautiful area of our country. It was my first visit. The display of wild, black eyed "susies" on the open hillsides was a delight. Walking in the ruts at the Blue Mountain Crossing, and looking across the Snake River at the old Fort Boise crossing were also sights that captured my imagination. But the most impressive man-made sight had to be the Flagstaff Hill Interpretive Center, with its commanding view of the trail and its uncanny appearance of a wagon when viewed from the interstate. My new camera was used often trying to capture all these sights, and more.

There were many new faces at this convention, including many new members. Hopefully they will all be back next year. New members mean new talents and experience that OCTA can use in a variety of areas. Those of us who have been around the organization for awhile need to find a niche for the new faces, a place where they can enjoy OCTA as we do and also contribute what they can.

Chapter members, please take note of the reminder on the front page.

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Next NFP deadline
December 1

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

David Bigler

To match the excellence of the Oregon Trail Sesquicentennial celebration, this year's convention had to be outstanding. And it truly was, thanks to Dick and Trudy Ackerman, Lowell Tiller and the Northwest Chapter, plus a devoted band of volunteers.

Long remembered will be Baker City and the generous hospitality and uniform kindness of new friends there.

This year's convention climaxed a number of notable achievements in recent months, under the positive leadership of Ross Marshall, now Past President.

A gift to the ages is OCTA's Census of Overland Emigrant Documents (COED) Program under Kathy Roubal, now holding more than 1,200 diaries and over 40,000 names. For a computer novice, like me, to see Chuck Dodd, creator of the COED software, reduce research time from months to seconds was like watching magic.

Now opened is the opportunity to make a gift to preservation that goes on giving beyond one's lifetime, thanks to Treasurer Jim Budde and his Revenue Task Force. This new Revenue Enhancement Plan places a foundation for sustainable future growth.

Off the press, just in time for Baker City, were the first copies of Editor Bob Berry's handsome, newly enhanced map, "Western Emigrant Trails, 1830-1870," one of our most popular offerings.

By the time the latest printing of 10,000 is finished, there will be some 1,500 orders already on file.

Also introduced at this year's convention were some other significant publications. These included Bill Hill's newest work, *Reading, Writing and Riding Along the Oregon-California Trails*, an educational activity book, and the new *Mapping Emigrant Trails (MET)* manual, produced by Don Buck, Andrew Hammond, Tom Hunt, Dave Johnson and John Maloney.

Progress by Susan Doyle, General Editor, offers great promise for "The Emigrant

Trails Historic Studies Series." OCTA's growth in membership speaks for the fine work of Jackie Lewin, Membership Chairwoman, and our headquarters staff and volunteers.

Especially gratifying at Baker City was the desire expressed by a number of aspiring authors to prepare articles for *Overland Journal* and *News from the Plains*. Such interest testifies to the growing status of these publications, edited by Lois Daniel and Rose Ann Tompkins.

These and other achievements will challenge the new members of our leadership team, including your president, not to mention the proved associates who will continue to serve in existing posts or take on new assignments.

Utah Crossroads last month applauded the election of its first Board member, Will Bagley of Salt Lake City, one of his state's best young historians. He joined Lee Underbrink of Wyoming, Rose Ann Tompkins of Arizona and Larry Jones of Idaho, also elected this year to new three-year terms.

Former Director Chuck Martin, Jr., of Indiana is our new Vice President and Chairman, Nominating and Leadership Committee; Mary Ann Tortorich of California will direct the Convention Committee; and Utahn W. L. "Bud" Rusho, will take over as Chairman of the Awards Committee from Larry Jones.

My own purpose will be to build OCTA from the bottom up, to strengthen existing chapters and add new ones. For this reason, I am especially happy that Past President Ross Marshall has agreed to serve as Chairman of the newly re-activated Chapters Committee.

As we recognize the progress we have made, all of us who will serve over the next year, starting with me, enlist your support and involvement in making OCTA an even greater force for historic trails preservation in the future.



Left: Newly elected OCTA President, David Bigler, on right, confers with Dick Ackerman, Convention Chairman, during the convention banquet.

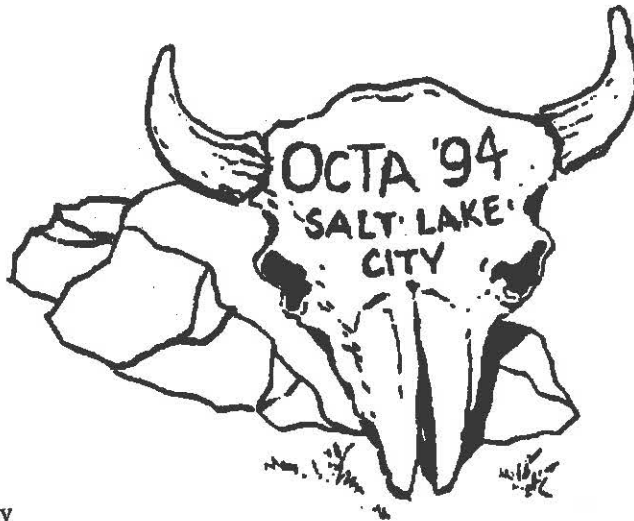
SALT LAKE CONVENTION PREVIEW

Reflecting the significance of Salt Lake City as a major crossroad in the saga of western migration, the organizers for the 1994 Oregon-California Trails Association convention have prepared a remarkable program of lectures and field trips. The scholastic depth and quality of the events have been recognized by Brigham Young University. Those who wish may register with the University for fully transferable workshop credits. As an additional feature, conventioners will be introduced to the world renowned facilities for genealogical and historical research of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (Mormons).

There will be a choice of pre-convention tours on Monday, August 8. The selection will offer: Hastings Cutoff across portions of the Salt Lake Valley to the Hastings Pass and an overview of the Salt Desert ... or ... along the Mormon Trail to Fort Bridger and the Needles. On Tuesday August 9th, an archeology field workshop will be conducted in the morning, and a tour of Mormon Church facilities in the afternoon. The convention will officially open Wednesday, August 10th.

Conventioners will have a broad menu of fascinating events from which to choose. As of this date the following distinguished scholars and researchers have been scheduled to lecture:

- Dr. Fred R. Gowans - "The Fur Trade and the Opening of the Trails"
- Roy D. Tea - "The First Wagons Across Utah, The Bartelson-Bidwell Party"
- Will Bagley - "Lansford W. Hastings, Honest Entrepreneur or Heartless Promoter"
- Dr. Stanley B. Kimbal, "The Mormon Emigration"



- Dr. LaMar C. Berrett, "From Ft. Bridger to the Valley on the Pioneer trail"
- Robert and Lyndia Carter, "The Hand Cart Emigration"
- H. Rush Spedden, "The Fearful Long Drive, The Salt Desert Crossing"
- Norman Wright, "Measuring the Distance, Pioneer Odometers"
- Dr. Floyd W. O'Neil, "Gold Rushers Meet the Saints, The Kingdom at the Crossroads"
- Michael Landon & Dr. Kenneth Owens, "First Wagons Over the Salt Lake Cutoff, 1848"
- Dr. Brigham D. Madsen, "The Trail North to Montana"
- Dr. David B. Madsen, "Excavation of the Donner-Reed Wagons on the Great Salt Lake Desert"
- Steven K. Madsen, "The Spanish Trail"

In addition, workshops in the following subjects will be available: Genealogy; Preservation; COED; COED Data Entry; Mapping; and the pre-convention Archeology Workshop.

An exciting slate of field trips has been scheduled around decades of exploration by outstanding trail researchers. Conventioners will have a choice of several trails of major historic importance:

The Donner Party and the Hastings Cutoff; The Mormon Trail from Ft.

Bridger to Great Salt Lake; The Hensley Cutoff from Salt Lake City to City of the Rocks; Significant Trail Sites in the Salt Lake Valley.

A post-convention tour on Sunday August 14th, will cover the Hastings Cutoff, with an inspection of Floating Island, and dedication of the Donner Spring Monument, the famous spring at the base of Pilot Peak. The Donner Spring Monument is particularly significant. It is the result of laudable cooperation by the land owner and the efforts of members of the Crossroads Chapter of OCTA. Vernon Gorzitze designed, organized, and led the construction of this major historic landmark.

Special arrangements have also been made for conventioners to attend the broadcast of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir, and to tour portions of the Pony Express Trail.

Jack Shapiro
Publicity Chair, '94 Convention

WITH SINCERE GRATITUDE

I want to express my appreciation to the officers, directors, committees and members at large for the support and cooperative spirit you extended to me as your president the last two years. Each of you made the job fun and very rewarding. Whenever there was a job to be done all I had to do was pick up the phone and someone was always eager to help complete the task. And I know you will all do the same for our new President, Dave Bigler. I look forward to continuing to work with you in the future as we together fulfill the purposes of OCTA.

Ross Marshall

1993 Annual Reports

On pages 7, 8, 15 and 16 are found excerpts from some of the annual reports presented to the board at the Baker City meeting. It is not possible to publish all of the reports, but the members may find these excerpts of interest. They give a flavor and depth of the numerous activities within our organization.

President Ross Marshall

OCTA can certainly be proud of its achievements in the past 10 years. However, a number of challenges confront us:

1. The purposes of OCTA as conceived by the founders remain as sound as in the beginning, that is, preservation, PRESERVATION, PRESERVATION. We must continue reservation of trail remains and sites, the written record and the story of westward emigration. This job is never done and must be the foundation of all we do in the future.

2. We have been and must remain an organization of volunteers. This is not to say that we should not have paid staff. It sometimes is easier when you can afford it to just hire it done, but this is not always best. If we maintain the volunteer personality in our activities and in our relationships with each other, we will be a healthier organization. If we need help, money, goods, services or expertise, we need to always ask for it. I continue to be amazed at the number of people who are willing to help out if they know what is needed and believe in the purposes. OCTA's purposes are good.



Above: Ross Marshall during a television interview at the convention.

3. Expenses should always be controlled and minimized. However, when revenue increases, expenses will very possibly increase. A good example is our headquarters. We have an excellent headquarters staff, but we are beginning to push the envelope. The increases in membership, services and revenues are stretching the staff, both paid and volunteer.

4. The discovery and enlistment of future leadership, both national and at the chapter level.

5. A persistent need to always increase the effectiveness of our communications with each other; between officers and directors, national with chapters, and chapters with members.

6. The increased trail stewardship that we now have with the Cal Trail bill, but much work is ahead. The possible consolidation of the "Corridor" trails makes our agency relationships even more important in the future.

7. We should never lose the warm and personal climate at OCTA. The popularity of the conventions is a good indication that our members enjoy each other. I know I do. I hope it will always be that way.

Preservation Officer

Tom Hunt

CITY OF ROCKS, IDAHO. As of this writing, we are still awaiting the publication of the final Management Plan for City of Rocks. What the delay in publication indicates is hard to tell. It is clear that the director of the Reserve is enamored with the rock-climbing mystique, but all agencies involved in the planning procedure have indicated that they expect the final plan to place primary emphasis on the historic trail aspects of the Reserve and not the rock-climbing activities. It was made abundantly clear to the director that this is what Congress intended in designating the Reserve. We must be prepared to react quickly and decisively if there should be any attempt to circumvent this expressed congressional intention.

FT. HALL, IDAHO. I am encouraged to report that the Army Corps of Engineers (at the request of the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes and with OCTA's full support) has conducted a field survey to assess the threat of erosion from the Snake River to the Ft. Hall site. This threat has been a concern to OCTA for a number of years now, but that concern has not been addressed by either the BurRec or the BIA. The Corps recommendation fully supports OCTA's position in this vexing matter. The Corps is recommending action to prevent a possible change in the course of the Snake and also the further erosion of the banks upstream from the site. The Corps will contribute some funding to the effort; the BIA and BurRec are being asked to assume the balance of the costs as is their obligation under their respective jurisdictional responsibilities for the site. It is

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not sure that the BIA and BurRec will even accept the Corps' recommendation. They are free either to accept or reject it. Since their position all along has been that the Snake River presented no threat to the Ft. Hall site (and OCTA and all other concerned groups were wrong to feel that it did), it is possible that they will not accept the recommendation which, after all, would constitute a tacit admission that their assessments of the situation had been wrong. We must now wait and see how they respond to the Corps' proposed course of action.

Another consequence of OCTA's continued interest in the Ft. Hall site is that the Tribes have agreed to allow several archaeological test pits to be dug in order to determine for sure the actual location of the Ft. Hall site.

COED. Kathy Roubal

The following figures give a cumulative total of documents in the COED database. Note the incredible amount of surveys completed by COED volunteers since the Rock Springs Convention one short year ago!

DATE	TOTAL DOCUMENTS	TOTAL NAMES
8/06/93	1,332	43,402
8/05/92	652	25,511
7/31/91	291	10,072

PLANS FOR 1993/1994

- Complete data entry handbook.
- Recruit a Data Entry Coordinator to train COED volunteers on data entry.
- Finish output programs for the upcoming genealogical name searches in time to open to the public by March 1994.
- Continue working on dial-up capabilities for COED.
- Continue to develop maps, routes and codes for the Bozeman, Southern and Santa Fe Trail Systems.

Trail Marking

Randy Brown

At Raft River three gravesites were restored.

In Wyoming the marker at Warm Springs will be replaced. This is the first OCTA marker to be vandalized or stolen.

Near Rock Springs the 1852 grave of Malinda Armstrong will be marked.

In Oregon OCTA is marking the 1852 grave of David Koontz.

At the suggestion of Greg Franzwa, I recently restored to Register Cliff the Unthank inscriptions that had nearly washed away. Using a photo of the names as they appeared fifty years ago a template was made and the inscriptions were put back in the same spot on the cliff. Meanwhile, the rest of the inscriptions there continue to fade away.

The Crossroads Chapter continues their work at Donner Spring located at the west edge of the Salt Desert crossing. Fencing of the spring nears completion and several interpretive markers will be installed in time for the Salt Lake convention. The chapter has raised funds locally for this project and should be congratulated for accomplishing that feat.

The Utah chapter received 100 Carsonite trail markers this summer and members will be busy marking the Hastings and Hensley cutoffs in preparation for 1994 convention trail treks.

In Wyoming trail marking continues in various locations. Some trail was marked in the vicinity of Porter's Rock on the so-called Plateau Route west of Guernsey. On the "Hill Road" west of Fort Laramie a mile of existing ruts was marked this spring. Also near Guernsey, two recently "discovered" routes that lead to the river from the high ground west of the fort were marked with carsonites. Finally, west of Guernsey, the route through Cold Springs pass was remarked as was the junction of the Warm Springs and Cold Springs routes which is on the big hill that separates Warm Springs canyon and Cottonwood Creek.

Near Glendo a mile of existing ruts was marked in the vicinity of Twin

Springs. As for Twin Springs itself, this well known emigrant watering site is no more. Sometimes called Rock Springs or Red Springs, it was frequently noted by trail diarists. Last year the state water engineer forced the lessee to make "improvements" at the spring or his water right would be lost. The rancher was well aware of the springs' historic importance and protested, but to no avail. The spring was capped and piped into a stock tank. However, according to the rancher, these improvements need not be permanent. The spring could be restored to its natural state, and he is willing to do it, provided the bureaucrats in Cheyenne can be persuaded to concede that the spring deserves protection from development. This will be the major obstacle to the spring's eventual restoration.

The committee would like once more to thank Greg Franzwa who has continued to make the layouts for our OCTA markers at no charge and for his helpful editing suggestions.

Trail Mapping

David Johnson

MET Manual

Revisions of the MET manual have been completed. Changes include simplification and clarification of coding, elimination of some forms, and updating various sections.

Trail Mapping Data Base

I have begun a data base which eventually will include all of the 7.5 minute quadrangle maps which cover all of the emigrant trails. So far the data base includes the maps for all of the California Trail from Utah to California, the Applegate Trail, and the main route of the Oregon Trail.

Assistance is being sought from persons familiar with the other trails (including prominent cut-offs) who would be willing to trace the routes of the trails as accurately as possible on

excerpts from an

Oregon Trail Diary

**Baker City, Oregon
August 9-14, 1993**

Monday the 9th

Old friends filter in early for OCTA's 11th convention. I meet a long-time acquaintance from Long Island at a rest stop at Boardman, another at Pendleton Burger King. In Baker City registration is running smoothly already despite requests to "switch this" or "add that." The archaeology field school is already under way at the Oregon Trail Regional Museum.

Tuesday the 10th

More than 300 people participate in pre-convention activities. That's more people than OCTA had members in 1983. Buses head to Hell's Canyon to ride the jet boats, to Sumter Valley to ride the steam railway, to Flagstaff Hill to participate in the archaeology field school and to Pleasant Valley to hike the trail. 150 hikers brave the hot, arid trail for ten miles. Many found no virtue on Virtue Flats. A member headed off to the day-long board meeting says, "I'll be locked up all day and miss the fun stuff."

Wednesday the 11th

Registration hits 730 people as OCTA's largest ever convention officially gets under way. Baker High School is taken over as chapter meetings are followed by the general meeting. The Mayor of Baker City proclaims OCTA Appreciation Week. Two donations are announced. Jeanne Miller of Independence presents the 1854 Mayhew Diary and Merrill Mattes announces the transfer of his papers from the Nebraska Historical Society to OCTA. The Merrill Mattes Research Library in Independence now houses

copies of close to 1000 diaries, and three original diaries. Pocatello is announced as the 1997 convention site (1994 in Salt Lake City, 1995 in Grand Island and 1996 in Elko).

The afternoon is filled with speakers led off by Greg Franzwa's informational history. The Trail Tenders provide cultural connections between speakers Shirlee Evans, Jackie Cook and John Woodward.



The evening social provides people with the opportunity to get to know each other. Name tags include relatives who traveled the trail. More than one set of "cousins" are discovered. Past conventions are roasted by judge Ross Marshall, prosecutor Bill Hill and defense attorney Charlie Martin. OCTA's impromptu trail band with another fiddle and a spoons player pleases the audience.

Thursday the 12th

Back to Baker High School for a morning of talks and good slides by Richard Hanes, Keith Clark, Irving Merrill, Richard Reick, and Earl Schmidt. Shuttle buses then take participants to Flagstaff Hill for more pre-

sentations by Susan Butruille, Jacqueline Williams, Mary Cross and Mary Oman. The afternoon picnic in City Park has people arriving early as they get used to long lines.

Back to the High School for an evening of superb entertainment. Joyce Badgely Hunsacker as "Fanny" has the audience in the palm of her hand. We laugh at how she handles her husband Theo, cry when her daughter Della dies, and laugh when she pokes fun at two guys named Ackerman and Mattes. The Trail Band has us clapping and stomping our feet to good original music, trail songs and diary quotes. The Trail Band is dripping with talent. Greg Franzwa demands an encore and got two. Merrill Mattes says this is the best band he has ever heard in his life. Bill Watson, in his usual calm manner says, "Fantastic, wonderful, great entertainment ... and a full house."

Friday the 13th

It must be unlucky to run tours on this day. Twelve buses head off in two directions. One has air pressure problems and must off-load its passengers onto other buses. Another loses its air-conditioning at the hottest part of the trip south. Four become lost as guide Helen Holmes misses the turnoff (twice). It becomes the Lost Holmes Party in search of the Holmes Cutoff somewhere along the Owyhee River. At the same time four buses in LaGrande, hearing of a pioneer cabin, do the School Bus Shuffle as four buses arrive at the same intersection at the same time from four different directions.

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Despite these minor glitches (see Dick Ackerman's report on buses) the Southern Route sees Fort Boise, Vale, Farewell Bend and the Swayze Cutoff. The Northern Route sees LaGrande, the Blue Mountains, a Paiute Indian demonstration and the new Forest Service Interpretive Park.

Saturday the 14th

Another day of tours is much more subdued as the drivers now know where to turn. The Blue Mountain Crossing Park is impressive as thunder in the Blues provided appropriate sound effects.

The final banquet, with 400 people in attendance, starts with musical entertainment by the Prairie Dog Music Company. Awards are awarded and prizes raffled (see Norm Lindburg's report).

As the 730 attendees depart either Saturday or Sunday they read on the marquee at Sunridge, "Happy Trails, OCTA."

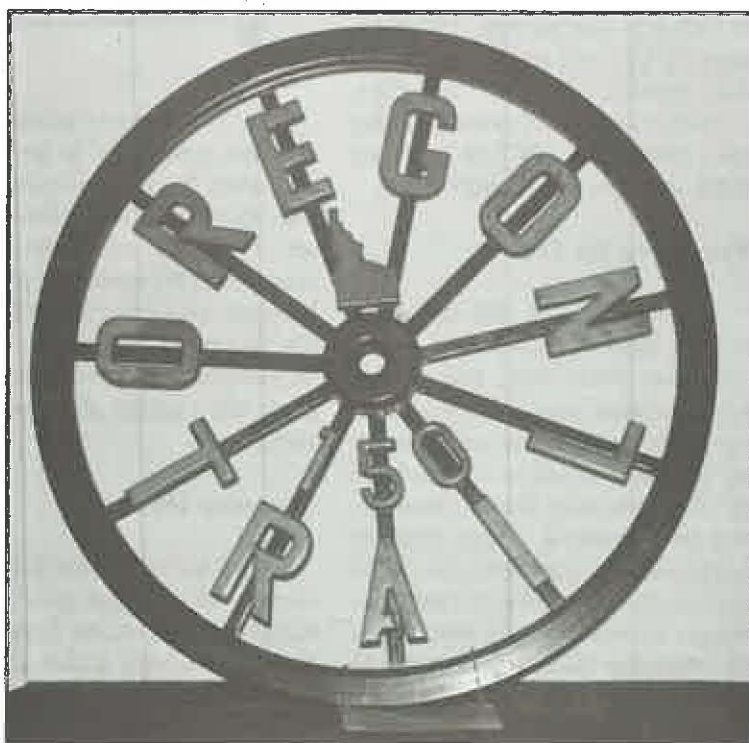
Jim Tompkins

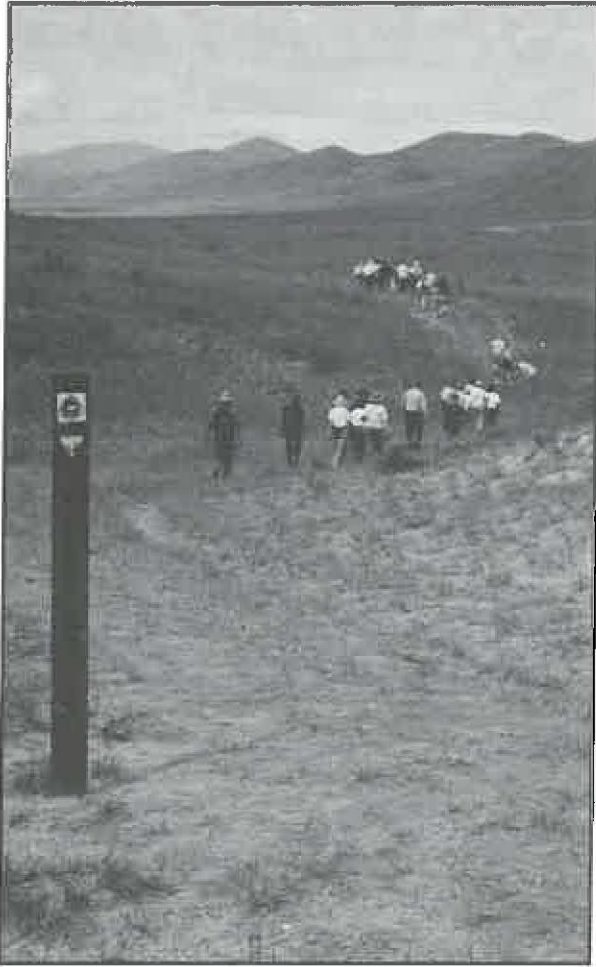
The welcome sign on page 9 was adapted from a photograph by Dick Ackerman.

Above: This beautiful setting is in the new Blue Mountain Interpretive Park, where the Oregon Trail swale is very evident, as shown here.

photo by Dick Ackerman

Below: This handmade, all wood, full-size wagon wheel was presented to OCTA by the Idaho Chapter at the banquet.





Above: Led by Jim Renner, the trail between Birch Creek and Farewell Bend was partially hiked by the Fort Boise Hiking Tour. A trail marker can be seen in the foreground.

RAFFLE REPORT

Norm Lindburg, chairman of the raffle committee, reports that not only did they have a lot of fun during the convention but it was also a financial success. Cash distribution lists \$1341.37 went to the National Treasury and \$177.83 to the Northwest Chapter treasury. Winner of the Grand Prize, the OCTA quilt, was Betty & Herman Zittel of Carpinteria, California. There were lots of contributors to the raffle and Norm wants a special thank you to go to each and every one of them.

Those who contributed to the raffle were Trudy Ackerman, Will Bagley, Roger Blair, Arlene Buschert, Susan Butruille, Joy Cassidy, Judy Chamberlain, Arthur H. Clark Co., Mary Cross, Bill Dobell, Shirlee Evans, Porter French, Greg Franzwa, Levida Hileman, Bill Hill, Helen Holmes, Jack Holmes, Idaho State Historical Soc., Jack Ingram, Don Jordan, Oregon Trail Mercantile, Bob Ripley, Shann Rupp, Don Shannon, Bob Shellenberger, Edgar Stanton, Tamarack Books, Lowell Tiller, Trails West Books, Bert Webber, Willamette Valley Vineyards, and Jackie Williams.

There was also a special drawing for three special collector coins in a small box donated by Terry Karp of the Oregon Trail Mercantile. The coins had a value of \$350.00 and to be eligible for the drawing, all you had to do was drop into their place of business and sign a card. The winning ticket was drawn just before OCTA's raffle began. The winner was Evelyn White of Gilroy, California. Evelyn was not at the banquet but friends agreed to take the coins to her.

The raffle has grown to be something our membership looks forward to and the revenue generated goes to assist OCTA with its many worthwhile projects. The real winners are all of us who enjoy the history and trails of the western migration because that's where the money goes. Job well done! Thanks Norm & Donna.



Above: From a distance, the Flagstaff Hill Interpretive Center is silhouetted against the horizon. When seen from the Interstate north of Baker City, it seems like a distant wagon coming over the rise.

CONVENTION



*Above: The 1993 Volunteer of the Year recipient, Chuck Dodd, receives the appreciation of the banquet attendees.
photo by Dick Ackerman*

Below: Jim Renner indicates the location of a double grave near Farewell Bend. These unknown remains were found during I-84 construction and reburied at this site. The grave contains the remains of a man and a woman buried in a wagon box. According to Bob Rennells, a fragment of the woman's dress and the heel of the man's boot were found, but the wagon box was decayed.

Bottom, right: This musical group, Willa Bailey and the Buffalo Chips, entertained with trail music and songs during "Cultural Connections", a part of the presentations schedule.

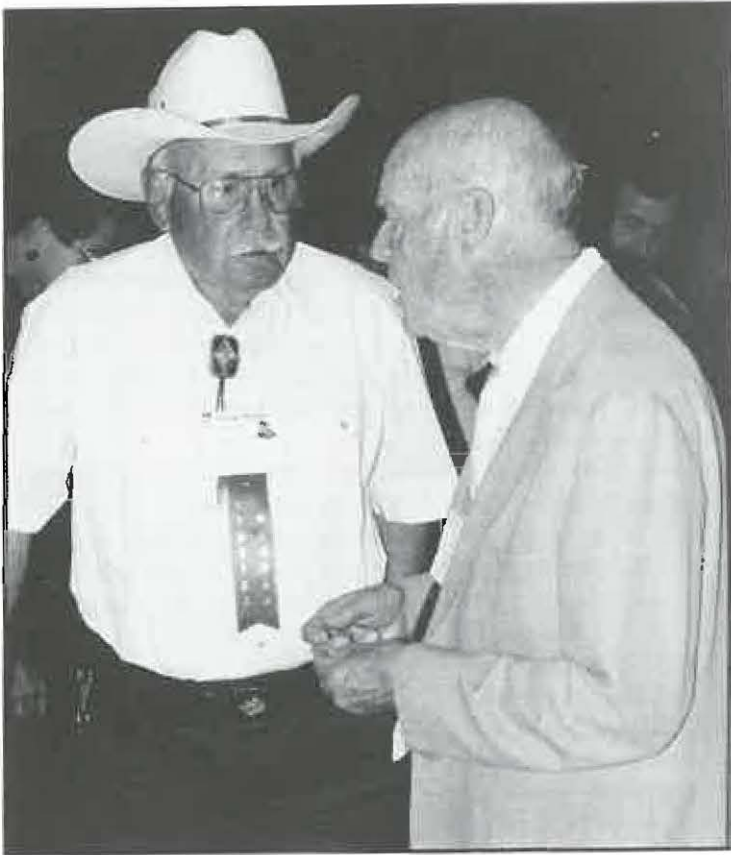
Below, left: Earl Schmidt gave a presentation entitled "The First Overland Emigrant Family to the West". This was one of some twelve presentations by a variety of speakers.



FACES



Clockwise, starting above: Betty Scheinost enters the banquet room through the covered wagon entrance; Friend of the Trail award winner from Nebraska, Wayne Koch, shares his collection of trail relics found on his ranch over the years; George Watkins (left) and Merrill Mattes visiting at the banquet; Hal Manhart (left) and Dick Ackerman greet each other at the high school auditorium.



BUSES AND MORE

The Baker City Convention Committee went about selecting a bus company to provide service for the '93 convention in the customary manner checking prices, track record, schedules, and like a used car buyer, inspecting coaches, kicking tires, and in the end the bus company we felt could serve our convention the best was Mid-Columbia Bus Company. Most all of our business dealings with them was conducted through Mike Blagg, manager of the LaGrande operations.

As time went on, we not only found them very friendly and helpful to deal with, they helped plan some of the routes which were quite difficult because of either dust, corners, hills or combinations thereof. It was obvious their first concern was to help us plan convention trips that our participants would enjoy. Then on our trial runs, we were exposed to more of their personnel and drivers and we were further impressed. What we didn't realize at the time was how much we also must have impressed them by taking them along trail remnants right in their backyard which they did not know existed. The company decided that they wanted to become members of OCTA and joined as a Patron \$100.00 membership.

Then we received a letter from Douglas Flatt, one of the company vice-presidents who asked if they could help sponsor our Wednesday evening opening reception and also help sponsor Marv Ross and the Trail Band and Fanny. Any amount of sponsorship of these events of course is something we really look forward to and it definitely helps assure a successful convention.

More importantly to a convention committee such interaction with a private company opens the door for OCTA to show another group of individuals the importance of the history and heritage of our trails. Mid-Columbia Bus, we welcome you as new members, we feel certain you will enjoy your relationship with OCTA and we look forward to doing business with you in the future.

Dick Ackerman

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UMATILLA INDIANS PLAN OREGON TRAIL INTERPRETIVE CENTER

The Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation have been working on the development of the Oregon Trail Institute since 1989. It was at that time that the State sponsored Oregon Trail Advisory Council first approached the Tribes regarding the possibility of locating an Oregon Trail Interpretive Center on the Reservation. After intense scrutiny and discussion, the Tribes agreed to the concept with the stipulation that they would have complete control over the facility and the storyline that would be presented.

Plans call for a 38,000 square foot \$13 million facility unique in its Indian perspective of the Oregon Trail experience. It was agreed at a special meeting of the General Council that the overall theme of the Center would be the story

of the Tribes using the Oregon Trail as a reference point in time.

The Interpretive Center will be the cornerstone for tourism development on the Reservation, and is expected to spur approximately \$22 million in private investment for associated attractions.

The Oregon Trail project will serve to address Tribal goals of both cultural preservation and economic development, and with its unique theme, will make a statement for indigenous peoples worldwide.

All photographs by the editor unless otherwise credited.

• • • • continued from page 8

the USGS map indexes. It is a simple process for anyone familiar with any routes of the trails. Persons interested in doing this should contact me.

Trail Mapping

With the MET manual now completed and the data base well under way, we are seeking qualified individuals who would be willing to map various sections of the trail according to the guidelines outlined in the MET manual.

Mapping Outings and Workshops

Don Buck will be leading a trail mapping outing with the Southwest Chapter in October to field test the changes which have been made in the MET manual. At the Salt Lake City Convention in 1994 a mapping workshop will be offered for persons interested in, becoming involved in trail mapping activities.

Global Positioning System (GPS)

Several individuals within OCTA have been experimenting with GPS in an effort to determine if it would be of benefit to our mapping efforts. At this stage we can't be certain if such a system within our financial means would be accurate enough to augment our mapping.

Idaho Chapter

IOCTA field efforts involved:

--Setting an OCTA plaque and fencing the three gravesites in Raft River Oregon Trail and California Trail parting of the ways vicinity. The gravesite plaque was dedicated on the evening of July 9 as part of the Official Wagon Train program. The program was the effort of the gravesite landowners Lyle and Carol Woodbury.

--Marking about two miles of trail on Big Hill both on the west face and at the canyon exit using OCTA and BLM Carsonite markers. This segment of marking involved both public and private lands. A small part of the trail was not marked, as the trail is easy to spot

from Highway 30 but very difficult to find when actually on the trace because of the surface geology. Additionally two miles of later vintage Oregon Trail on three private ownerships were marked.

--Marking three-fourths of a mile of Oregon Trail between I-84 and Idaho State Highway 81. The land is owned by State of Idaho. This trace lays within a couple of miles of Marsh Creek.

--Moving one Trails West marker to a more accurate position at Birch Creek crossing of the Goose Creek Road as well as a new Trails West marker set higher up in Birch Creek.

--Marking between five and six miles of Goodale's Cutoff on Idaho National Engineering Laboratory land and public land adjacent to INEL. Past managers at INEL have been reluctant to allow such marking but the INEL archaeologist paved the way for IOCTA to mark on the INEL site.

--Participating in the construction of the BLM kiosk in the Thousand Springs area of Nevada as its contribution to National Trails Day celebration.

--Supporting Bureau of Land Management's Oregon Trail teachers education program by furnishing IOCTA members as historic trail knowledgeable resources for the program.

--Establishing a listing of members who are available for making Oregon Trail or California presentations.

--Providing an OCTA plaque commemorating the McAully Toll Road, which will be dedicated as part of the Peg Leg Smith Rendevous Days in Montpelier.

John Davis, Chapter President

Nebraska Chapter

The Nebraska chapter sponsored four events during the past year, including two trail treks and two programs. All events were well attended, including many visitors who learned of these OCTA activities through publicity in local papers, museums and libraries.

The fall trail trek was held at Rock Creek Station State Park and Hollenburg Ranch and Pony Express

Station in October, 1992. Fairbury residents, Estaline Carpenter and Lester Jones, gave a talk and slide presentation on the trail in Jefferson county and Nebraska.

In June, 1993, the chapter met at the site of the Diamond Springs Road Ranch west of Brule to view the Lower California Crossing of the South Platte River. Trail guides, Bob Berry and Randy Brown, led a hike up California Hill. After following the trail by car caravan, hikers walked the last part of the ridge leading to Windlass Hill. After lunch at Ash Hollow with Dennis Shimmin, park superintendent, and a stop at the Rachel Pattison grave, the day ended with a hike on the Cedar Grove Trail.

The chapter and the Douglas County Historical Society cosponsored a program by Charles Martin on June 6, 1993, honoring National Trails Day. On June 27, 1993, Jim Denney gave a program on Chimney Rock and other significant points along the trail at the Stuhr Museum living history trails day in Grand Island.

The Oregon Trail Sesquicentennial has provided an opportunity for chapter members to publicize the importance of the trail and the role of OCTA. Omaha radio station KKAR featured Bob Berry in an interview. Betty Scheinost has spoken to several county genealogy and historical societies in the Columbus area. Helen Sundell provided a program for the Omaha Lions Club, and among the many groups addressed by Charles Martin are the Western Hills Presbyterian Senior Club, the Good Fellowship Club, the North Omaha Community Club, the Westside Kiwanis Club, P.E.O. and the D.A.R. He will also participate in a panel at the Nebraska Writers Literature Festival in Lincoln, dealing with trail diarists.

Bob Hurst of Lincoln was instrumental in placing two trail sites on the National Register of Historic Places, Water Holes Ranch and Deadwood Draw, both located near Sidney.

Helen Sundell, Chapter President

continued on next page • • • • •

•••• continued

Wyoming Chapter

Randy Brown has completed a list of more than 3000 names inscribed along the Trail and has these on a computer program. Randy, along with Lee Underbrink, utilized this information to unravel and solve the puzzle of a rock tombstone inscription proving that the person buried there died 17 years before the inscriber placed his name on the rock.

A new, higher level of cooperation with the Wyoming State Highway Department has evolved as a result of 1992's fiasco regarding the highway batch plant located on top of the ruts west of South Pass. In late July the site of the Mormon Ferry across the Platte in Casper was marked with a plaque and dedication. Things do change—presently on this site is a city of Casper sports complex.

A vigorous effort is underway in Casper and throughout Wyoming to build a National Historic Trails Interpretive Center in Casper. The City of Casper has donated land on a hill north of the Platte River overlooking the valley. From here one can see the route of the Trail south of the Platte River, the site of the Mormon Ferry directly underneath the Interpretive Center site the Platte Bridge location further upstream; and the reconstructed Platte Bridge Station (later renamed Fort Caspar). The BLM is a prime partner in this enterprise and hopes to obtain money from Congress. The biggest letdown to date has been the failure to secure any funds from the State of Wyoming to help this Interpretive Center become a reality.

Frank "Pinky" Ellis,
Chapter President

--- and finally ---

After eight pages of facts and figures, our Treasurer, Jim Budde reports:

**OCTA remains
financially sound!**

NEWS FROM HEADQUARTERS

Jeanne Miller, Headquarters Manager

This past summer OCTA Headquarters received an unusual gift.

George L. and Anna Tilton of Spanaway, Washington have presented OCTA with a beautiful plaque which honors all oxen who were used on the trails.

The plaque, made of ash wood, is 12.5" by 21" and is framed in a unique way using no nails. It displays, under glass, a news article about oxen and their shoes, and the plaque is designed to swivel to show the continuation of the article on the back. Mounted on the front of the plaque is a pair of authentic ox shoes made in New Hampshire.

Mr. Tilton is a retired fine furniture maker, who has his own lumber mill. He selects and cuts trees, cures and dries the wood for his projects. He tells us he also is helping to restore the Ezra Meeker mansion in Puyallup, Washington.

The plaque will be displayed in the board room of OCTA Headquarters building.

* * * * *

NEW MATERIALS AVAILABLE FROM OCTA

Fort Boise to the Blue Mountain Crossing: Tours on the Oregon Trail

This is the tour guide booklet from the Baker City Convention. It contains 27 pages of commentary and 11 pages of maps

Spiral Bound \$6.00
P&H 2.00

Wagons West: Trail Tales 1848 by Robert Shellenberger

Reviewed in the OJ (11:1) Written for the elementary schoolage reader, this is an engaging and informative story of one family's trek westward on the eve of the great Gold Rush.

paperback \$9.95
P&H 3.00

A Road from El Dorado: The 1848 Trail Journal of Ephriam Green

edited by Will Bagley

Reviewed in the OJ (10:3) This book is a journal which deals with a journey of some members of the Mormon Battalion from California to Salt Lake City. The real work which makes this book outstanding is the work of the editor who starts with events leading up to their discharge and this eastbound journey.

paperback \$10.00
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All books are available from OCTA. Remember - 10% off book prices for OCTA members. Postage and handling - \$3 for first book, \$1 each additional book.

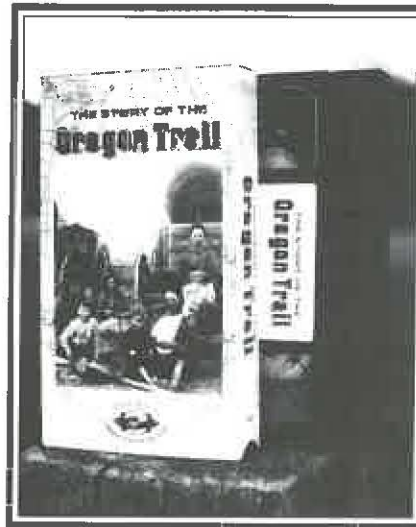
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CHIMNEY ROCK DEDICATION

by Merrill J. Mattes

Lawrence Sommer, new Director of the Nebraska State Historical Society, sent Clare and me an invitation to attend the long awaited dedication of the planned site of the Chimney Rock Visitor Center and Museum in western Nebraska, scheduled for June 12. We quickly accepted, not only to participate in this historic event, but to pay a nostalgic visit to nearby Scotts Bluff National Monument, where I spent my first ten years with the National Park Service, and in the vicinity of which all three of our boys were born. Also, I have been a member of the NSHS for nearly 60 years, ever since 1935 when then NSHS Superintendent A. E. Sheldon hunted me up in my Gering, NE office, and extracted \$2 from me to become a member of the NSHS. (In 1966, before my transfer from Omaha to San Francisco, I became a Life Member of the NSHS.)

As Regional Historian in Omaha I did the research work and wrote up the justification for recognition of Chimney Rock as a National Historic Site. Also, before getting transferred to San Francisco I completed my manuscript for my *Great Platte River Road*, published by the Nebraska SHS in 1967, and now in its 4th edition. In this book is one whole chapter on "Chimney Rock, Eighth Wonder of the World."



Above: Merrill Mattes wore his OCTA sweatshirt to the Chimney Rock dedication. photo by Clare Mattes

Prior to the dedication Clare and I attended a barbecue for invited guests at the Oregon Trail Ranch, 1 1/2 miles distant from Chimney Rock, owned by OCTA member Gordon Howard who takes people on covered wagon trail tours. The Charlie Martins and OCTA Nebraska Chapter's Helen Sundell were among others present.

We drove to the dedication site about 1/2 mile due east of the Chimney. Less than half of the total crowd of over 200 were able to get seats in the tent at the site, but the weather was cool and accommodating to standees. With Mr. Sommer presiding, there were introductions of a few luminaries such as the Governor of Nebraska, legislators, and a variety of state and local citizens who headed up or contributed to fund-raising campaigns. The goal of \$500,000 was raised for the planned structure and access road.

At the end of the ceremonies all were invited to line up to be among "the first" to shovel the first dirt exca-

vated for the center, planned for completion in late 1994. The event was well covered by TV and state newspapers.

While in the historic Platte Valley, I made medicine on two other fronts. On the afternoon of the 11th, Larry Reed, new Superintendent of Scotts Bluff NM, joined me in a quick tour of famous Robidoux Pass (not part of SBNM, but should be). Robidoux Pass is where the Oregon Trail ran up through 1850 to cross over the Scotts Bluffs looped chain. Mitchell Pass within SBNM was not opened for use until 1851, when the California Gold Rush became the main overland event. At the time of our visit OCTA trail markers erected by Randy Brown were in place both at Robidoux Pass and within SBNM, but interpretive signs supposed to be provided by the Seattle Office of the NPS were nowhere to be seen.

On the 13th, on the way to Denver with Warren, our oldest boy who is a high school teacher in Omaha, and his wife Carmen, we paid the obligatory visit to the historic shrine known as Fort Laramie National Historic Site. Here another part of my heart is to be found, as it's first "Acting Custodian" (out of SBNM), Regional Historian out of Omaha, and Chief of Historic Preservation out of Denver in the research, preservation and restoration of the venerable historic buildings that survive there, from 1849 to abandonment in 1890.

NEWS FROM THE PLAINS

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Rose Ann Tompkins, Editor

1994
OCTA Convention
Salt Lake City, Utah

1995
Grand Island,
Nebraska

1996
Elko, Nevada

1997
Pocatello, Idaho

IDAHO CHAPTER MARKS EIGHTEEN MILES

Text and photo
by Fred Dykes



Why the big smiles? Because these folks have just completed the marking of an eighteen mile segment of Goodale's Cutoff from Big Southern Butte, seen in the background of this photograph. On May 21 and 22, in a joint effort of the Idaho Chapter of The Oregon-California Trails Association, the Idaho Falls District of the Bureau

of Land Management, and the Idaho National Engineering Laboratory, the last unmarked portion of the 53 miles of nearly continuous Cutoff ruts from near Springfield to near Arco was signed at quarter mile intervals.

Those participating, from left to right, are Bill Wilson, Ralph Thornton, Linda Montgomery, Gary Montgom-

ery, Linda Cook, BLM archeologist Dick Hill, INEL. Archeologist Sue Miller, East Idaho historian Quincy Jensen, and Fred Dykes (not in photograph). There is no OCTA decal on the marker because the supply had all been used. Teakettle Butte is in the near background.

ROSS MARSHALL IS MAJORS HOUSE DIRECTOR

Ross Marshall, OCTA's immediate past-president, became the first full-time Executive Director of the Alexander Majors House and Museum in Kansas City, Missouri on June 1, 1993.

"I am excited to be involved with not only preserving the House and site, but the heritage of Alexander Majors. He was involved in not only local history, but was a leader in the westward expansion of our country, on the Santa

Fe Trail, Pony Express, Oregon Trail, and stagecoach lines," Ross stated.

Alexander Majors and his freighting firm, Russell, Majors, Waddell, are responsible for establishing Kansas City's commercial destiny along with the foundation and principles on which the west was built. Majors western freighting operation was instrumental in attracting governmental and private shippers to unload goods at Westport Landing and this gave Kansas City its

initial thrust toward prosperity.

The Majors House, built in 1856, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Restored in 1984, the house stands in a 5 acre park in the heart of Kansas City.

During your next visit to OCTA Headquarters in Independence, plan a visit to the historic Majors House. It is located at 8201 State Line Road; the telephone number is (816) 333-5556. Ross will be glad to see you.

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