

NEWS *from the* PLAINS



Volume IX, No. 4

NEWSLETTER OF THE OREGON-CALIFORNIA TRAILS ASSOCIATION

October 1995

PREMIER EMIGRANT TRAILS HISTORICAL STUDIES SERIES VOLUME AVAILABLE

The 1849 California Trail Diaries of Elijah Preston Howell
by Susan Badger Doyle

As General Editor of OCTA's Emigrant Trails Historical Studies Series, it is my great pleasure to announce that the long-awaited first volume in the series is now available. *The 1849 California Trail Diaries of Elijah Preston Howell*, edited by Susan Badger Doyle and Donald E. Buck, launches OCTA's new series of numbered monographs. It is a fine example of an 1849 gold rush diary. In *Platte River Road Narratives*, Merrill J. Mattes awards his top rating of five stars to Howell's diary and describes it as "a journal of superior quality for the extent of its revealing detail as well as literary competence." He also notes its importance as "one of the better sources for cross-referencing of other companies."

Elijah Preston Howell began his diary, "On Saturday May 6th 1849 I started from Athens, Gentry County, Missouri to the Gold Mines in California." Nearly five months later he arrived at his destination, and he concluded his diary with a classic summation of the overland trail experience. He wrote, "When I come to look back, I find a great portion of our trouble was in anticipation, and that the different portions of the rout was not when we came to travel them, near so bad as we had anticipated." Two versions of Howell's diary are presented in a unique side-by-side format, with a preface, an introduction, extensive footnotes, detailed maps, four appendixes, a bibliography, a name index and a general index. The first version is a copy he made of the diary he kept while traveling, which he sent to his brother in Missouri. He wrote the second version years later, also basing it on his original diary. The original diary has not been located, but these two versions were preserved in separate archives in California and Missouri. Together they offer a vivid account of Howell's journey during one of the most signifi-

See EMIGRANT TRAILS HISTORICAL STUDIES SERIES, page 8.

CONVENTION SPEAKERS INFORM AND DELIGHT



OCTA founder and keynote speaker Merrill J. Mattes launched the 1995 Oregon-California Trail Association 13th annual convention in Nebraska on August 8 with a brilliant presentation, "Trail Blazing, Research and Preservation." Mattes recalled his speech at the first OCTA convention about the organization's "spiritual predecessors," which was delivered to an audience of only twelve people. In Grand Island on Wednesday morning, several hundred OCTA members were fortunate to hear an extremely witty and insightful discussion of OCTA's organization and development.

As a young man, Mattes had just been appointed Custodian at Scotts Bluff when an old man showed up in his office and said "My name is William Henry Jackson. I used to..." Mattes cut him off, knowing exactly who he was. Jackson and Mattes hiked over Mitchell Pass and Jackson showed Merrill where he had camped and where he made his famous painting. As one listener commented, "It was incredible to listen to someone who actually met William H. Jackson!"

Gary Zaruba, Professor of Art at the University of Nebraska at Kearney, started the speakers' program on Friday with

See SPEAKERS, page 2.

THE EDITOR'S CORNER

From **SPEAKERS**, page 1.

So much has happened this summer I can't even hit the high points. In early August Dave Bigler and I drove the trail on our way to the Grand Island Convention. We visited the Parting of the Ways, the Martin Handcart memorial, and clambered into Devil's Gate. We met Levida Hileman at Independence Rock and climbed to the top of Scotts Bluff—it was a great trip.

The national convention in Grand Island was like old home week, meeting old friends and making new ones, and it was amazing to see what Helen Sundell, Corrine Rickner and Betty Scheinost accomplished with a little help from their friends. (Both Betty and Corrine chastised me for mixing up their assignments in the last issue of the NFP—Corrine deserves credit for brilliantly managing registration.)

The official events were great, with good food and excellent service. The speakers were informative and sometimes provocative—Charles Trimble gave one of the best talks on American Indians I've ever heard.

I'd like to thank all the contributors to this issue, especially teachers Jean Lamp and Dorothy Oltmer who educate 14 students from kindergarten to eighth grade in the one-room Garfield schoolhouse in Butler County, Nebraska. Shirley Grosche contributed the doll making instructions in "Buffalo Chips" and Jan Hall sent her students' trail artwork. *Please send more art!* I'm pleased to have some great material for future issues and my thanks to the good people who sent it to me. If it won't fit, I'll let contributors know as soon as I recover from putting this issue together.

The Board of Directors decided to put the kibosh on chapter logos that were variants of the copyrighted OCTA logo—don't ask me why, I was asleep—so I had to pull them off the headings in "News from the Chapters." To keep things interesting, I've tried out a new font for the headings, but, personally, I'll miss the customized chapter logos. And OCTA's smallest chapter forgot to file a report, which is forgivable, but so did our largest chapter, which is not.

The crush of convention news has forced me to bump our latest department, "150 Years Ago," despite a wonderful William Ide letter submitted by Kristin Johnson. We will pick this feature up again in our January issue.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

You can greatly increase chances of publication (and reduce the chance that the editor will alter your meaning) by sending material on computer disk in Macintosh or DOS format. Please save the files in a couple of formats, preferably Word, WordPerfect 5.x, text or RTF formats (I can't read WP 6.0 or the more esoteric word processors.) Enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope to have material returned and a postcard for notification of publication decisions.

a paper on "Nineteenth Century Art and Artists along the Platte River." Retired professor Gilbert Adrian discussed the geology and physical background of the Platte River. Charles E. Trimble, an Oglala Sioux who was born and raised on the Pine Ridge reservation and is currently president of the Nebraska State Historical Society, spoke on "Indians and the Overland Trails."

Besides keeping the audience in stitches, Dr. Jim Hanson, Jr., a former director of Nebraska State Historical Society, described the Spanish origins of the fur trade in Nebraska. Will A. Locke not only "Mormon Handcarts on the Trail," but he brought a replica he had built to show the challenge faced when "some must push and some must pull." OCTA Director Roger Blair, M.D. described "Cholera: 'The Bourn from Which No Traveler Returns'..." He even supplied his listeners with a guaranteed cure made from simple materials a typical emigrant would have had on hand.

Eli Paul of the Nebraska State Historical Society dazzled viewers with "The Recently Discovered Quesenbury Sketches of Chimney Rock." OCTA members wanted to know when his book would be available. Despite a bout of ill health, Lyn Ryder described "Road Ranches Along the Nebraska Trails" to the great entertainment of her audience. Local Nebraska historian Ronnie O'Brien recalled "Family Recollections of Local Trail History," sharing her research into the facts and legends of life on the trail north of the Platte River.

NEWS FROM THE PLAINS

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Next Deadline for *News from the Plains* is December 1, 1995

THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

It was great to attend the annual convention in Grand Island and to meet so many new members and to renew friendships with those who usually attend. Chairman Helen Sundell, Corrine Rickner, Betty Scheinost and the other committee members did an excellent job educating us and helping us visualize emigrant travel along the Platte River.

OCTA welcomes Norm Wilson of Auburn, California, and Lowell Tiller of Portland, Oregon, as new members of its board of directors. In addition, Doyle Reed and Michael Bateman have been re-elected to second terms as directors. They all will be an asset to the board.

At the annual membership meeting in Grand Island, a special announcement was made by representatives of the National Park Service, the Bureau of Land Management and the Forest Service. The National Park Service and the Bureau of Land Management are under the Department of Interior and the Forest Service operates under the Department of Agriculture. The three agencies have agreed to a service-wide memorandum of understanding for cooperative management and administration of all National Historic Trails. This will allow for specific agreements on specific trails. One agency will have the lead on each trail. The NPS has the lead on and will administer the California, Oregon, Pony Express, and Mormon Trails. The management rests on various on-ground agencies, including BLM, USFS, state, and local, as well as interest groups such as OCTA. The NPS will work with all of these. Not only will this agreement cut down on duplication, but also it will ensure that the talents of the personnel of all three agencies will be working toward a common goal. It should also simplify OCTA's relationship with the federal government.

Lois Daniel, who has served as editor of the *Overland Journal* since 1988, chose not to renew her contract with OCTA. She will produce her last volume with the upcoming issue. She is to be commended for her work in providing a high quality, schol-

arly journal. The responsibility will now go to Marilyn Holt. She comes to OCTA with much experience, and we look forward to her association with the organization. Peter DeLafosse, publications chair, and his committee are to be complimented for their approach in searching for the new editor. Please support Marilyn by the contribution of articles for publication.

The membership committee under the leadership of Elaine McNabney reported that OCTA now includes over 4,000 individuals and represents every state and many foreign countries. She and Jeanne Miller have asked for help in finding additional, like-minded groups (non-profits) to exchange mailing lists with. This is one way in which they can increase membership by reaching those with an interest in history.

The Elijah Preston Howell diaries, the first number in OCTA's Emigrant Trail Historical Studies Series, was edited by Susan Badger Doyle and Don Buck, and is now available. Former OCTA president and trail historian David L. Bigler says the 1849 Howell diary represents "an important and lasting contribution to our understanding of America's move west." Please support this worthwhile project's initial publication through the purchase of a copy. Use the form on page 8 to order your copy today

As I begin my term as president of OCTA, I am

thankful for so many talented people who have offered their aid and support. The volunteerism of many people has combined to make OCTA one of the most highly respected groups dedicated to trail preservation. In particular, I want to acknowledge the staff and boards of the St. Joseph Museum and Pony Express National Memorial for their confidence and encouragement.

—Jackie Lewin.



Take a look at OCTA's new officers: Roger Blair, Vice-President; Helen Sundell, Secretary; Jackie Lewin, President; and Jim Budde, Treasurer.

—Photo by W. L. Rusho.

REFLECTIONS ON THE GRAND ISLAND CONVENTION

by Helen Sundell

Over four hundred OCTA members and guests attended the national convention held in Grand Island, Nebraska. Registration went smoothly thanks to the many hours of preparation by Betty Scheinost and Corrine Rickner of Columbus, Nebraska. They also deserve a great deal of credit for organizing and implementing convention plans. We were a committee of three who set the theme of the convention and followed it through.

Recognition should also go to Charlie Martin who set up the speakers program and contributed most of the diary excerpts included in the tour guide hand book, describing the trail as the emigrants saw it. Local trail history was provided by Ronnie O'Brien of Shelton, Nebraska, and Marilyn Wilson of Clarks, Nebraska. Members of the Stuhr Research Center and the Hall County Historical Society also contributed useful material. One of the pleasures of planning the convention was meeting local residents who shared an interest in trail history.

The pre-convention tours were big events that gave convention goers an opportunity to see more of the trails in Nebraska. Over 100 people attended each event. Bob Roeser from Ogallala, Nebraska, and Dennis Shimmin from Lewellen, Nebraska, led the tour to California Hill and Ash Hollow. Russ Genung led the tour along the Little Blue River. Russ also directed the south of the Platte tour. Thanks should go to these people for their part in making the pre-convention tours a success.

I particularly want to thank the staff at the Midtown Holiday Inn who spent long hours behind the scenes to make the convention run smoothly. Their congeniality reflected the spirit of the convention.

We had no control over the weather. With a heat index of over 100 degrees each day of the convention, our visitors had a taste of an exceptionally hot and humid Nebraska summer. We are thankful that the tornado that touched down northwest of Grand Island did only minor damage and happened several days before the convention opened.

Even though cattle have replaced the buffalo and corn and soybeans grow in place of prairie grass, we hope that the speakers and the bus tours gave you a view of travel on the north and south side of the Platte river in central Nebraska as it was experience by the emigrants.

We thank you all for coming.



Fiddler Olive Donaldson shows a little of the enthusiasm that makes the OCTA Band a hit at every convention. Here Bob Iverson and Lyn Ryder handle guitar chores, while Al Mulder plucks the banjo. We can only see the back of accordionist Joe Fairfield, and the band's legendary harmonica player, Fred Trende, must be just out of camera range.—Photo by W. L. Rusho.



The Nebraska OCTA convention couldn't have happened without these three great ladies—Helen Sundell, Corrine Rickner and Betty Scheinost.—Photo by Rose Ann Tompkins.

TOURING SOUTH OF THE PLATTE

By Jim Denney

To those OCTA convention goers in Grand Island who chose to take a trip south of the Platte River to learn about Susan Hail, the Plum Creek Massacre site or even about Fort Kearny, this trek into the past was worth any discomfort from the heat of the day.

Thanks to a script written by veteran OCTA members Charles W. Martin and Helen Sundell, both of Omaha, the travel along this unassuming but sand-filled stream was given zest because of the adventures recited from the diary-filled script, based on overland travel narratives, over the bus's communication system. Two buses made the junket on Thursday with two more following on Saturday.

For the convention travelers, publisher Kim Naden provided insight into what walking across Nebraska was really like. Several years ago, Naden walked nearly 450 miles in broken intervals across the Cornhusker State, following the Oregon, California and Mormon Trails as well as the Pony Express.

He had land-owner permission for cutting through pastures and corn fields. He kept notes. He did his sleeping under the stars and once was awakened early in the morning by a cow licking his bare feet. In other words, Naden had a "feel" of what it is like to be a pioneer of the past.

He greeted the buses at the Susan Hail grave site in northwest Adams County. He quickly dispelled the inscription on Mrs. Hail's tombstone which said she had been poisoned by Indians. "More likely," Naden said, "Susan Hail, whose grave is known as Lone Grave because of its occupancy in this pasture, died from disease or sickness."

The "meat and potatoes" of Naden's talk was about geography. He explained that from the point of the Susan Hail grave toward the northwest, the trail travelers got their first glimpse of the Platte River and its wide valley.

He mentioned the hills in back of the wagons that had descended into the valley became known as "the Nebraska Coast," and then he praised the land owner of Susan Hail's grave for preserving swales or ruts for modern generations to see and walk into.

With an OCTA marker in view, Naden asked some of the bus passengers to extend themselves into the rut so that when the buses departed, those inside the air-conditioned vehicles could visualize the rut with humans lining the indentation. Those who stayed to line the rut were given a lift in Naden's car to Fort Kearny.

At Fort Kearny, Naden again told about the early days of this military post near the Platte which was used by many wagon trains from both sides of the river to re-supply for the trip westward toward Fort Laramie.

Fort Kearny now is a Nebraska state historical park and is administered by the Nebraska Game and Parks commission. Gene Hunt is park superintendent and also took part in the orientation.

There are no original buildings at Fort Kearny—only a rebuilt blacksmith shop of adobe construction and a questionable stockade which was largely erected for tourist attention. Inside an air-conditioned visitor center, Supt. Hunt explained that the fort annually draws about 65,000 tourist yearly, including hundreds of central Nebraska school youngsters.

"They come here, sit through a slide presentation in our theater," Hunt explained, "and then we take them around the grounds and explain Fort Kearny's importance on the trail. We usually fire a cannon on special days to attract attention." OCTA members were fortunate to see and hear the cannon discharge.

Hunt did solve one mystery for this quest. He explained that nearly everyone who comes here wants to know why Fort Kearny doesn't have the extra 'e' in its spelling, like the city of Kearney.

"As near as we can tell, we believe the 'e' was added as a mistake by some company clerk or another military person—we know they weren't the best of spellers."

Fort Kearny was named in memory of Stephen Watts Kearny, a hero of the Mexican War. As Kim Naden explained, it is the second Fort Kearny in Nebraska—the original having been built near the Missouri River in present-day Nebraska City.

From Fort Kearny, the busses proceeded westward and before crossing north of the Platte, they learned about Dobytown, a community of bars and questionable characters that existed during fort days as an outlet for equally questionable activity for soldiers and trail travelers.

The buses then crossed the river and headed west toward Lexington, where lunch awaited them as well as a walk-through tour of the Dawson County Museum, one of Nebraska's finest.

Lunch was served from a buffet line in the museum's agricultural equipment building with OCTA members taking their plates to picnic tables in a nearby park.

In the afternoon, it was Clyde Wallace's turn to give the visitors a lesson in history. Wallace, a 90-year-old retired farmer, told of the "real" location of the Plum Creek Massacre site and how he went about determining it through a visit with Nancy Morton, who was kidnapped by Indians after the attack on her husband's wagon train in 1864. Wallace's son, Bob, is director of the Dawson County Museum and played host to the visitors.

Near the massacre site, the busses stopped at the Joe Jeffrey Ranch where they were greeted by Joe in an Indian outfit as well as two horse-drawn wagons which were used for rides. The highlight of this stop was see-

See TOURING SOUTH OF THE PLATTE, page 9.

TOURING CALIFORNIA HILL AND THE LITTLE BLUE

by Jean Lamp and Dorothy Oltmer

CALIFORNIA HILL TOUR

To start our tour of California Hill, we met in Ogallala on Monday, August 7, 1995 at 8:00 A.M. at the Pioneer Saloon on Front Street, and were officially greeted by Bob Roeser of the Nebraska National Trails Museum Foundation.

Today we walked in history. Our feet took us down the same trails as the early pioneers did when they crossed Nebraska. The same summer sun made us put on our hats and squint our eyes against the glare. We crossed the swales and followed the ruts to where they cut a gap in California Hill, and all the time we thought, "How hearty these ancestors!" Snake bites, lack of water, cholera, and accidents—these hardships they endured and still moved onward, ever onward to follow their dream.

Most of the early travelers were ill-prepared for their journey. They had few wilderness skills and little or no money to replenish their supplies. The wagons were so small. There was only room for their provisions. This meant that men, women and children had to walk the 2,000 miles across the plains.

On our two mile hike, as we stood on the middle swell of California Hill and looked back to the gentle slope that was the beginning and on to the steeper top, we thought, "This isn't too bad." But the higher we climbed in the burning summer sun, the slower our steps became.

We can imagine the creak of the wagons, the plodding of the oxen, the dust and thirst, but nothing in our civilized setting of air-conditioned cars and houses, speed of transportation, and restaurants along the way can prepare us as present day travelers for what the pioneers endured.

Here the natural prairie grasses and flowers still grow protected by OCTA. Our guide, Dennis Shimmin, pointed out Indian bread plant, cacti and many other plants and grasses.

Between Brule and Big Springs, along I-80, a world class museum will be built. It will be planted with native grasses and trees will be removed along the Platte River so it will look as it did when the trails went through there.

We journeyed on to Windlass Hill and Windlass Hill homestead. The Reverend Dennis Clary homesteaded here in 1885. For years this was a landmark for Ash Hollow and Windlass Hill. The ruts and swales are still visible, and the ash-tree covered valley provided sanctuary for the weary travelers on the trails.

As the temperature reached 90 degrees, we had empathy for the pioneer women in their long dresses and petticoats and wished for a sunbonnet.

LITTLE BLUE RIVER TOUR

On Tuesday, August 8, 1995, we met at the Town Square in Oak, Nebraska, at 9:30 A.M. Russ Genung, 1995-96 president of the Nebraska chapter of OCTA, and his sister, Gwen Samsula, welcomed us. They led us on a tour following the Oregon Trail along the Little Blue River.

We saw the Kiowa Ranch Trail Marker and the Emery Marker. Roger Emery, a stage driver, who discovered an Indian ambush ahead, turned around and headed back to a wagon train with the Indians in hot pursuit. He saved their lives. We also saw the site of the Bowie Ranch and then returned to the Oak Town Square for a yummy buffalo burger barbeque.

What History is found here!—and is this community involved! Gwen Samsula has been doing reenactments involving 90-360 people from the community portraying the Oak Grove Ranch killings of 1864. This reenactment is usually done every third or fourth year during the month of August. On alternate years they have a trail ride.

We stood on the bluff at a point called the Narrows where Indians would ambush the pioneers because only one wagon at a time could pass between the bluff and the Little Blue River.

Other points of interest were Kelly Ranch, Little Blue Station, Nine Mile Ridge and Dewese Pony Express. We explored the junction of the Fort Riley and Oregon Trails. We also visited the site of the Pawnee and Spring ranches.

We carried these precious memories of the past with us as we traveled back to our modern motel.



Russ Genung and Gwen Samuels visit the Emery Marker on the Little Blue River Tour.—Photo by Jean Lamp.

ALCOVE SPRING DEDICATION

The historical dedication of Alcove Spring was a well organized and managed occasion, with the least possible inconvenience because of the hot weather for those of us in attendance. I missed my fraternity brother, Merrill Mattes, whom I knew in Kansas City sixty years ago.

The dedication was a homecoming for me and for the spirit of my long time dear friend, Dan Jacobson, as represented at the dedication by his beautiful and famous painting of Alcove Spring as he saw it one hundred and fifty years ago. Our own Greg Franzwa showed the painting in his book *The Oregon Trail Revisited*, and said that it was "a remarkably accurate depiction." I brought the painting to the dedication and it was closely viewed by many.

It was a homecoming for us because Dan Jacobson was born ninety-eight years ago just a few miles to the southwest on the other side of the little town of Waterville and I was born ninety-six years ago just a few miles down the Blue River on the west bank in the still occupied stone house built by my grandfather, Jonathan Marion Frost, a hundred year ago, after he had been on the Oregon Trail for two years in the early 1860s as a freighter and wagon master. He later drove 886 Texas long horn cattle from Texas to Junction City on the recently opened Chisholm Trail.

Dan fought in France in World War I and later received considerable fame as a Western painter. His paintings appeared sometimes in the *Kansas City Star*, including a large oil painting he made for me of my Grandfather and his cattle on the Chisholm Trail. Several of his paintings still hang on the walls of the famous Savoy Grill in Kansas City where he had his studio and where I visited him many times.

I have been to Alcove Spring many times, too, and one time I had the good fortune to be there after a heavy rain shower and saw the water going over the fall just as in the painting with the Spring bubbling cold water as a continuing active link back one hundred and fifty and more years ago when the brave pioneers camped on the hillsides as in the painting.

—Judge Earle W. Frost

Convention-goers ride the ruts in Joe Jeffrey's pasture near Lincoln, Nebraska. —Photo by Helen Sundell.

PLATTE RIVER HIKING TOUR

The natural beauty of the Platte River was featured during the Hiking Tour of the Grand Island Convention on Thursday, August 10. The two branches of the meandering river were observed from two bridges, 300 and 962 feet long, as part of an easy 1.8 mile hike along the abandoned Burlington and Missouri River Railroad right-of-way.

The above pictures show some of the two busloads of seventy people who paused in the middle of the longest bridge to discuss the river and the wildlife along this Fort Kearny Hike-Bike Trail which is owned and maintained by the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission.

This section of the Platte River is in the middle of the annual spring stopover of thousands of migrating Sand Hill cranes. None was observed during the August hike, however. Among other things, we were able to see several beaver dams during this stop.

The tour, as led by Ross Marshall and Jim Budde, also included a delightful mid-day stop at the historic Fort Kearny, which included a splendid catered lunch. Kim Naden, preservation officer of the Nebraska Chapter was on hand to present the Fort's trail history, and Gene Hunt led us on a tour of the grounds and restored buildings. In the afternoon, Kim accompanied us to the Susan B. Hail gravesite. We were able to hike along a one-half mile stretch of ruts near the grave. At the end of the hike, Vernon Hunt showed us the site and artifacts from a suspected location of the Sand Hill Pony Express station.

We returned to the Holiday Inn about 4:00 P.M.—a delightful and unhurried day spent along the Oregon-California-Pony Express Trail and the Platte River.

—Ross Marshall



From EMIGRANT TRAILS HISTORICAL STUDIES SERIES, page 1.
cant years in western overland migration.

The production of the first volume in the series was a cooperative effort, and I had an impressive team. My co-editor, Don Buck, is well known to OCTA members, and he justly deserves the highest praise for his work on this task. Rose Ann Tompkins has been an integral part of the project from the beginning. She transcribed both diaries, and she produced the layout, the indexes, the maps and the camera-ready copy. I also had expert assistance from Roger Blair, Randy Brown and Tom Hunt. The result of this superb collaborative effort is an outstanding volume of western literature.

The publication of this and future numbered volumes in the Emigrant Trails Historical Studies Series are made possible by the generous and supportive contributions from our members to OCTA's Special Publications Fund. Proceeds from the sales of each volume will return to the fund to insure a self-sustaining publication program for the series. This designated fund will enable the series to become one of OCTA's primary historical

preservation activities. OCTA's Preservation Officer, Tom Hunt, recently wrote about the importance of the series:

OCTA's Emigrant Trails Historical Studies Series addresses a problem which overland trails enthusiasts have long recognized: the unwillingness of commercial publishers to publish trail-related material for which they feel there is no longer a market. The Elijah P. Howell diaries constitute one of those "meaty" accounts of the overland trail which add greatly to anyone's historical library. It is a wonderful choice for the first publication in this OCTA series, and it affords the student of the trail insight as to how the editorial process affects historical material with the passage of years. The purpose of OCTA is to preserve the overland emigrant trail experience.

The 1849 California Trail Diaries of Elijah Preston Howell is available in both paperback and clothbound editions. A special introductory discount offer to OCTA members will extend until December 1. Use order form below to help get the series off to a strong start.

EMIGRANT TRAILS HISTORICAL STUDIES SERIES, NUMBER 1
ORDER FORM

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From *TOURING SOUTH OF THE PLATTE*, page 5. ing the three crossings of Plum Creek and learning from Clyde Wallace about the "true story" of the massacre.

En route to the massacre site, the busses stopped for picture taking at the Sarepa Fly grave. An attention getter was a new OCTA marker erected by Randy Brown, an OCTA member from Douglas, Wyoming, who has been installing OCTA markers all along the trail.

The rest of the day was spent following a segment of the Old Military Road that once extended from Fort Omaha to Fort Kearny. This winding trail gave an insight into the history of Wood River (both the town and stream) and its importance on the Mormon Trail.

Before returning to Grand Island, the busses stopped briefly at a small pasture to see a swale or rut (which may be the only rut still visible in Hall County). Members of the Hall County Historical Society currently are raising money to purchase the site so that the visible trail evidence can be preserved.

As a wind-up for the day-long journey, the script of Martin and Sundell told about the August, 1864, occurrence near present day Grand Island when Indians attacked at the homestead of George Martin (no relation to Charles) and his two sons, Nathaniel and Robert. George was hit by an arrow that cut a gash into his jugular vein. He was saved by Mrs. Martin using horse hair to twist around the vein before he bled to death. Their sons likewise were hit by an arrow while the two boys attempted to escape on horseback. The arrow pinned the two sons together and they fell from their horse. Indians thought they were dead but they survived and lived to become part of Grand Island's history. A large and colorful painted mural of the Martin brothers, riding across the Plains, pinned together by an arrow is on the wall in the lobby of the Holiday Inn on Interstate 80 south of Grand Island.

Fans of the North Platte tour show a fine appreciation of Nebraska's summer weather and prove that real OCTA pioneers don't need air conditioning.

—Photo by W. L. Rusho.

CONVENTION WORKSHOP PREPARES FOR FUTURE EVENTS

Twenty-one people attended the Convention Planning Workshop at Grand Island conducted by members of the National Convention Committee. Chair Mary Ann Tortorich lead the workshop with input from National Treasurer Jim Budde. Attendees represented the OCTA chapters due to host future conventions: Elko, NV—1996; Pocatello, ID—1997; Pendleton, OR—1998 and Chico, CA—1999. A few friendly folk not associated with any convention also came to the workshop.

If you would like to help at any convention, notify that chapter and ask to be included on their list of "go-fers." It can be fun to work in the planning and execution of a Convention. Many assignments can be learned in a few hours and do not need prior training.

The class went home with a workbook addressing the Registration Form, Tours Bus Selection Form and the Registration Booklet and a promise of future expanded draft of the present Convention Workshop Manual.

The goal of the Convention Committee is to help the host convention committee run a SAFE and ENJOYABLE convention as "bump-free" as possible. Planning for all the what-ifs is a tremendous responsibility and the host chapters work for years to bring you the best convention possible.

If you have any ideas for the manual or suggestions or comments about OCTA conventions, feel free to write to us c/o Mary Ann Tortorich, 12544 Eldel Road, Pine Grove, CA 95665-9718.

—Mary Ann Tortorich



TRAIL LANDMARKS FALL TO FLOOD AND RAILROAD

WYOMING BLM SAVES INSCRIPTIONS

The Devil really did his thing to the Devil's Backbone (also known as the Avenue of the Rocks) outside Casper, Wyoming, on the trail to Independence Rock. This spring two months of rain caused the large rock facing, which contained many emigrant inscriptions, to fall. With the crash went approximately eighteen authentic trail inscriptions. The loss of the Randall Fuller inscription is especially disappointing for this wayfaring pioneer leader led a remarkable life. His name appeared on the rock for 141 years but it became famous to OCTA members after Charlie Martin, OCTA member from Omaha, wrote the Randall Fuller article in the *Overland Journal*, Vol. 6, No. 4. The Grand Island convention attendees had lunch in Fullerton, Nebraska, the town named for Randall Fuller.

The resulting wreck left many small rocks and two very large ones. Seeing that some of the inscriptions were still intact, the BLM sorted through the small rocks and a number of names. This left two large rocks that could not be moved by hand.

Not to be discouraged, Jude Carrino, a BLM archaeologist and OCTA charter member, rounded up fellow BLM employees Chris Arthur with a rock saw and Gary Skillman with a backhoe. With a day's labor the two large rocks were cut apart and more inscriptions were saved. But low and behold, there was no sight of Fuller. As the last large rock was lifted, a small rock was noticed pounded into the sand. There was Fuller, or what was left of his inscription. Only the "uller" and date were left but this is enough to reconstruct the entire inscription.

The inscriptions at Devil's Backbone are now few in number. The ones that have been saved are now in storage with hopes of reconstructing a wall of names when Casper's National Historic Trails Center is built.

—Lesley Wischmann and Lee Underbrink



BLM employees Chris Arthur, Jude Carrino and Gary Stillman work to salvage inscriptions at the Devil's Backbone.

—Photo by Lee Underbrink.

RAILROAD RELOCATES REBECCA WINTERS GRAVE

In early September, the Burlington Northern railroad dug up and moved the grave of pioneer Rebecca Winters near Scottsbluff, Nebraska. The tracks originally detoured around the grave site, but the railroad wants to run another line and the current location of the grave raised safety concerns, since visitors had to cross the tracks from the highway to visit the site.

Rebecca Winters was a 50-year-old Latter-day Saint who died of cholera in 1852. Her grave was marked by an iron wheel rim inscribed with her name. Walter Meacham tells this story about the Burlington road engineers who were laying out the original line of the track and discovered the grave:

Boys says the leader, we'll turn aside,
Here, close by the trail, her grave shall stay,
For she came first in this desert wide,
Rebecca Winters holds right of way.

The railroad's safety office worked with the Rebecca Winters Genealogical Society and the Nebraska Historical Society to get approval for the move, which was estimated to cost \$10,000. OCTA member Joseph Fairfield of Bridgeport, Nebraska, alerted members at the convention to the impending relocation. The grave, once "one of the best maintained graves of the emigration period," will apparently be moved to the historical marker on the highway.

—Will Bagley



Winners of this year's Friend of the Trail awards are Pete Gaines, Joe Jeffrey and Faye Gaines.

—Photo by Rose Ann Tompkins.

EDUCATORS WHO SHINE WIN OCTA HONORS

OCTA's Newest Award Recognizes Outstanding Educators.

The first recipients of the Outstanding Educator Award are Lois Herbel, Gering, Nebraska; Jan Christelman Hill, Centereach, New York; Keith F. May, Pendleton, Oregon; and Dale Clark, Grand Island, Nebraska. This award was established to recognize educators from all levels—primary through adult education—for their excellence in teaching and for developing programs that go “above and beyond” the normal teaching of westward migration. These four recipients all reflected the high quality of teaching that OCTA hopes to encourage. Those who attended the Grand Island convention were able to meet them firsthand and to view some of their work and discuss their programs.

Lois teaches third grade in the Geil Elementary School in Gering, Nebraska. Her project involved a number of teaching techniques and projects. She and her students took a variety of field trips to historic sites along the Oregon Trail so that they could get a feel of the trail. Then, most uniquely, they produced a multimedia CD textbook about the Oregon Trail. The CD, in turn, will become part of a larger CD program on Nebraska History that will be shared by schools all over the state of Nebraska. Her students learned about the emigrants’ motivations, hardships endured along the trail, and the geography of the west. At the same time they greatly increased their knowledge about the capabilities of the computer and their skills in using it. They were able to select the music, photographs and diary entries that were incorporated into their CD textbook.

Jan teaches Special Education in the Ann M. MacArthur Primary School in the Locust Valley School District, Locust Valley, New York. Jan’s project involved the production of a forty-five minute video movie depicting the migration west along the Oregon Trail. Her students portrayed historical figures, such as Louis Vasquez and Jim Beckwourth, as well as average emigrants. Using a living history format, students learned about the emigrants’ motivations, their emotions and experiences as recorded in their diaries. They were also engaged in a variety of activities including: learning pioneer songs, children’s games and dances; creating props for the sets; making

models of wagons; and advertising their production with their own drawings and paintings of landmarks. There was a special viewing for parents, children, the administration and board members. Each student was given a copy of the video as well as an “academy award” trophy.

Keith teaches continuing education in the summer through Antioch University/The Heritage Institution, Seattle, Washington. Keith teaches first grade in Pendleton during the rest of the school year. Keith’s courses provide his adult students, most of whom are other teachers, with more than lectures. The Oregon Trail across the state of Oregon is Keith’s classroom. A variety of hiking trips along the trail ruts and auto tours to various historic sites and museums are commonplace. His students learn about the emigrants’ motivations, hardships endured along the trail, and the geography of the trail firsthand.

Dale works as the Education Director at Stuhr Museum of the Prairie Pioneer, Grand Island, Nebraska. Dale’s course, “The Overland Trail” has been experienced by hundreds of students from Nebraska and Kansas. It provides his students with opportunities beyond lectures. It is a hands-on experience in which students of all ages and capabilities can participate. Pulling a handcart, cooking with a Dutch oven, tolerating the heat of the day and the dust of the trail are all part of a student’s experience. His students learn about the emigrants’ motivations, hardships endured along the trail, and the need to organize, plan and cooperate.

These fine educators stressed more than just reading or lecturing. Hands-on experiences and the integration of a variety of skills—art, language, math, science, music and geography were all part of their programs. All their students, no matter what their age, now have a much better idea of what the emigrants of one hundred fifty years ago experienced as they migrated west across the United States. And it is all because of dedicated teachers such as our four award winners!

If you know of any outstanding educators, be sure to nominate them for the 1996 awards.

—Bill Hill



Outstanding Educator Award recipients are Dale Clark, Grand Island, Nebraska; Keith F. May, Pendleton, Oregon; Lois Herbel, Gering, Nebraska; and Jan Christelman Hill, Centereach, New York.—Photo by Rose Ann Tompkins.

THE READING TRAIL

by Lyndia Carter

This time the reading trail led me to a most wonderful place—the public library. I've been down this trail many times and have always discovered fertile lands and gold mines of reading. This time the trail led me to some brand-new books just waiting to be opened up, checked out and then settled into for fine reading.

Early this summer I found a wonderful new book about pioneer kids. *Pioneer Children on the Journey West* by Emmy E. Werner seems like a rather grown-up book, but you ought to encourage your teachers to get read it and share the stories with you because you are going to love them. Even moms and dads will like this one and can tell you the stories or can read some of them aloud to you as a family. If you're a good reader, you'll have a great time reading many portions of this book by yourself.

The book is full of stories, most of which use the words of diaries or memoirs of the children when they were young and on their way west. These children and teenagers had some real hard times or adventures going across the plains to California. Some of them were snow-bound in the mountains or attacked by hostile Indians. One group even got stranded in Death Valley. There are stories of kids who just had the normal tough times of walking a couple of thousand miles, camping out for nearly six months or running low on supplies. This is the real stuff of real pioneer kids, not something someone made up for a book or movie. All ages, from little kids to teenagers, are found in the book's pages. I'm sure you'll find at least one whose adventures you will especially enjoy learning about; perhaps you can even imagine you are there with them.

In August our library got another new called *The Way West, Journal of a Pioneer Woman*. "Yuck," you say, "I don't want to learn about women—they're old!" But like me you'll fall in love with it just by looking at it. Yes, she is a grown-up, but she also had seven kids who traveled west with her and another one was born when they were almost to their new home in Oregon. Amelia Stewart Knight, who was on her way to Oregon Territory in 1853, kept a diary. She often wrote about her children and the many interesting things along the way that happened to the family. This is true-life adventure! The kids get sick, one boy is nearly run over by the wagon, they get caught in storms, the dog gets lost (almost stolen!), they have a race with a herd of cattle, they meet friendly Indians and they leave their little girl Lucy behind on the trail by mistake. What a story! Lillian Schissel, who adapted the journal, also provides a very good introduction about going west by wagon.

Best of all, it's a picture book! Each page is wonderfully illustrated by artist Michael McCurdy with brightly colored "scratchboard" pictures. I look at each picture over and over again—the illustrations are so full of de-

tail, expression, humor and historical accuracy. They fit the story so very well—he must have loved the story as much as I do, and as much as I think you will too. (However, there are really four boys and three girls in the family and the pictures show five boys and two girls—the name Frances is confusing, I guess). All ages from preschoolers to your grandparents can have fun with this terrific book.

The next book, *Venture to Oregon* by Gordon Hull, came as a gift. Mr. Hull is a novelist, which means he makes up the stories he writes, but he is very different from most novelists. He has carefully researched the trails and life in a wagon train to make his story as accurate as possible. He builds his plot and the personalities of his characters in the true setting of the westward movement. The day-to-day occurrences in the lives of the characters all could have happened. The plot has a love story, adventures, problems to be worked out, bad guys and heroes, joy and sadness, all rolled up with the stuff of history. If you want a good, well-told story with an accurate historical setting about the Oregon Trail, this is it. It's an uplifting book, showing the value of people making responsible choices in life. This book may be more fitting to teenagers, but fifth and sixth graders with above average reading skills and maturity will benefit from the story's realism and historical accuracy.

Pioneer Children on the Journey West

by Emmy E. Werner

Westview Press, Inc., Boulder, Colorado 1995

Ages 14 and up, younger ages for read-aloud and story-telling

Nonfiction

The Way West: Journal of a Pioneer Woman

by Amelia Stewart Knight; illustrations by Michael McCurdy

Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, New York, NY 1995

Ages 6 to 96

Nonfiction

Venture to Oregon

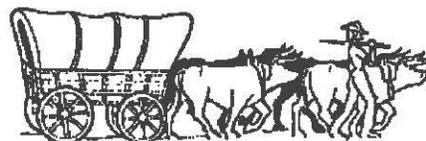
by Gordon Hull

The Patrice Press, Tucson, Arizona 1993

Ages 13 and up (adults enjoy a good novel too!)
fiction

Enjoy the trail to the library and let me know about any good books you find about the journey west!

— Mrs. C.



COLORADO

COLORADO CHAPTER PLANS CHEROKEE TRAIL ADVENTURE

The Colorado Chapter has been resurrected from a somewhat comatose state and a trail trek is planned for Saturday, September 30.

After a long period of inactivity by the Colorado Chapter, in May, new officers were elected and the group is being led now by some individuals with a lot of enthusiasm and motivation to get the Chapter active again. Terri Tiehen, of Aurora, was elected President and I just heard from her a couple days ago with information that the details of the planned trail trek to Russellville and Point of Rocks to visit the Cherokee Trail area will be forthcoming. Possibly the notice will be in my mail this weekend. When it becomes available I'll post it here. We welcome all inquiries and hope all our Colorado Chapter members will attend and bring along guests.

—Lyn Ryder

CROSSROADS

UTAHNS HAVE A BUSY SUMMER

Utah Crossroads members had a busy summer, that's for sure! Many of us attended the OCTA Convention in Grand Island in August and had a hot but wonderful time. Crossroads members deeply appreciate the enormous amount of energy and effort the Nebraska Chapter expended to make the 1995 Convention enjoyable. Grand Island was a grand experience!

In Utah, Crossroads members kept up their rut-romping and trail-tracking. Al Mulder worked persistently on documenting trail markers in Utah. Roy Tea was prowling all over the Great Salt Lake Desert looking for trail evidence, and had very good luck, by the way. LaMar Berrett doggedly had his nose to the Mormon Trail grindstone, preparing his forthcoming book. Vern Gorzitze, Jerry Dunton, Oscar Olson, George Ivory and a host of others have all been on the trail at every opportunity. Dave Bigler, Will Bagley, Robert Hoshide, and Peter DeLafosse have been researching and writing the books they have in process. Gar Elison has been preparing the Crossroads autumn field trip, scheduled for October 7 and 8, along the western third of the Hudspeth Cutoff in Idaho. Kristin Johnson has been buried in documents searching for Hastings Cutoff materials to honor its sesquicentennial in '96.

Michael Landon trying to complete work on an article on the Salt Lake Cutoff. Nancy Anderson worked very hard to prepare field trips for school teachers. And Lyndia Carter is still dragging her research in a handcart, but got side-tracked researching textiles on the trails.

On June 24, 1995, Vern Gorzitze organized a work party to spruce up the Crossroads preservation project at Donner Spring. A small party of workers (four to be exact) shovels, weed-whackers and paintbrushes in hand, showed up early and attacked weeds and recoated the pole fence with linseed oil. In the cool of the morning, work progressed rapidly but there was still much to be done. Reinforcements arrived before noon in the form of twelve people who had followed Roy Tea and George Ivory along the Hastings Cutoff. They were immediately put to work. Among them was Charlene Olorenshaw who had traveled all the way from Soda Springs, Idaho, for the tour.

When the sun was high in the sky, work ended and lunch began. The group rewarded itself by spending the rest of the day on the Hastings trail to Silverzone Pass. With Roy Tea leading the way and Matthew Ivory to keep his sharp eyes on the look-out for the trail, we bounced across the desert. The trail was in bad shape and it took several stops to fill in washes so the vehicles could get through but we were on the trail (or very close to it). Highlights were Hall Spring, Bidwell Pass and the spring at Silverzone Pass. Even Tom Sawyer didn't have this much fun painting fence!

Washington Terrace was the scene of the Crossroads Chapter annual barbeque. The "Cottonwood Gang," a country band that plays a fun mix of old time tunes and blue-grass, supplied entertainment. Crossroaders mingled and shared their latest explorations and research findings and caught up on news of friends. After the delicious dinner, the Cottonwood Gang once again picked up their fiddles, banjos, mandolins, guitars, basses and whatever to fill the coming twilight with sounds of good fun.

George Ivory took over to conduct the business end of the meeting. Of special interest to Crossroaders was the announcement by Gar Elison of the Autumn Field trip. The expedition is scheduled for Saturday and Sunday, October 7 and 8, to go along the Hudspeth Cutoff from Twin Springs to the junction with the California Trail. Sounds like a very enjoyable trip!

George introduced the evening's speaker, Florence Youngberg, who described Parley's Hollow, an area emigrants passed through to enter Salt Lake Valley after using the Golden Pass Road. Thus did Crossroads Chapter spend a casual late summer evening together. It was a great way to begin a new season of trail activities and end the busy summer.

—Lyndia Carter

NORTHWEST

OREGON TRAIL MARKER DEDICATED

On June 3, 1995, National Trails Day, the Northwest Chapter of the Oregon-California Trails Association dedicated an Oregon Trail marker denoting the crossing of the Blue Mountains by those early pioneers on their way to the western valleys of the Oregon Territory. The marker consists of a granite stone with a bronze plaque set in a cement base. Funds for the marker were collected as a memorial to a friend of the Trail, Maurice "Burch" Burchfield, who died last November. Burch had spent several days the last few years with others in identifying, marking, and clearing the trail across much of the Blue Mountains. The marker is located on private property owned by the Cunningham Sheep Company of Pendleton, Oregon and is east of Interstate 84 approximately half way between Pendleton and LaGrande, Oregon.

—Richard Ackerman

SOUTHWEST

CHAPTER SHARES IN CA/NV FIELD TRIP

OCTA's California-Nevada Chapter sponsored a field trip in April for those hardy souls intent on inflicting damage to their vehicles as they followed Neil Johns, the mad man of desert travel, into the wilds of the Mojave Desert. A total of nineteen people in eleven cars met in the parking lot of the Mojave County Museum in Kingman, Arizona on the morning of Monday, April 3. This was billed as a 4WD trip, with dry camping involved, only the hardy need apply. Nine of those on the trip were SWOCTA members, and four more of the nineteen we added to our membership. This made it as much a SWOCTA event as a CA-NV event (only we didn't have to plan it).

At least twelve SWOCTA members made it to Grand Island for this year's convention. From SWOCTA's viewpoint, a highlight of the convention was the awarding of

IDAHO

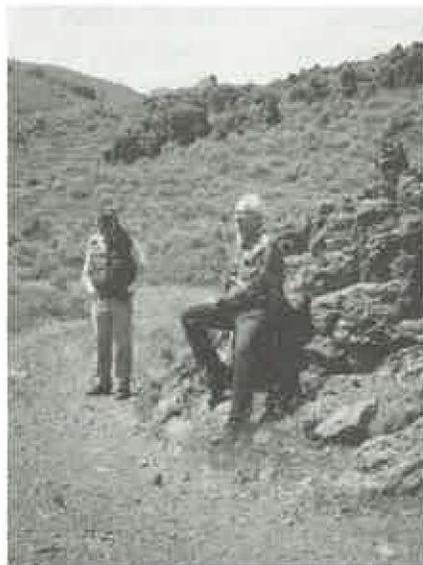
CHAPTER TOURS GOODALE'S CUTOFF

The Idaho Chapter met June 3 at the Junction of U.S. Highway 20 and the Featherville Road to tour the west end of Goodale's Cutoff. We had 20 members in attendance. Wally Meyer was the guide and historian.

The first stop was Castle Rocks. Here a half mile of pristine ruts gave everyone a chance to see the ruts and enjoy the wild flowers, beaver dams, and the granite boulders. Lunch was eaten here. After lunch we departed for Dixie, a ghost town of one forlorn, windowless building. Starting in 1864 emigrants replenished their supplies at a ranch located in this area, and in 1870, Dixie became a stop along the Rocky Bar stage line.

From here we drove along a county road which follows Goodale's Cutoff and looked at trail remnants along the way.

At the end of the tour, participants drove over a two track road across four miles of private land to McGuire Springs where we had to park the vehicles due to a muddy creek crossing. This ranch land was crossed with the permission of its owner, Steve Percy.



Wally Meyer and Fred Dykes rest on the trail between McGuire and Cottonwood springs.

—Photo by Afton Patrick

From McGuire spring we hiked along Goodale's cutoff to Cottonwood Springs. West of this Spring, the cutoff crosses some very difficult and rocky terrain, and Fred Dykes along with two other members of the party walked ahead to find two boulders which emigrants had to pass through where they could barely get their wagons between them. Looking west one could empathize with Julius Merrill who wrote on September 14, 1864, "A very hard road. More difficult than the Bear River Mountains, being steeper."

On the return to the vehicles Wally discovered a probable emigrant grave. It was laid out in a rectangle with rocks outlining it.

Although the original plan was to stay overnight, the wet terrain and the ominous clouds caused a change of plans. With only four wheel drive vehicles and no sturdy oxen, it was unanimously agreed to head for dry ground

—Janece Thornton

On July 13, shortly after Janece filed this report, her husband, Idaho Chapter President Ralph Thornton, was seriously burned in an explosion and fire. Ralph is recovering at his home in Idaho, but has been forced to resign as chapter president.

Our best wishes are with you, Ralph and Janece. —Editor.

the chapter's first Friends of the Trail Award. As a result of our outing to the Point of Rocks Ranch on the Santa Fé Trail in northeast New Mexico in September, 1994, we nominated the ranch owners, Pete and Faye Gaines. They came to the convention to receive the award, and our chapter should be proud to have added them to those who have been given this award by OCTA. The Gaines are a remarkable couple and indeed are Friends of the Trail.

—Rose Ann Tompkins

TRAILS HEAD

CHAPTER TREK XV A HIT

First of all, congratulations to the Nebraska Chapter and to Helen Sundell and her committee in particular, for hosting a splendid convention in Grand Island. Especially significant were the first Educator of the Year Awards. This should grow to be a major event at each convention. Our Trails Head Chapter Committee, chaired by Barbara Magerl expects to have one or more nominations for next year.

Congratulations also to Duane Iles and Blue Rapids, Kansas people who hosted the Dedication Ceremony Sunday, August 13 at Alcove Springs. As new owners of the Springs and over 200 acres of surrounding pasture land, they have done a nice job of providing access, yet preserving the pristine setting. A large crowd was in attendance, many from the convention.

Trails Head Chapter Trek XV took place June 7 over the Westport to Gardner, Kansas branch of the local Trail. Craig Crease led the bus tour and provided outstanding historical background with some eight hours of commentary. Westport, about one mile from the Kansas border, began in the 1830s and by the 1840s was an outfitting village for traffic, not only to Santa Fé, but Oregon and California. Two branches went south and west from Westport before joining up about ten miles away in present-day Overland Park, Kansas and proceeding through Olathe to Gardner, to join up with the Independence Road. The Oregon-California Trail branched off from the earlier Santa Fé Trail just west of there. A very enjoyable and informative trek.

—Ross Marshall

postponed twice. Highlights of this trek were visits to several grave sites, viewing rifle pits dug along the North Platte River to protect the hay meadows east of Fort Laramie, and viewing some magnificent deep swales east of Fort Laramie. We were very fortunate to see an original well dug at the site of Ash Point Trading Post east of Fort Laramie. This well had just been uncovered the preceding week by the rancher cultivating his corn fields. In late July the chapter had a trek led by Mike Brown of the Green River BLM. We welcomed Utah Crossroads member Madeline Latimer and guests to our trek. Twenty-two people trailed with Mike from South Pass to Little Sandy Crossing. We were fortunate to have member Paul Scherbel with us on this day for he had helped Henderson install the marker at the Parting of the Ways, and he shared his reminiscences with us. The trek ended that day with the very famous ice cream at Farson, WY. Some members remember this from the Rock Springs National Convention treks.

The next day Mike Brown, assisted by Randy Brown and Lee Underbrink led us again starting west of the Green River and following the Slate Creek Cutoff. Here again are excellent examples of swales easily seen for miles. We traveled to Emigrant Springs to view the inscriptions there and to search out graves. This day also proved to be an excellent trail day.

In early July, Jude Carino of the Casper BLM, was notified by visiting tourists that most of the remaining names at Rock Avenue west of Casper had eroded out and were in a tumbled pile at the side of the road. Jude started proceedings immediately to try to save the remains of any chunks of rock containing inscriptions and they are now in storage for safekeeping.

The volunteers working at Independence Rock over the summer have had great success and have thoroughly enjoyed meeting many people. We were pleased to see so many OCTA members passing through. The greatest reward was all the trail information we received from descendants looking for inscriptions of ancestors. We plan to repeat this activity next summer.

—Levida Hileman

THE OCTA BAND

Many thanks to the participants in the OCTA Band who played for the evening activities at the '95 Grand Island Convention. Also, many thanks to those hardy music lovers who sang along with the Band's efforts. The OCTA Band is comprised of any convention attendee who has an instrument and the desire to participate. The tune list features traditional American songs. Those participating this year were: Guitars—Bob Iverson (CA), Mike Bateman (ID), and Will Bagley (UT); Fiddle—Olive Donaldson (CA); Banjos—Al Mulder (UT) and Lyn Ryder (CO., also Guitar); Harmonica—Fred Trende (SD); and Accordion—Joe Fairfield (NE). Many thanks to the Grand Island Convention leaders who scheduled the Band to play. Band members need to be prepared for Elko '96, if unscheduled the Band will jam at the Convention.

—Olive Donaldson

WYOMING

TREK COMMITTEE KEEPS CHAPTER BUSY

The Wyoming Chapter had an active summer and has plans in place for some wonderful treks this fall, weather permitting. Due to a wet spring, some of our planned treks were postponed more than once but finally on June 24th Randy Brown led us on a trek starting at Henry, Nebraska and ending at Guernsey, Wyoming. This trip had been

Announcements

THREE FEDERAL AGENCIES PLEDGE COOPERATION ON HISTORIC TRAILS

Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt honored OCTA by selecting our Grand Island general membership meeting to announce the National Park Service, the Bureau of Land Management and the Forest Service Memorandum of Understanding for the administration of America's 11 national historic trails. Secretary Babbitt said: "One of my major goals is interagency cooperation to better serve the American public. I am proud that the national historic trails are at the forefront of responsive government."

This 5-year agreement encourages interagency planning, budgeting, jointly staffed offices to protect the national historic trails from threats and degradation, coordination on historic interpretation, and responsive service to the public.

Representing the National Park Service, Dr. Jere Krakow, Superintendent of Historic Trails in Salt Lake City, stated: "America's national historic trails offer a wonderful network of important resources which help us explore and understand the diverse legacy of our history."

The 11 National Historic Trails include: the Oregon, Mormon Pioneer, California, and Pony Express Trails that overlap in Nebraska and Wyoming; Alaska's Iditarod Trail; the Lewis and Clark Trail; the Juan Bautista de Anza Trail in Arizona and California; the route of the Nez Perce through Oregon, Idaho, Wyoming and Montana; the Santa Fé Trail; the route of the Trail of Tears; and the Overmountain Victory March route in the Appalachian Mountains.

"This agreement formalizes a close working relationship already at work in presenting these trails to the public," added Dr. Krakow. "These agencies have sought increasingly effective ways to remove agency barriers and to serve the public more effectively."

Speaking on behalf of the BLM, Jude Carino, historic trails coordinator, Casper, Wyoming, said: "There is another reason why this agreement is so important. It has been built from the ground up. This agreement formalizes a close working relationship at the field level that is already established in many places."

After their announcement, the agency representatives proposed that our four trails corridor be the pilot project for this agreement. OCTA agreed and invited the Mormon Trails Assn. and the National Pony Express Assn. to form a trails corridor coalition with our federal agencies representatives to work on trail planning and interpretation matters of mutual concern.

OCTA MEMBERS WIN LOCAL HISTORY HONORS

The American Association for State and Local History honored OCTA members Burt Silcock and Ken Owens during the annual meeting in Saratoga Springs, New York.

Burt Silcock of Meridian, Idaho, was awarded a Certificate of Commendation as "a dedicated and effective leader in developing and protecting the Oregon Trail and its Idaho history. He has undertaken a series of major local history and Oregon Trail projects including route identification and mapping, installation and maintenance of route markers, creation of local interest groups, and organization and management of emigrant road activities."

Dr. Ken Owens of Sacramento, California, received a Certificate of Commendation for his book, *John Sutter and a Wider West*. According to the award: "John Sutter frequently appears in historical accounts as a unique and colorful individual with no more than marginal importance. This collection...makes clear that while Sutter was far from a heroic figure, he can no longer be considered merely a marginal historical actor."

CONGRESS AND THE TRAILS

National Park Service Director Roger Kennedy described the "Parks Destruction" legislation facing his agency in September at Saratoga Springs, NY. Congress has six different bills in the House and three in the Senate that impact the Park Service. Similar bills in Congress impact the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management.

Jeanne and Bill Watson, Trails Liaison Co-Chairs, told Director Kennedy that OCTA is delighted with the national historic trails Memorandum of Understanding and thanked him for the Park Service's support of OCTA's trails activities.

Congress will move quickly on agency budgets because October 1 is the start of the new fiscal year. If you are concerned about the possible sale of public lands or parks, call or write the home office of your Representative and Senators. Then call them periodically for an update.

Members of the Trails Liaison Committee are being asked to alert their House and Senate contacts to OCTA's concerns about protecting our trail routes on federal lands. The new NPS-BLM-USFS interagency team has been asked to alert OCTA if federal lands crossed by our trails are subject to sale.

—Bill and Jeanne Watson

Queries and Comments

I live in Alpine, California, which was a stagestop for the San Antonio-San Diego Mail Line, also known as Birch's Stage Route or the Jackass Mail Trail. The stage stopped at Williams' Ranch, and later at the Viejas Post Office both in Alpine. There are two huge grazing lands here, one of which contains four adobe and rock structures, in addition to an enormous mortarless rock wall enclosing 10 acres. An 1872 map shows three trails converging at the enclosure, but no one in the community knows when, by whom, or for what purpose it was built. The State Historic Resources Commission has declared it unique, but they also need more documentation before it can be placed on the National Register. We have done exhaustive research and haven't come up with anything concrete. A developer is challenging the significance to build a golf course. He is not cooperating with our archaeologists to do site testing. If you know of *any* sources that might describe such an enclosure, we would sincerely appreciate your help.

—Yolaine M. Stout
E-mail address: Yolaine@aol.com

We were pleased to see the newest list of books added to OCTA's stock in NFTP July '95. Looks like some excellent titles, as listed by Jeanne Miller. However, we were dismayed at the short shrift given to my book, *Oregon Trail Interpretive Center*, which didn't even indicate the author's name. I am an OCTA member, and a NWOC-TA chapter member and was on the planning committee for the 1993 OCTA convention that was held here in Baker City. The book was a result, in part, to overwhelming OCTA response to the National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center at Flagstaff Hill, which hosted many of the convention activities. This book is the first of the KC Publications titles to be formatted to feature direct Oregon Trail diary quotes in addition to text. The book has been nominated for several national awards, and is a good indicator of what "OCTA west coast chapter members are doing"—(as called for in your Editor's Corner piece).

Rest assured we are doing more than simply "receiving copies of the newsletter."

Joyce Badgley Thinsaker,
Author: *Oregon Trail Interpretive Center*

I am trying to find information about an 1849 California wagon train lead by Daniel Heryford whose members included my great grandfather, William Heryford and wife. They lost newborn twin girls somewhere along the way. The wagon train went first to Pikes Peak from Iowa and then on to California.

I am new to Family History Studies and tying in this wagon train is very interesting and opens lots of questions.

Thank you considering this request.

Norman Heryford
PO Box 2982, Weaverville, CA 96093

Finding an error in the work of the late Dale Morgan, among the finest of western scholars, must be news since he made so few of them. The two errors I will point out, one of them of some significance, should in no way detract from Morgan's great contribution to Donner party scholarship, especially in *West from Fort Bridger* and *Overland in 1846*.

In *Overland in 1846*, Morgan transcribed the notes of Ritchie and Tucker, members of the first Donner relief party. They reported that the leader of the relief efforts, Selim E. Woodworth, was three miles up the trail from Mule Springs when his small party met members of the returning first relief party (p. 234). Morgan's end note 12 (p. 453) reads: "this was as close as Selim Woodworth ever got to Donner Lake..." Not so.

There is convincing evidence that on two occasions Woodworth got at least 20 miles beyond Mule Springs, as far as Yuba Bottoms with provisions. There he met the returning second and third relief parties headed by James F. Reed and William Eddy. He then escorted famished and weakened relief party members and emigrants, many close to death, to the safety of civilization. The testimony of Reed and McCutchen (*Pacific Rural Press*, April 1, 1871) makes it abundantly clear that their returning second relief party met Woodworth and his small party on the Yuba the day after they left Starved Camp. It was two nights later before they all reached the Bear Valley camp. It was at least another day's march to Mule Springs, another 30 miles to Johnson's Ranch and still another 40 miles to Sutter's Fort.

J. Quinn Thornton, using William Eddy as his informant, wrote that Woodworth encamped with the returning third relief party in the snow "at the last crossing of the Yuva river." Woodworth himself testified that he had been "twice over on Juba River" (*California Star*, April 3, 1847). Morgan's error is not trivial. It lends his great authority to the mistaken view of Donner chroniclers from Thornton to Stewart that Woodworth was a lazy and even cowardly lout who served the entrapped emigrants poorly. See my "In Defense of Woodworth," in *Winter of Entrapment: A New Look at the Donner Party*, Revised Edition, 1994.

While I am at it, forgive me for pointing up an annoying little item in Korns and Morgan's *West from Fort Bridger*, as updated and revised by Bagley and Schindler. Among Donner party members mentioned on p. 200 is "Jean Baptiste Trubode (Trudeau)." Isn't it time to retire "Trubode," not ever his actual surname but rather a plain mistake first appearing in Eliza P. Donner Houghton's 1911 book, *The Expedition of the Donner Party and Its Tragic Fate*, and repeated by later chroniclers (Stewart, DeVoto, et al.)? Trudeau used the Spanish-sounding name "Truvido" (troo-bee-doe) in his latter years, and Mrs. Houghton reversed the vowels (troo-bo-dee).

—Joseph King
Walnut Creek, California

Buffalo Chips

PIONEER DOLLS

by Shirley N. Grosche

Pioneers could not bring many belongings in their covered wagons. Many possessions had to be left behind or dumped by the side of the road during the journey. The pioneers had to make many things for themselves along the trail. One item that pioneer mothers made for their children was "handkerchief dolls," "rag babies" or "rag dolls." These dolls could be made from scraps of material such as cotton muslin and a cotton print (plain color cloth was also used) with no more than two or three colors.

MATERIALS

Muslin	For Body
	1 piece muslin 17-inches wide & 15-inches long
	1 piece 1/2-inches wide & 12-inches long
Print	For Apron and Head Scarf
	1 piece 6-inches wide & 10-inches long (apron)
	1 piece 2-inches wide & 10-inches long (scarf)

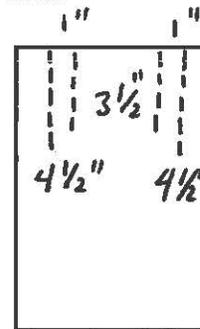
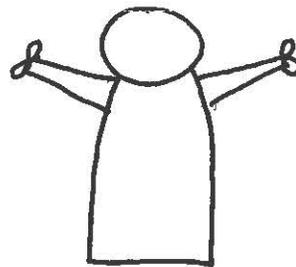
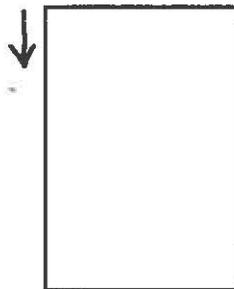
Head Cotton ball or fiberfill about the size of golf ball

DIRECTIONS

Making the Doll

Using 17x15-inch muslin piece, tie knot 3 to 4 inches down from each corner to form the arms. Fold top over 3 inches. Place cotton ball in the center of the fabric. Tie a narrow muslin strip around the neck. Let the ends hang down from the back of the doll.

Tie arms 3 1/2 to 4 inches down from each corner.



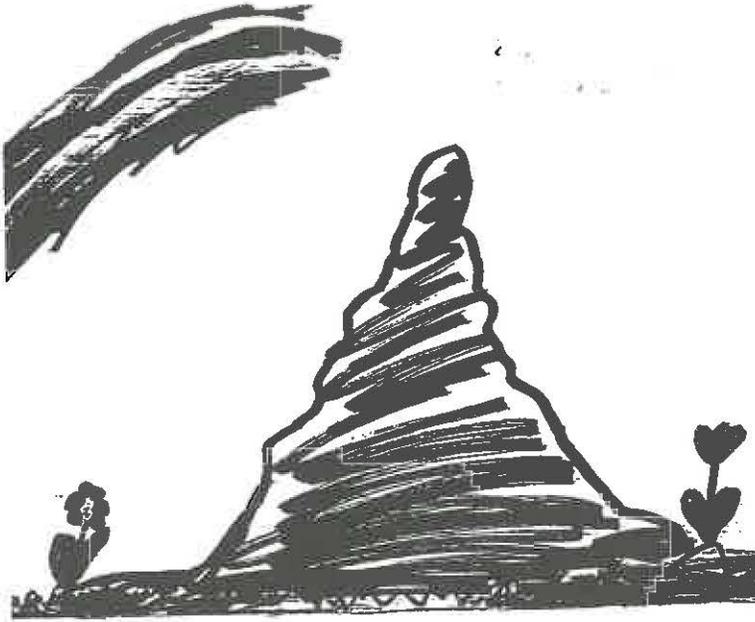
Apron and Scarf

Using the apron piece, tear 1-inch from the edge 4-inches long. Make second tear or cut 3 inches in length. See the diagram. Fold the bib under 3 inches. Tie 3 inch strips around the neck. Tie 4 inch strips under arms and tie around back waist. Tie print strip over doll's head.

Your Prairie Rag Doll Is Complete!

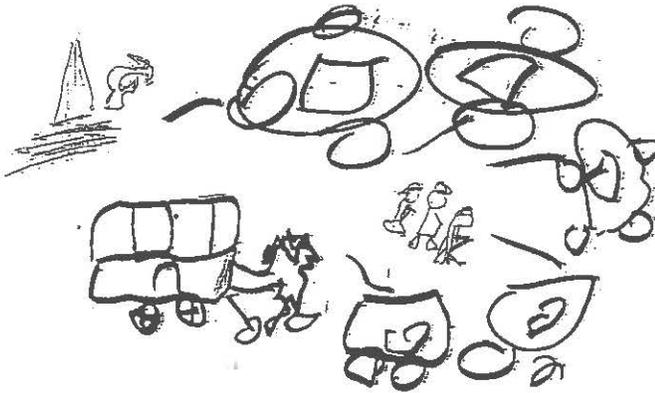
Note: Used fabrics work very well as they give a more authentic look to your doll.

—Submitted by Shirley N. Grosche



Rainbow over Chimney Rock

—By Angelica



Wagons Cirled

—By Jose

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CLASSROOM OF THE QUARTER

Our Classroom of the Quarter is Nancy Andersen's Fourth Grade Class at Arcadia Elementary School in the Granite School District in Utah. As Nancy demonstrates, there are many ways to bring trails heritage into the classroom—and lots of places to get support.—Editor.

Having been born and raised in San Diego, California, I am a newcomer to Utah and Western United States trail history. My childhood vacations were always great learning experiences because my father had a love of history and made sure that his children always knew plenty about the places we traveled to. I didn't realize until later in life what an interest in history he had fostered in me. When I married my husband, Ron, I found another history enthusiast.

After the last of my five children entered first grade, I returned to the teaching profession as a fourth grade teacher. The social studies curriculum for fourth grade includes a study of Utah pioneer history. My colleagues and I felt the need to breathe life into this subject. Over the years I have developed what I think is an exciting approach to pioneer history. Each year I try to improve the activities, and through my involvement with the Oregon-California Trails Association and other historical organizations I am educating the teacher as well as my students.

My students enjoy planning the trip west from Winter Quarters, Nebraska, to Salt Lake City. First we fill out our supply orders in great detail, carefully calculating the number of pounds of each item we can take without exceeding our weight limit. We are also restricted in the amount of money we can spend. Then we pack our wagons by drawing where each item will fit in the wagon. Each student is assigned a trail duty, just as the real pioneer children were assigned chores. We study the biographies of the real pioneers and keep our own journals along the trail. We map out the trail as we travel along. As tragedies and hardships occur along the way we calculate the amount of goods consumed or lost, making sure we don't run out of supplies. Sometimes we trade with the Indians or other pioneers for the things we need. During the unit we invite the docents from the Mormon History Museum to give their outstanding presentation on pioneer transportation. We take an annual field trip to "This Is The Place State Park" and participate in the activities at the Old Deseret Village. As part of the assessment of what the students have learned they make their own pioneer games for which they have to formulate questions. At the end of the unit we have a "Pioneer Pal," celebration lasting the entire day. The students get hands-on experience with pioneer crafts, games and cooking. We tie quilts, make homemade ice cream, fry scones, dip candles, carve soap, make sand paintings, braid rugs, make pioneer dolls, square dance, tell stories, eat, and compete in arm wrestling, marbles, stick pull and rolling wagon rims. The students at our school have heard about pioneer day from their older siblings, and they look forward to our celebration all year.

—Nancy Andersen

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WHAT'S NEW IN THE *News*?

-  *The 1849 California Trail Diaries of Elijah Preston Howell*, edited by Susan Badger Doyle and Donald E. Buck, the first volume in the Emigrant Trails Historical Studies Series, is now available. See page 1 for the special introductory offer.
-  Full reports on the Nebraska convention begin on page 4 and continue throughout this issue.
-  Trail landmarks fall to flood and railroad development. Page 10.
-  Follow the "Reading Trail" with Lyndia Carter. Page 12.
-  Chapter News. Pages 13-15.
-  Historic interagency agreement to manage National Historic Trails announced at OCTA convention. Page 16.
-  Buffalo Chips Rides Again! See pages 18-19.
-  Order form for *The 1849 California Trail Diaries of Elijah Preston Howell*. Page 8.