

# NEWS *from the* PLAINS



Volume X, No. 4

NEWSLETTER OF THE OREGON-CALIFORNIA TRAILS ASSOCIATION

October 1996

## REBECCA WINTERS LIVES AGAIN

*Burlington Northern Honored for Role in Preserving Trail Landmark*  
by Will Bagley

In 1852, 50-year-old Mormon pioneer Rebecca Winters contracted cholera and died near Scottsbluff, Nebraska. Five-year-old Ellis Reynolds (who later became Utah's first female physician) held a light while her father cut Winters' name in an iron wagon tire to stand as the woman's headstone. Winters' daughter Augusta later married Heber J. Grant, who became president and prophet of the LDS Church. According to lore, railroad surveyors "turned aside" the original line of the track because "Rebecca Winters holds right of way." (See page 11 for Anne McQueen's poem about Winters.)

The grave site, which became a beloved landmark in the history of overland emigration, stood next to the tracks of the Burlington Northern, some 400 yards from a historic marker. In the summer of 1995, the Burlington Northern Railroad assigned Safety Coordinator Charlie Klutts to fence the grave. Hundreds of visitors crossed the tracks every year to visit the location and this represented substantial safety hazard.

Charlie measured the site and proposed that the railroad take the money it would cost to build a fence and instead move the grave to the historic marker. The railroad agreed.

Charlie put together a remarkable effort to reconstruct this important historic site. He ran a personal ad in the Salt Lake newspapers and contacted Aldon Winters, president of the Rebecca Winters' Family Organization in Utah and secured their active cooperation. He brought in cultural anthropologist Terry Steinacher and undertaker Dennis Kramer to direct the excavation of the 144-year-old grave. Sixty-five people attended the disinterment on September 5, a 95° day. With a roadgrader, Charlie cut a trench par-

## ELKO CONVENTION A BIG SUCCESS FOR TRAIL BUFFS



Once again, master western storyteller-historian Fred Gowans entertained and delighted OCTA members who attended the annual national convention with a masterful keynote address. We've got a host of articles about the Elko bash beginning on page 4, but they only begin to describe the fun OCTAs had at this year's convention. But don't worry—the folks in Pocatello are ready to keep the ball rolling in 1997.



*Greg Franzwa presents Meritorious Achievement Award to Track Foreman Charlie Klutts of the Burlington Northern-Santa Fé Railroad.*

—Bev Hesse Photo

See RAILROAD WINS OCTA'S HIGHEST HONOR, page 8.

## THE EDITOR'S CORNER

After seven years of working on OCTA publications, it is natural that I start my last "Editor's Corner" with both regret and relief. I'll miss working with the great people who've helped out so much, but I won't miss the deadlines. I met the new editor, Bill Martin, at the Elko convention, and I'm happy to predict that *News from the Plains* will continue to improve under his leadership. But remember—the newsletter is only as good as the material the members submit to it. I've been lucky to have excellent support and I'm confident Bill will enjoy your on-going assistance.

This issue was slightly delayed while I completed the index to *The Pioneer Camp of the Saints: The 1846 and 1847 Mormon Trail Journals of Thomas Bullock*. I've been very pleased to have the chance to publish for the first time the official journal of the 1847 Brigham Young pioneer company, and working with the Arthur H. Clark Company has been both an honor and a pleasure. If everything goes right, we can hope to see the book by Christmas. Utahns can now rest easy, but Californians should watch out, for I'll soon turn my attention to editing the Samuel Brannan papers.

I think my final issue makes a pretty good swan song. It only begins to capture the fun and adventure of the Elko convention, but it's a start. At my last night at the convention, I had the pleasure of meeting Charley Klutts, who gave me a personal account of his work on the Rebecca Winters grave. It was such a moving story that I felt compelled to share it with you—and I hope you'll agree that this tale shows that overland trail history is alive and well.

You'll find my first and last poetry page in this issue, and I confess it's an odd combination. But I think the tributes to Rebecca Winters and Sy make an interesting—if occasionally jarring—combination.

Once again, we've received a lot more copy than we could use. But don't worry, Jim Jarrett's excellent report from the Gateway Chapter, Vern Osborn's entertaining convention coverage and Bill Hill's report on the Outstanding Educator Awards, have a good chance of making it into the next issue.

Fans of Lyndia Carter's "Reading Trail" column will be disappointed that it's missing from this issue—and it's all my fault. Lyndia gave me the article at our annual Crossroads barbecue—and I lost it! But don't despair—Lyndia's great work will continue.

Much more disappointing has been the lack of support for "Buffalo Chips." No teachers submitted anything for this issue, so I've had to rely on material from our last Classroom of the Quarter, Janet Krakauer's fifth graders at the Duke Middle School in Durham, North Carolina. They've done some great work, but without more interest from educators, I'm afraid "Buffalo Chips" has reached the End of the Trail.

So, adios. Thanks again to those of you who helped with *News from the Plains*, and let's keep up the good work.

### SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

OCTA and *News from the Plains* welcomes timely submissions of news and features related to the appreciation and preservation of America's overland trails heritage.

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 DOS format. Please save the files in a couple of formats, preferably Word, WordPerfect 5.x, text or RTF formats. Enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope to have material returned and a postcard for notification of publication decisions.

## NEWS FROM THE PLAINS

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Next Deadline for *News from the Plains* is December 1, 1996

# THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

By this time, life has probably settled back down for those who spent so many months planning the Elko Convention. Their efforts are certainly appreciated by the more than 600 people who attended. Paul Sawyer and Bob Pearce did an excellent job as co-chairs, and their ability to capture the support of many facets of the community is to be commended. The contributions of the numerous cooperating sponsors and supporting sponsors greatly aided the quality of their convention. I am very grateful to the many local volunteers, participants and presenters, and the California-Nevada Chapter for helping Paul and Bob make the Elko Convention so successful. It was a job well done and a convention to remember!

On Tuesday during the convention, the Board of Directors held their day-long annual meeting. Following are highlights of some of the issues brought forth and the decisions of the board. Please feel free to contact me if you would like a more detailed report.

- The Long-Range Planning Committee with Chuck Martin as chair is being reactivated. He and his committee will be collecting data from members and setting goals for OCTA's committees to work on.
- The Public Relations Committee continues to urge all chapters to use the new manual, "Strategies for Increasing Public Relations." Leslie Wischmann requests information on all OCTA activities, local and national, so she may effectively serve as chair. She also continues to increase awareness of OCTA through the Internet.
- Preservation Officer Tom Hunt and his committee presented for board approval the resolution to support employees of the National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management and the United States Forest Service as well as state and local governments in doing their jobs as mandated by law without fear or threats from anyone. The resolution furthermore requests persons holding other opinions present them in the courts for non-violent resolution.
- The Collections Committee under Jeanne Watson is continuing work on the Mattes Library Collection and is discussing various proposals with Clare Mattes concerning the Merrill Mattes Library Memorial Fund.
- The Education Committee announced plans for a teachers' workshop at next year's convention, and Bill Hill requested help from any interested member. The new activity book on the Mormon Trail, *Finding the Right Place*, is now available from the OCTA bookstore.
- Executive Director Jeanne Miller reported that membership as of August had increased to 2,589, which actually involves well over 3,000 people. However, due to the increasing costs of printing and postage for the *News from the Plains* and the *Overland Journal*, the board felt that a dues increase was necessary so that a mem-

bership would cover its own expenses. This was a difficult decision for the board since no one looks forward to a dues increase—even when necessary. The board agreed to increase the membership dues by \$5.00 for two categories (individual and family). I ask that you all support the Board of Directors and OCTA in this decision.

- As Publications Chair, Rose Ann Tompkins requested that the board approve the creation of "The Merrill J. Mattes Award for Excellence in Writing." It will be presented each year for the best *Overland Journal* article. The board also approved the committee's desire to search for a "developmental editor" to begin work on an overland trails map. In addition, Rose Ann presented a membership survey that will provide direction to the editors of the *Overland Journal* and *News from the Plains*. If you did not complete the survey at the convention, please respond to the survey printed on page 7. It is very important that you share your thoughts and opinions.
- The Trail Mapping Committee Chair Dave Johnson presented the new edition of the guide "Mapping Emigrant Trails" edited by Don Buck. The committee continues to improve the methods available to chapters mapping the trails.

Jere Krakow, National Park Service Superintendent of the Long Distance Trails, and Tom Thomas, Job Captain of the California and Pony Express Trails Comprehensive Management Plan, reported that public meetings will be held early in 1997 for review of the trail protection plan. The Trails Liaison Committee under Bill and Jeanne Watson will help coordinate these meetings. All chapter and OCTA members are encouraged to attend. OCTA's continued partnership with the National Park Service is an important one.

It was also announced at the board meeting that the Wyoming BLM has created a South Pass Historic Landscape Area of Critical Concern and, as part of the management plan, is nominating the Federal land portions of the area to the National Register of Historic Places.

The results of the election of the new members of the board of directors were announced during the convention. All of the candidates were well qualified and the decision faced by the membership was a difficult one. New to the board are Levida Hileman of Wyoming, Bill Rupp of California and Wally Meyer of Idaho. A special thank you goes to Rose Ann Tompkins,

# DEDICATION OF HUMBOLDT HIGHROADS HISTORICAL SITE

by Charles Greenhaw

**A** saying of the Lakota Sioux goes like this: "A people without history are like wind blowing in the buffalo grass."

Beginning about four years ago, a few local people with an interest in history realized that a remarkable opportunity existed in eastern Nevada. These people—I'll call them historians in 4x4s—saw the chance to experience a significant part of our nation's westward expansion and also to help preserve portions of the historic trails. These four-wheel-drive historians followed—and may times re-followed—emigrant and goldrusher trails across eastern Nevada. They ranged as far east as Silver Island in the Bonneville Salt Flats, as far west as Iron Point, as far north as Raft river and as far south as Overland Pass. The main California Trail coming out of Idaho and running along the Humboldt River, together with the Hastings Cutoff, which runs between this site and Fort Bridger, Wyoming, amount to 400 miles of trails in Elko County alone. The local

people searched out many miles of desert that might contain wagon roads of the mid-1800s: ruts, swales, dim lines across the sagebrush. On the California Trail, they had the benefit of several markers erected many years ago by Trails West. But they wanted to identify many unmarked sections in areas like Deeth, Osino and Carlin. They visited City of Rocks, often described by emigrants. They climbed wondrous Granite Peak and saw the deep, 150-mile vistas seen by overlanders. They were awed at Record Bluff where names from the 1840s remain etched in sandstone. They visited the lonely graves at Gravelly Ford. Along the 188 miles of the Hastings Cutoff between Pilot Peak and Elko no markers existed. The local group identified and marked numerous sites across Ruby Valley, sometimes at camps of the Donner party. They placed trail markers in Overland Pass and along Huntington Creek, which leads north to the South Fork. Finally they built an interpretative site on I-80. It was planned, designed and built by friends and neighbors and helped by contributions from Elko-area business and industry.

They chose this place for many reasons.

The mountains of Elko County were great barriers to crossing the Great Basin. The mountains to the east and south of us along with the surrounding deserts, obstructed exploration. Europeans had been in North America 300 years before they crossed the Great Basin. But the waters from mountain snowpacks created the Humboldt River and its South Fork. Near this site both the main river—once called Ogden's or Mary's River—and its South Fork combined. It was almost fated, try-

See DEDICATION, page 9.



*The finale of the 1996 convention was the dedication of the Humboldt Highroad Historical Site marker nine miles west of Elko on Interstate 80. The high point was the appearance of Alfrieda Jake of the Shoshoni Nation, who gave a prayer in sign language, and Marta Lienhard Vincent, descendant of Heinrich Lienhard, who traveled the Hastings Cutoff in 1846. Marta played bagpipes at the dedication.*

—Douglas Crary Photo



*Three of the people most responsible for the success of the Elko Convention—Bob Pearce, Alyson Kazanis and Paul Sawyer—pose with their awards.*

—Elko Daily Free Press Photo

# LONG HIKE TO THE HUMBOLDT

by Sherman Collins

The Saturday Trail Hike was a great success with enthusiastic and knowledgeable guides. We started our trip from the convention center at about 6 A.M. Our bus took us about 45 minutes west on Hwy. 80 where we unloaded and started an approximate five to six hour hike through history. It was my understanding that this portion of the California Trail, from Emigrant Pass to Gravelly Ford, has only been open to the public this past year. Everyone carried a small pack with something to quench their thirst, and after a warning about snakes, we proceeded down a steeply sloped mountainside to the California Trail. After reaching the trail we turned south and we could see definite indications that we were on the "right track."

Our group of 28 hikers, the maximum allowed to sign up, proceeded at a leisurely pace with many heads looking down for artifacts and thinking about the thousands that walked and rode where we were walking. As further evidence, we came upon the first of several trail markers announcing "The California Trail."

After proceeding another mile or two, someone excitedly told of an artifact find, verified by all, that the metal object dated back to the early trail days. This was to be repeated a number of times and each time the artifacts were returned to their original sites for discovery by the next fortunate hikers.

Gradually the mountains on each side of the trail closed in so that the wagons would have to pass single file for the next mile. This meant that ALL the thousands of wagons would be forced into this confined space where we were walking. Again, artifacts were in evidence.

We were about two hours into our hike when Marta Lienhard Vincent showed some of us a small daguerreotype of her great-grandfather, Heinrich Lienhard, who took the Hastings Cutoff ahead of the Donners, and continued on the very trail we were walking. We can but imagine Marta's feelings while we were in the narrow passageway. She also showed us a metal or bone case with Heinrich's initials. This opened up to show a magnifying glass for starting fires.

As the trail broadened, our hikers spread to the right and left much as the wagons might do to avoid the dust. Suddenly there was an excited yell that indicated a special find. It was the metal rim of a wagon wheel lying flat and embedded with only a slight edge showing. After some careful dirt removal, it was confirmed to be very old and likely from a covered wagon.

Another mile or so and some small pieces of light green glass from a broken bottle were observed. When held up to the sunlight bubbles in the glass could be seen, identifying the glass as old. Very late in our hike we came across two graves, well marked with stones and surrounded by a wooden fence. The occupants of the graves are

unknown, but it was noted by all what a lonely yet beautiful grave site, situated in a level area with beautiful mountain views in all directions.

At about 12:30, a few hundred yards below the two unknown graves, we came to the Humboldt River crossing point with much gravel evident on both sides of the shallow river.

From the river, we returned to our "sag wagon" which was located on a ranch road above our trail. More water was available and a couple of trips were needed to get all 29 back to a working ranch off Interstate 80. We enjoyed a very good box lunch and recuperated while lying in the shade of cottonwood trees.

I would make these observations of the participants. To my knowledge there were no complaints of any kind. Everyone, although a bit tired and overheated, seemed to hold up extremely well and all seemed equally enthusiastic about the hike.

## ARCHAEOLOGY WORKSHOP

On Monday, August 12, 1996, 27 OCTA members met at the Elko Convention Center to receive instructions for the annual Archaeology Workshop. Three Elko District BLM archaeologists outlined the plan for day-long field work at the mouth of the South Fork of the Humboldt. After a short trip across the Humboldt Valley, the group disembarked from their vehicles at this historic site where the Donner party and others who took the Hastings Cutoff emerged from their long by-pass and saw the wagons of the migration weaving their way to the West across the Humboldt River.

Dividing into three groups, the members had hour-long field sessions on use of the Global Positioning System for mapping sites and trails; site mapping, using transit and mapping table to locate flagged artifacts and features; and basic site survey.

At the survey workshop members combed a hillside, marking surface artifacts, and they held a discussion on what had gone on at this site from the types of artifacts found. At the GPS workshops, members learned to use the satellite-based instrument for entering locations, which can later be fed into a computer for map making. To make a drawing of a site's features and artifacts, members learned to measure and draw a map of a site using a mapping table and a transit.

Despite the heat and sun, the clear waters of the South fork of the Humboldt, complete with trout, kept members refreshed during their stream-side lunch. The sessions ended at 4:00 P.M. The Archaeology Committee met on Wednesday to plan for the workshop to be held at Pocatello, Idaho, in 1997. Still in the planning stage, a two-day workshop on an Idaho site is a good possibility.

—Sharon Manhart

# AWARDS PRESENTED AT ELKO CONVENTION

by Will Rusho

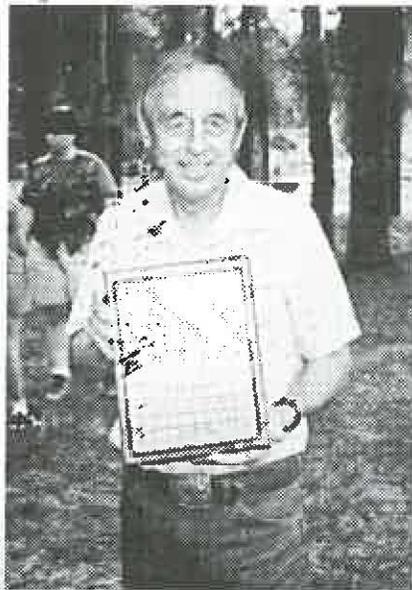
**O**CTA awards for 1996 were presented at a gala Awards Banquet in Elko on Friday, August 16. As usual, awards were made in several categories, including Meritorious Achievement, National Certificate of Appreciation, Distinguished Volunteer of the Year, Friend of the Trail and Education Awards.

## MERITORIOUS ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

Andy and Joanne Hammond received the MAA for their tireless efforts to map, mark, and make people aware of the Beckworth Trail in California. Andy and Joanne spent years researching every available map, book and diary related to the trail, and in the process, even discovering several maps and diaries heretofore unknown. Then they walked and mapped every inch of the trail, using OCTA's MET program. Particularly time consuming was obtaining owners' permission to place markers on private property and on National Forests. The Hammonds even wrote and published a book on the history of Jim Beckworth with a guide to the location of markers. All proceeds from the sale of the book were donated to the Plumas County Museum.

Susan Badger Doyle received the MAA for her long service as Secretary to OCTA and then as a Board Member for six years. She volunteered to be editor of the newly-established Emigrant Trails Historical Study Series and achieved publication of the first volume in 1995. She plans more publications in the future. Susan is an expert on the Bozeman Trail and is currently editing a two volume set to be published by Montana History. She is also serving on a Wyoming state commission to examine applications to the National Registry of Historic Places.

Burlington Northern Railroad received the MAA for the company's careful and thoughtful reburial of Rebecca Winters, who died in 1852 on the Mormon Trail in Scottsbluff, Nebraska. The grave, dangerously close to the Burlington Line, was moved to protect those who wished to view the marker. Charlie Klutts, BN safety coordinator, was instrumental in exhuming the bones, and under the watchful eye of Rebecca's descendants, slowly and respectfully moving them to the new location. The occasion was termed "one of the most dramatic events to take place on the Mormon Trail."



Dick Silva proudly displays his well-deserved Distinguished Volunteer Award for his work on California's Yreka Trail.

## DISTINGUISHED VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

Jo and Keith Arnold and Dick Silva were selected as Distinguished Volunteers of the Year for their research, identification, and mapping of the Yreka Trail in northern California. This effort actually took them several years. Through their efforts, both private landowners and public agencies have become aware of the trail and efforts to preserve and mark the trail are now underway.

## NATIONAL CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION

Will Bagley, was awarded the Certificate for his two-year service as Editor of *News from the Plains* newsletter. His efforts have resulted in an improved appearance and more readable publication. Will also spoke at the Elko Convention about the Fort Hall Road in Idaho, Utah and Nevada. He has edited several publications, including the forthcoming *Pioneer Camp of the Saints*, and he is currently at work as editor for a new Arthur H. Clark series, *KINGDOM IN THE WEST: The Mormons and the American Frontier*.

Placer Dome US, Inc, made a large contribution to OCTA for the cost of materials to build the kiosk at the terminus of the Hastings Cutoff, west of Elko, Nevada. The company has always responded to OCTA's requests to cross their lands and have freely made equipment and financial resources available.

## 1996 CONVENTION CHAIRMEN

Paul Sawyer and Bob Pearce received the awards for their excellent work in preparing for and conducting the 1996 Elko Convention. The award can only begin to reward the outstanding efforts of these two fine gentlemen—not to mention the entire town of Elko.

## FRIEND OF THE TRAIL

Friend of the Trail awards were made to the following landowners who have portions of historic trails on their properties: Nevada: Maggie Creek Ranches, Inc. (California Trail, Hastings Cutoff, Greenhorn Cutoff); Wyoming, Vernon Bomgardner (Oregon-California Trail).

Outgoing Directors Larry Jones, Rose Ann Tompkins and Lee Underbrink received Certificates of Appreciation.

—Jean Lamp Photo

## BOARD RELUCTANTLY APPROVES DUES INCREASE

On August 13, 1996, the Board of Directors voted to increase the membership dues for OCTA. Ironically, it was exactly five years ago on the same date in 1991 that the last dues increase was announced. The Board of Directors reluctantly decided to raise the annual dues after a review of proposed expenditures for this Fiscal Year and the proposed budget for FY 96-97.

Since then, we have increased our net revenues by recruiting new members, sponsoring a string of successful annual conventions, the sale of merchandise through the OCTA Store, and having an Annual Fund Raising Drive. All of these mechanisms raise cash to help pay organizational bills that provide services to the membership, help us to fulfill our responsibilities to preserve and protect the emigrant trails, and help delay the day when the membership dues must be increased. Net revenues have been increased, but not as fast as our expenses.

One of the principle reasons for the 1991 increase was the jump in postal rates. While we cannot attribute this latest increase solely to a large jump in postal rates, we have been nicked repeatedly by a continuing series of smaller increases while trying to conform to the rising demands for special handling by the Postal Authorities (nine-digit zip code, bar codes, etc.). If you add the increased costs for paper, printing and office help (we added a third part-time person and increased the paid hours from 50 to 82 hours per week), you can see how the costs have increased. Since each OCTA member receives at least thirteen pieces of mail each year, you can readily see that our efforts to communicate with the membership represents a significant but a very necessary cost.

In 1991, the average membership cost was \$23.46 and today, it stands at \$31.05. This represents an increase of \$7.59 in just five years. The membership dues average a little less than \$32.00, so you can readily see that the difference between membership dues and cost has become very thin. This leaves little revenue to support our other trail preservation activities.

OCTA is a victim of its own success. We have become the pre-eminent historic trail preservation organization in the United States. No organization can come close to matching our efforts in preserving and protecting the historic emigrant trails. This prominence carries a burden of responsibility to continue our efforts, and this can only be accomplished if we remain financially strong.

Therefore, I recommended and the Board of Directors approved an increase in the Individual and Family membership rates of \$5.00 per year for each category effective October 1, 1996.

—Jim Budde, Treasurer

## OVERLAND JOURNAL & NEWS FROM THE PLAINS ASSESSMENT

Last year the *Overland Journal* editorship changed. At the end of this year the *News from the Plains* editor will change. To get feedback from OCTA members, we ask you to take a few minutes to comment on aspects of OCTA's quarterly publications. These are your publications and we want them to reflect your expectations.

You may use the number guides to the questions to write an answer, it is not necessary to restate the question. Send your response to me at the address below. We appreciate your help.

1. What do you like about the *Overland Journal*?
2. What do you dislike about the *Overland Journal*? Why?
3. What trail subject(s) interest you the most in the OLJ?
4. What trail subject(s) would you like to see in the OLJ that are not in the publication now?
5. What do you like about *News from the Plains*?
6. What do you dislike about *News from the Plains*?
7. What feature(s) interest you the most in NFP?
8. What feature(s) would you like to see in the NFP that are not in the publication now?
9. Would you like to see any format changes in the OLJ or the NFP? If so, do you have suggestions?
10. Do you prefer the *Overland Journal* and *News from the Plains* as separate publications or would you prefer to see them combined into one quarterly publication?
11. Do you have any other comments or suggestions?

Name and address are optional, but it would help if we want to contact you for additional input.

Rose Ann Tompkins  
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Two of OCTA's hardest working editors, Virginia Hammerness of Trail Talk and Marilyn Holt of Overland Journal, are caught before a display of Nevada's scenic wonders.

—Mary Mueller Photo

From REBECCA WINTERS, page 1.

allel to the grave: the cut revealed the discolored shape of a coffin about three feet deep. "We didn't expect to find anything," Klutts confessed, but as they excavated the grave, they found digital bones carried up by mice. They then reached the articulated skeleton of Rebecca Winters. "It was really something to see," said descendant Nancy Winters. She watched as a three-year-old girl looked into the grave and said, "I love you, Grandma."

I learned about the railroad's plans at the 1995 OCTA convention at Grand Island. I confess, my first reaction was, "Can't they preserve the grave and get safe access to it?" I wished the railroad would do what legend says the surveyors did—move the tracks.

Charlie had similar thoughts, but knew that the railroad was not going to spend millions to reroute miles of track. In a way, he felt like he was violating a sacred site, but he knew that Rebecca Winters died helping cholera victims. "She wouldn't want anyone getting killed coming to look at her grave," Charlie said. Moving the tracks to save lives "was something she would have felt was all

right."

The Duggan Kramer Funeral Home covered all burial expenses and at the family's request provided a mahogany coffin. On October 14, 1995, 135 people attended the reburial of Rebecca Winters, who was once again laid to rest, this time with all Latter-day Saint rites and a lonestar quilt. The grave was dedicated on June 15, 1996 before a crowd of more than 200 people. Que Winters of Salt Lake adopted Charlie Klutts into the Winters Family, and they presented him with a duplicate of the lonestar quilt laid to rest with Rebecca Winters.

For its great efforts to restore this legendary trail site and protect the public, Greg Franzwa nominated the Burlington Northern for OCTA's highest honor, the Meritorious Achievement Award. Que Winters and Charlie Klutts accepted the award at this year's Elko convention. "I don't think anyone has ever given the railroad any award like that," Charlie observed.

Don't worry, Charlie. You earned it.

From THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER, page 3.

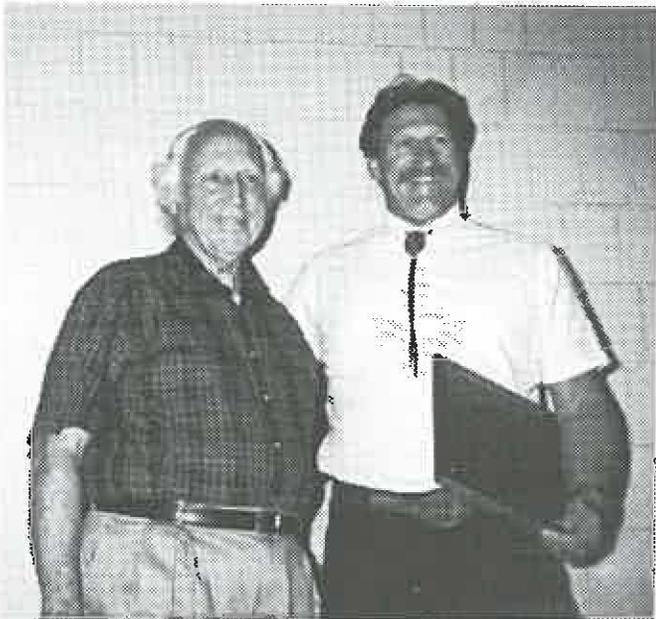
Lee Underbrink, and Larry Jones who completed their terms on the board.

At the annual Awards Banquet, Will Rusho did an outstanding job of smoothly presenting the awards. This was Will's last year as Awards Chairman, and I want to thank him for his work. I don't want to repeat other articles in the *News from the Plains*, so I will refer you to them to learn who the awards were presented to. However, I do want to add my congratulations and sincere thanks to these people for their commitment to OCTA's goals of trail preservation and education.

The next issue of the *News from the Plains* will have a new editor, Bill Martin. I appreciate his willingness to serve in this capacity and look forward to working with him. In addition, I want to thank Will Bagley for his work as editor over the last few years. He has a deep concern for the quality of the *News from the Plains* and was an excellent editor. Although this issue will be his last one, we look forward to Will's continued contributions to OCTA since he was recently reelected to serve another three-year term on the Board of Directors.

I look forward to working with you all over the next year. OCTA has an important mission of trail preservation and education. OCTA also has many dedicated and capable people who can work together to accomplish this mission.

—Jackie Lewin, President



Charlie Klutts of the Burlington Northern–Santa Fé Railroad and Que Winters of the Rebecca Winters Family Organization accept OCTA's Meritorious Achievement Award. Que adopted Charlie into the Winters family.

From DEDICATION, page 4. ing to solve the puzzle of a route across Nevada would make this site a significant one. Lansford Hastings, a politically ambitious man, had seen the South Fork two times before he led the emigrants of 1846 via the cutoff bearing his name to California. He had barely seen Ruby Valley, which, he probably thought was the source of the South Fork. But it was not to be and the Hastings Cutoff was to become a most infamous passage—one whose terrible landscape helped break the Donner party.

Historian Dale Morgan called the Humboldt the "Highroad of the West," America's most necessary river. It was to be a lifeline in the development of the United States. A very old river, older than the Basin and Range, peoples of eons past ranged and forged along it. Western Shoshone peoples of more recent times fished, hunted and gathered here. The first known white man to die in Nevada—Joseph Paul, a trapper with the 1828 Snake River Country expedition—was buried just west of here. One of the first hostile encounters between Americans and Shoshones occurred just south of here when some of Joseph Walker's 1833 fur brigade killed Indians who were stealing traps. Through the canyons came the first overland emigrants across Nevada to California—the Bidwell-Bartleson party—in 1841, and through that defile came the famous emigrants of the year of decision—1846, the year that marks the connecting of the United States between Atlantic and Pacific. The well-known Donner party, the last people on the trail in 1846, came through South Fork Canyon 150 years ago this September 30. Hundreds of goldrushers followed the path originally developed by Lansford Hastings as a short cut from Wyoming. A few members of the Mormon Battalion used the Hastings Cutoff as they

returned to Salt Lake City from California in the 1840s, and the route was for a short time the road of the Jackass Mail between Utah and Sacramento.

The development of the main California Trail and the opening of Hensley's Cutoff north around the Salt Lake in the 1840s virtually closed the Hastings route by 1850.

This place—the Humboldt Highroads Historical Site—embodies a significance not often found in a single location. That significance is bound up ultimately in nation making, in the linking of East and West and the formation of the United States. The California Trail along the Humboldt River was the route of 300,000 emigrants before the coming of the Central Pacific Railroad. That enterprise, built by thousands of Chinese laborers and likened to the opening of the Suez Canal, virtually followed the emigrant route between Sacramento and Humboldt Wells.

Several national roads were destined to converge in this area: Indian paths, fur-trapper trails, wagon roads. It is the most curious cutoff in our history. The transcontinental railroad, and in our own time, the great American automobile roads, Nevada Route 1, the Victory Highway, U.S. 40 and its modern phase, Interstate 80, the Eisenhower Highway, and lines of the information superhighway are also routed east and west here.

The builders of this kiosk intended that this rich history be embodied in a memorial. Thousands of people drive this highway daily without knowing they travel a road rich in our history. And thousand of new citizens of eastern Nevada do not know what happened here. This interpretative marker will help Americans visualize the experiences of those who blazed the trail, and understand the human spirit in its search for fulfillment.

*At the Hitching of the Teams, Maro and Nancy Wootan of Glenns Ferry, Idaho, show off a fine team of oxen.*

*—Photo by Douglas Crary.*



# GREENHORN EXPLORES THE HASTINGS ROAD

by Neal Johns

What's the best description of the west end of the Hastings Cutoff? Dust, Dust, Dust! The only thing that made it palatable was the sense of history this route inspired and the example set by the guy in front, Paul Sawyer. Old Paul (don't say that to his face!) had put in an awful lot of work in preparation for these two days of trail riding and it showed. The problems frequently encountered when doing this by yourself—such as access to private property, getting lost, and not having anyone to give you the necessary background to understand your experience—just didn't happen when Paul was up front. Don't forget the other trail guides either, for there were 50+ vehicles split into several semi-independent groups.

We started east of Elko and after a stop to orient ourselves, headed west just like the Emigrants, toward a green spot visible for miles which turned out to be Big Springs, now a private ranch. Heading south into the dust, we soon came to Mad Woman Spring (now labeled Flowery Lake), where a lesser amount of water was to be found. Mad Woman was named after a peculiar disposition women acquire after being on the trail too long. Turning west, we crossed over the Pequop Mountains and then across the Independence Valley over to Mound Springs where we recruited the mad women and had lunch.

One Lost Soul missed a right turn crossing the moun-

tains and furnished some amusement to the more calloused travelers listening to the CB chatter of "I'm at a fork, what should I do?" We all closed the train up a little closer and prayed that it would be not be us eliciting the chuckles next time.

Near Mill Spring (now Warm Creek Ranch) we got a chance to walk on some well-preserved swales of the old trail before proceeding across Ruby Valley to Sulphur Hot Springs. This was the end of the first day of dust so we headed back to Elko on a black trail with no dust.

The next day we returned to this point and then headed south down the valley. We stopped at Cave Spring for lunch and yes, it is a great gusher of a spring coming out of a cave! Then it was onward down Ruby Valley toward Overland Pass. We didn't actually go through the pass because of bad road conditions but we got a good look at it from Fort Ruby.

We picked up the trail on the west side of Overland Pass by going over Harrison Pass and then proceeded north to follow the trail up the valleys defined by Corral, Smith and Huntington Creek and finally the South Fork of the Humboldt River. The South Fork is something else! It was bad enough looking down into the gorge where the wagons had to travel much less doing it. Returning to Elko on the last few miles of blacktop we had time to count our blessings. Thanks, Paul!



Three unknown pioneers—all right, you know who they are!—pose before OCTA's ever popular Trail Band.

—Doug Crary Photo



The Donner party straggler, Bill Pugsley, with companion Matt James at the dedication of the Humboldt Highroads marker. See story on page 12.

—Mary Mueller Photo

## REBECCA WINTERS

## ON THE OREGON TRAIL

Out on the desert, barren and wide,  
Watered along by the immigrant tears;  
Upon the Oregon Trail she died—  
Rebecca Winter, aged fifty years.  
Seeking the land of the storied West,  
Opulent land of gold and fame,  
Leaving her hearthstone warm, with the rest,  
From somewhere out of the east, she came.

Maybe the heart of her bosom died,  
For grief for some little grave back home,  
Leaving all for the man at her side,  
For women must follow, where man would roam.

'T'was famine, or fever, or wan despair  
That hushed the cry of her silent breast;  
Close by the trail, where the wagons fare,  
Rebecca Winter was laid to rest.  
Somebody—husband, son, or sire—  
Roughly wrought, seeing not for tears,  
This, for her grave, on a sunken tire:  
"Rebecca Winter—aged 50 years."

Long she lay by the Oregon Trail,  
With sagebrush growing above her head,  
And coyotes barked in the moonlight pale,  
And wagon-trains moved on by the dead.

Till, bearing compass and line and chain,  
Men came, marking a way to the West,  
Daring the desert's drought and the pain,  
A daring heart in each dauntless breast.  
And stumbling into a sagebrush bed,  
The lineman read—through a mist of tears—  
On the wagon tire, that marked her head,  
"Rebecca Winter—aged 50 years."

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

Today\* the train glides fast to the West,  
Rounding the curve where the grave appears;  
A white shaft marking her place of rest,  
"Rebecca Winter—aged 50 years."  
Here is the shapen\*\* and turf-grown mound,  
And the name carved on the stone today;  
But the thought—"Tis for all the graves unfound,  
The others, who died upon the way."

—Anne McQueen

\*Prior to 1920.

\*\*Webster: fashioned with a definite shape.

*I believe that Donald H. Shannon sent me this great poem, which appeared in James H. Hawley's History of Idaho: The Gem of the Mountains (S. J. Clarke, 1920), 81-82.—Editor.*

## THE PATHFINDER

*A Poetic Salute to You-Know-Who and the Elko Convention*

He treads lightly on that hallowed ground, ever searching for a clue,  
He pauses now to shade his eyes, then starts his search anew.  
He's every bit the mountain man, silver hair and craggy brow,  
Like a cross between a billy goat and a pink albino cow.

A student of the western way, he resembles Daniel Boone,  
Still others say, looks be damned, he acts like Daniel Goone.  
He looks stupid in his buckskins and even sillier on a horse,  
His drawers are made of cowhide, hair side in of course.

He admires native customs, especially those to do with sleeping,  
Yes, he's perfected to a science the art of teepee creeping.  
And he sometimes hops in circles, Shoshone raindance it would seem,  
No, this one's of white mans making, called the jig a la Jim Beam.

The Indians have a name for him, they call him Whup Sa Dind,  
Translated into English it's the Old One Who Breaks Wind.  
Should a miner see him coming, they'll close the vault and lock it,  
For they also have a name for him, they call him Hand in Pocket.

One hundred fifty years ago the emigrants trekked west,  
At scouting out these weathered trails it takes the very best.  
You amateurs and drugstore types tis hopeless to apply,  
There's only one man fits the bill, that great pathfinder, "Sy."

He's searching for those ancient trails traversed so long ago,  
By wagon wheels and oxen feet through mud and dust and snow.  
Look yonder in that thicket friend, is that a bird dog pointing quail,  
No, it's Sawyer on his hands and knees, he's sniffing out a trail.

See him striding cross the salt flat, has he found a wagon track?  
No, his car's stuck in the mudhole and he's trying to get back.  
But don't worry 'bout our hero, his inner strength has brought him  
far—

"Granny, head for help old girl, I'll stay and guard the car."

For those who haven't met him, consider yourselves blessed,  
For he's not exactly humble as many can attest.  
He will grasp and shake your hand, say hello and how are you?  
From then on in it's listenin' friend, your talking days are through.

Have you read my book, it's money well spent,  
Called, "Wherever I Go, There is a Scent."  
If you'll just pay attention you may pick up some tips,  
Why I'm even surprised by what flows from my lips.

There's a very simple reason why he's a whiz at finding trails,  
He was there at the last supper, drank from the Holy Grail  
Yes, he was here to greet the wagons back in eighteen forty-two,  
Of course he's good at finding trails, he was here when they came  
through.

I would like to take a minute as I end these words of praise,  
To wish our honoree many happy trailing days.  
And should you happen to be near him keep his Indian name in  
mind—

And it matters not how steep the trail, never walk behind.

—RPD, August 96

## DONNER PARTY STRAGGLER MAKES FRIENDS IN UTAH

by Scott James

Since our meeting several weeks ago, Bill Pugsley has forever changed my perspective of the Hastings Cutoff and has profoundly enhanced my respect for the thousands of emigrants whose determination and sacrifice bolstered the very underpinnings of this great nation.

For two days, my son Matthew and I drove repeatedly through Mormon Flat and Big Mountain Pass in Utah looking for a "straggler" from the Donner-Reed party. Even though this "straggler" was some 150 years late, his determination and resolve were more than equal to that of the original body. Then, on the evening of August 6, we found him. Were it not for his horse, the order of his encampment and a certain confidence in his manner, my first glance would have made me conclude that Bill was simply a homeless man stranded somewhere in Little Dell Canyon. Twenty-one days on the trail under a burning sun, pressing onward over dusty and steep trails, have a way of removing traces of civilization from the traveler. A rough beard covered his face, marks from a hard fall soiled his clothing and his dark tan gave way to the dust of the trail in several streaks across his face and arms.

As Matt and I approached his camp, we found his manner calm, his nature peaceful and his voice inviting. We visited for a while and spoke casually of his walk along the trail to this point. He also introduced us to his dog Sam and his pack horse Patches. As Matt and I left him, we knew that this "straggler" had in some way touched our hearts. We knew that we would return to find him on the Trail again.

As members of the Utah Crossroads Chapter of OCTA, Matt and I found an opportunity within the next few days to have ourselves assigned to carry supplies to Bill and to provide him with trail guides as he crossed Utah and pressed on into Nevada. This assignment took us frequently to the Hastings Cutoff and brought us into daily contact with the "straggler." In this capacity, we got to know Bill over some several weeks. We were also both bitten several times by his dog and "slimed" more than once by his toothless horse.

Consistent with the schedule of the Donner Reed Party, though 150 years after the fact, Bill started his trek in Wyoming on July 17. Before Matt and I met him, he had traveled through Fort Bridger, Echo Canyon, East Canyon, Little Emigration Canyon, and over Big Mountain Pass. Though he had originally intended other-

wise, Bill soon discovered that he would not be able to parallel the original schedule of the Donner Reed Party. In his words "they just moved too slow, camped too often, and wasted too many days."

On August 8, Bill entered the Salt Lake Valley by way of Emigration Canyon. From there he moved on to Lake Point, then Erda and finally Grantsville. While in Grantsville, he participated in the OCTA dedication of the Crossroads kiosk at the Donner-Reed Museum. By August 13, Bill left Grantsville and traveled to Timpie Springs. From there he traveled to Big Springs, Delle and Redlum Springs, reaching Hastings Pass on August 15. The next morning he guided Bill through the pass and into the Aragonite Valley. From there, Bill moved on to Clive and then to Knolls. While camped in Knolls, Bill took a side trip to the OCTA convention in Elko. Back at Knolls, Bill pressed on across the salt flats to Wendover and crossed into Nevada on August 21.

By the first weekend in September, Patches had injured an ankle and had to be stabled in Elko. Being nearly three weeks ahead of the original Donner-Reed party, Bill took this opportunity to rest for a few days in Reno.

On September 14, with the assistance of Paul Sawyer, Bill returned to Jiggs, Nevada, to resume his trek. By the night of September 16, he and Sam completed their walk of the entire Hastings Cutoff.

During his journey, the "straggler" met varmints of every kind (including the two legged variety). He fought with rattlesnakes, endured unbearable heat and spent many sleepless nights on the cold floor of the desert. He ate cold food when it was available and was forever mindful of the absence of water in the desert. Even so, if Bill can find pasture and care for injured Patches and a replacement pack animal, he is certain to continue his march on into Truckee Lake in spite of the approaching snow.

Since our first meeting I have continued to wonder who this "straggler" is—where did he come from and what kind of a man was he. Well, over a period of several weeks, I discovered the answers to some of these questions. Bill is a 53-year-old California transplant who now resides in Reno, NV with his wife. He actually celebrated his birthday while on the trail. He has three grown children, two grandchildren, an adopted dog that bites and a horse without teeth. He possess an interesting combination of James Reed's tenacity, Miss Lucinda's persistence, and Brigham Young's vision of normally impossible goals.

His trek honors pioneers of many years past, rekindles our interest and enthusiasm for the emigrant trails, and draws the attention of the general public to the sacrifices made by so many people during the western migration. I have been intrigued and revitalized through my brief association with him and I am grateful that he has so clearly demonstrated unfailing courage and commitment to my son Matthew.

Lyndia Carter's column, THE READING TRAIL, will return in the next issue.

## CALIFORNIA-NEVADA

### PAST AND PRESENT LOOK GOOD FOR CHAPTER

The Elko convention of 1996 is now part of OCTA history. It was a good one. As the host chapter, CA-NV is proud and pleased that 610 OCTAns came to Elko to enjoy the trails, the cowboy poets, the Basque barbecue, the book room fare, the speakers and the socializing with old and new friends. The dedication of the kiosk was especially impressive.

On opening day 268 members of the CA-NV chapter were on hand at the convention center. The chapter credits two gentlemen from Elko with the convention's success. Paul Sawyer and Bob Pearce are a pair to beat when future conventions are held. They did a super job without asking a lot of help from charter members.

The chapter was honored at the convention when six of its members received distinguished volunteer awards "in grateful appreciation for time and effort and dedication" in trail work. Richard Silva and Jo and Keith Arnold received the award for work on the Yreka Trail, and Andy and Joanne Hammond were recognized for their efforts on the Beckwith Trail. Also announced at Elko was the election to the national board of CA-NV chapter president Bill Rupp.

Upcoming chapter events include the February 8, 1997 winter seminar that will be held in Grass Valley, CA. It will emphasize trails and gold mining, according to chair Betty McClain.

On March 8 and 9 there will be a spring meeting in Bakersfield, CA, where Kern County history will be highlighted.

The coming year's calendar of outings will also feature a trip to Johnson's Ranch in April, the Forty-Mile Desert in May, the Dog Valley route through the Sierra in June and the Lassen Trail in July.

—Patricia Loomis

## COLORADO

### COLORADO CHAPTER VISITS FORT VASQUEZ

The museum at Fort Vasquez, a fur trading post on the Cherokee and South Platte River trails, served as the meeting place for the Colorado Chapter's Fall Rendezvous on Saturday, September 14. Louis Vasquez and Andrew Sublette built the adobe-walled fort in 1837, and as the beaver trade declined the partners developed a brisk trade in buffalo robes and tongues.

Though subsequently deserted by the fur trade, Fort Vasquez served as a refuge for Pikes Peakers during the 1859 gold rush, a bivouac for troops during the Civil War, a stagecoach way station and a resting place for immigrants during the 1870s and 1880s. By the turn of the century Fort Vasquez had fallen into ruins. One hundred years after it was built, the WPA partially reconstructed the fort, and in 1958 it was deeded to the Colorado Historical Society which built the modern visitor center and museum south of the fort, following an archaeological survey.

Chapter members enjoyed a lunch at the Doubletree Inn in Platteville and a presentation by Doris Monahan, author of "Destination: Denver, the South Platte Trail," who spoke about the stage stations along that route. Terri Tiehen reported progress made regarding the construction of E-470 near the Smoky Hill Trail ruts and presented a letter from the Platte River Constructors indicating their willingness to cooperate in every way possible in marking and preserving the trail segment. An interpretive center showing location of the ruts is planned near the interchange with signs directing travelers.

Following the luncheon meeting, Lee Whiteley led the group to the sites of Fort St. Vrain and Fort Lupton, two of the three other trading posts built within seven miles of Fort Vasquez. No ruins are visible but the sites are marked.

—Margaret Bowers

## KANZA

### KANZA CHAPTER GOES TREKKING

Sunday, July 23, 1996—The sun was high and already heating the prairie except for the light breeze helping temper the summer day when 63 members of the Kanza chapter of OCTA gathered for a wagon trek along still visible traces of the Oregon Trail across the hills of Pottawatomie County. Three covered wagons pulled by teams plus outriders covered about three miles where land owners had graciously allowed us passage, relocated livestock for our convenience, and opened fences so we might have an open stretch of prairie. We experienced gully crossings and rough terrain. The view was not compromised by telephone pole or structure of any kind to mar our view from that of those travelers before us. We also took a walking tour to a spring along the trail with time to notice wild flowers, grasses and the berries which might have supplemented pioneers' stores. We enjoyed a trail lunch of meat prepared on site, baked beans, potato chips

(chips?), sourdough bread from a trail recipe (which had been made in a bread machine) and cobbler for dessert. Those early travelers would have enjoyed our feast. Jackie Lewin, president of OCTA National, joined us and spoke briefly at lunch time. Ross Marshall, president of the Santa Fé Trail Association and chairman of OCTA's Chapter Development Committee was present and spoke briefly also. Kanza Chapter president Ken Martin, also a past president of the National Pony Express Association, was present. Late in the afternoon livestock trailers carried home the horses and mules and we trekkers could indulge in soothing showers and moisturizer for tired bodies that got to rest on clean sheets, but we had a glimpse of how it had been for others who used that Trail on some long ago Sunday.

## CROSSROADS

### UTAH TEACHERS PRAISE OCTA ACTIVITY BOOK

At the beginning of the school year, Utah fourth and seventh grade school teachers received complementary copies of the new OCTA Educational Activity Book, *Finding The Right Place, The Story of the Mormon Trail*.

Praise for the book began flooding in to Utah Crossroads President, George Ivory, as soon as the books were delivered. Typical was a letter from a teacher at Centerville Elementary which said, "I was so delighted with both the activities and the content that I wanted to immediately express my appreciation to you and your organization. It is so well done, and will be an invaluable aid in the classroom."

The book was written by Bill Hill, Chairman of OCTA's Education Committee, as a special Mormon Trail version of his first activity book *Reading, Writing & Riding along the Oregon-California Trail*. Bill was assisted by Utah Crossroads Education Chair, Nancy Andersen, who is a fourth grade teacher in Utah. Nancy gave Bill many new ideas when she reviewed his initial draft of the book. Publication of the book by OCTA was approved by OCTA's Board of Directors during the 1995 National Convention at Grand Island after George Ivory presented the Board with a grant approval letter from the Utah Pioneer Sesquicentennial Council. Bill Hill went to work to prepare his draft for publication, which was accomplished this past August. The book was also approved by the Utah State Office of Education prior to publication and that office has assisted in distributing copies to the larger Utah School Districts.

## WYOMING

### CHAPTER MARKS FREDERICK FULKERSON GRAVE

Pictured near Devils Gate is the OCTA crew right after they redid the Frederick Fulkerson grave at Rattlesnake Pass going into the Sun Ranch. This is the gravesite that for many years was thought to be that of name carver T. P. Baker. With the help of others, Randy Brown investigated and put everything together to determine just who was in the grave. The OCTA interpretive sign now tells the story.

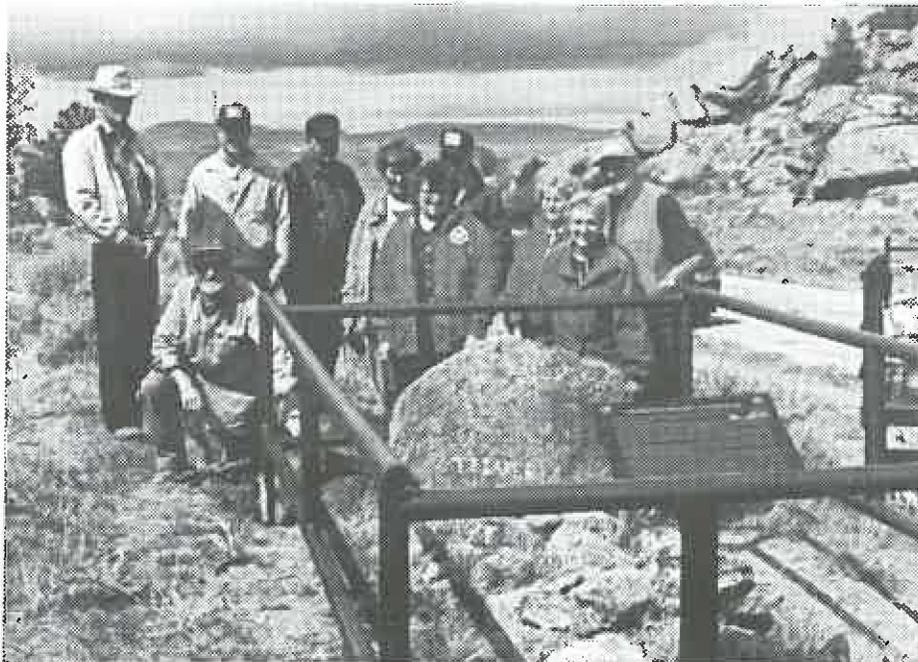
The picture shows a new type of pipe

fencing required due to the cattle that roam the area. It was constructed, transported and donated by a local OCTA

friend Mr. Dick Smith, shown back row, third from the left. The gentleman in the cowboy hat on the left rear row is someone many of you will recognize, rancher Bernard Sun. Bernard inspected our work and gave it his approval.

The chapter is also working to get rangers stationed at Independence Rock.

—Lee Underbrink



The Sesquicentennial Council Grant, along with additional funding from Ivory Homes, George's family's home-building company, paid for publication and distribution of 2,500 copies of the books to Utah teachers. If the initial excited response from teachers is any indication of how this activity book will be used in Utah Schools, "OCTA" may become a well-known household name as more than 50,000 fourth and seventh grade students in Utah broaden their knowledge of the western migration of the mid-nineteenth century. Utah Crossroads and Utah's educators cannot express enough thanks to Bill Hill for his tremendous effort in creating this activity book.

## NORTHWEST

### OREGON TRAIL MARKER DEDICATED

The main activity of the Northwest Chapter seems to have been attendance at the Elko convention. About 20 NW OCTAns attended. Congratulations to the folks in Elko for an excellent convention. The trip along the California Trail to Record Bluff and the pre-convention expedition on the Hastings Cutoff were especially good.

The next scheduled event for the Northwest Chapter is the Fall meeting at Fort Steilacoom on October 19. The feature will be a dramatic presentation by Ray Egan depicting Willis Boatman, an ancestor of our own Weldon Rau. Weldon will introduce Ray Egan and provide some additional family history. Pat and Jack Fletcher will also talk about trail research techniques. Planning for the 1998 Pendleton Convention continues. Discussions are proceeding with the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla and local landowners to gain access to important trail segments in the descent from the Blue Mountains. A dry run of convention tour options will be held in late October, almost two years ahead of the convention date. All in all, things are well along the trail in the Northwest. —Dave Welch

## SOUTHWEST

### CHAPTER SHARES IN CA/NV FIELD TRIP

The chapter's annual planning meeting was held June 8 in Angel Fire, NM. At that time, the activities for our coming year were scheduled. Although exact dates for all activities are not available, the general schedule is as follows:

- October 12, 1996—Trail hike up Hunter Draw.
- October 13 to 18, 1996—Trail mapping on in New Mexico.
- January 1997—Weekend outing along Gila River to view possible sites for marking by the chapter.
- March 1997—Follow-up outing to decide on site to mark.
- May 1997—Joint Trails Seminar in Las Vegas, NM, a joint endeavor by OCTA, the Santa Fé Trail Association and the Old Spanish Trail Association, similar to the joint meeting held in February 1996. The Corozon de los

Caminos Chapter of the Santa Fé Trail Association will host this joint meeting.

About 20 chapter members were in attendance for part or all of the Elko convention. Chapter member Jack Root wrote this as part of his thoughts on the convention.

"Eagerly awaited by me was a trip through Thousand Springs Valley to 'Record Bluff,' near the confluence of Little Goose and Goose Creeks. This eerie formation is covered with dated inscriptions and emigrant artwork. What a thrill to eat lunch in its shadow and imagine the wagon trains stopping here long ago.

"The next day was 'the hike'—six miles of Emigrant Canyon, ending at Gravelly Ford and its unknown graves. It was a neat hike, with swales galore, and this aging adventurer loved every minute, except for the oppressive heat, with shade virtually non-existent. I even had the good luck to spot a buried artifact—an old iron wagon tire (wheel rim). Fellow hikers seemed impressed and pleased."

—Rose Ann Tompkins

## TRAILS HEAD

### CHAPTER TREK A HIT

The Trails Head fall trek will cover the Military Road in Johnson County. Trails Head has already sponsored two other treks of the Military Road—one from Ft. Leavenworth to Grinter House in Wyandotte County and one from Johnson County to Ft. Scott. The October 5th trek will cover the portion of the Military Road that ran from Grinter House to southern Johnson County. The Military Road not only ran alongside the eastern edge of Indian Territory, but also became a connecting route to the Santa Fé Trail. Lee Kroh has researched the Military Road through Kansas by using the Kansas territorial survey maps of 1850. He is willingly sharing this research with Trails Head.

Barbara Magerl has proposed a book review series sponsored by Trails Head. Barbara is chairing the planning committee for this series. James Lee, Bill Bullard and Harold Smith will plan these discussions. This series, beginning in November, will likely be held in libraries and will provide trail-related activities for the winter months. The annual business meeting will be held at the first book review discussion. Jim Lee, chair of the nominating committee, will present a slate of officers for consideration.

Harold Smith, book review editor for the *Overland Journal*, and Niel Johnson, retired archivist of Truman Library, are collecting the oral history of Trails Head. They have interviewed Barbara Magerl, Barbara Bernauer and John Leamon. Harold and Niel also want to collect documents and photographs to establish a Trails Head Chapter archive. Even though Trails Head is only ten years old, now is the time to collect information and materials.

A marker for the Red Bridge swales is in the planning stage.

—Mary Conrad

# Announcements

## CALL FOR 1998 PAPERS AND PROGRAM PRESENTATIONS IN PENDLETON

The 1998 national convention of the Oregon-California Trails Association will be held at Pendleton, Oregon, August 10-15. The official opening will be August 12. The Northwest Chapter of OCTA invites papers of approximately 40 minutes in length to be presented on August 13. The main theme of the papers should address the impacts and cultural exchanges between the native peoples and overland emigrants. Please submit your proposal by September 1, 1997 to:

Glenn Harrison  
1132 30th Place SW  
Albany, OR 97321  
541-926-4680

## TRAILS CENTER NEEDS OCTA HELP

We need OCTA's help at a critical point in the National Historic Trails Interpretive Center, which has been planned for a number of years in Casper. We need to get construction funds into the BLM budget. A letter was sent by Wyoming Senators Simpson and Thomas on Monday, June 17th, to Slade Gorton (WA), Chairman of the Subcommittee on Interior Appropriations, requesting that construction funds for the actual building of the center be placed in the upcoming BLM budget. Members of that subcommittee include Robert Bennett of Utah, Ted Stevens of Alaska, Cochran of Miss., Hatfield of OR, Domenici of

NM, Burns of MT and Connie Mack of FL. As you know, the bulk of the funding for the design and construction of the exhibits will be from private, state, and local funds (much of which has already been obtained). The land is donated by the City of Casper. The responsibility of the BLM, under the partnership agreements, is to build the building and staff the center.

This now becomes an issue that requires a regional and national political input to get this into the BLM budget. BLM keeps saying that they need political input in order to get such an item in their budget. Our Senators say that they can do much more to get the money if the item is identified in the budget. The dog keeps chasing its tail. If you could write your Congressional representatives (or any other member of the subcommittee) to support this issue, it would be very helpful.

Thanks for whatever you can do.

—Ron Lund, Foundation Board

(The Executive Director for the Center Foundation is Edna Kennell, 307-265-8030, 5400 N. Center Casper, WY 82601.)

## OCTA GONE!

Bob and Pat Pearce sent *News from the Plains* this momento of the Elko convention—and this kind poem.



**OCTA  
Gone**

OCTA—GONE! The sign is clear  
Our friends have left for far and near!  
It's time to stop and now reflect  
About the folks we met.  
The gracious people who helped each day  
With our work and with our play.  
Thanks to each and EVERYONE  
Many Elko hearts you've won!  
OCTA—GONE! The sign is clear  
Thanks for coming—glad YOU were here!

Bill Hill (right) presents Outstanding Educator Awards to (left to right) Janel Anderson, Janet Camagna and Bruce D. Berst.

—Bev Hesse Photo

ANSWERS TO RIDDLES on Page 18: 1. 49ers or gold-rushers; 2. An ox; 3. Canvas wagon cover; 4. Quilt; 5. Scout or guide; 6. Indians; 7. South Pass; 8. Oregon; 9. Pioneer children; 10. A river or stream; 11. Blacksmith; 12. Rocking chair; 13. Marcus Whitman; 14. Handcart; 15. Lansford W. Hastings.

Since we could not be at the Elk convention and thus could not personally express our appreciation, we thank all our OCTA friends for the Meritorious Achievement Award we received.

—Andy & Joanne Hammond

Mary and Bill Mueller are good travelers. She often writes to me about the places they visited. I envy them, their American way of life. Following after them I found myself in Elko on my fifth visit to America.

I selected Reno as my jumping-off place. I traced the three trails to California by a rent-a-wagon: the Carson, Sonora and Fandango pass routes. They are the ones Tom Hunt took me over in 1991. At Genoa I felt like a real emigrant and a pious Mormon when I took the Mormon emigrant trail to Pleasant Valley. I was also a 49er from Placerville to Sonora. A bus tour of the 1991 convention took the route. Seeing the beautiful scenery along, I made up my mind to trace it someday. One of my American dreams has come true.

I took many photos on the Sonora Pass route. This time I never trespassed on a military base; US Marine Training Center at Pickel Meadow. I was not foolish enough to enter Black Rock Desert by an ordinary car. I enjoyed driving with speed along Pyramid Lake to Gerlach but I did not destroy myself. My car hit against a white pole by the road. Luckily it was a rubber or plastic one. At Gerlach I saw Bruno's Motel often mentioned in the newsletter. My wagon sped to Cedarville to find more than 30 classic cars marching there. My wagon slowly climbed up Fandango Pass where I danced not to keep myself warm but to celebrate my success. Commanding fine views, I could not help realizing I had reached California all the way. I was quite satisfied with the scenery I had seen in books.

I also took the train along the Truckee River to see that emigrant wagons crossed it so many times that hoofs of oxen became soft. Thanks to Jim Beach who took me out on the two day pre-convention tours and Mary Mueller who advised me on my travels and took me on a Floating White House Cruise. This time I've found a safer America than in our newspapers.

I would like to report I blazed another Applegate Trail from Oregon to California along the coast. You may call it Beautiful Beach Trail or simply, Route 101.

America the Beautiful!

—Yuji Aisaka

*Yuji Aisaka (pictured above) is a high school teacher and English translator in Kyoto, Japan. He joined OCTA in 1988 and has attended three conventions: 1991 in Sacramento, 1994 in Salt Lake City and in Elko in 1996.*

I enjoyed this year's National OCTA Convention; great planning, organization, leadership and plain hard work were much in evidence. The workers, the convention staff,

## Queries and Comments

the outstanding guides, as well as the great Convention Center, all contributed to a resounding success that the people of Elko and the OCTA can be very proud. I am looking forward to the next convention and a good hike in Idaho. I also think a Square Dance with caller might be popular and attract some "Greenhorns." This would seem quite appropriate for our "pioneer" type membership. When Marta Lienhard Vincent attends the convention I hope she will play "Amazing Grace" on the bagpipes during one of our social events when our band is playing. I have enclosed my story of the hike from Emigrant Pass to Gravelly Ford to share my enthusiastic report with other members.

—Sherman Collins

Naples, FL & Charlevoix, MI



I am seeking information about my families when they crossed the plains to California.

In 1863 my father's paternal grandparents, Oscar and Sarah Jane (Bogges) Smith, made the trek West via the Pony Express Trail from Macoupin County, Illinois, to Napa Valley, California. with their children: Henry C. (my grandfather), George W., Charles L. and Martha C. They traveled in a 28-wagon train, known as the Macoupin train and AKA the Wills' train.

Names of other families in the train were Wills, Bogges, Pitzer, Byer and Wristen. In 1864 my father's maternal grandparents, William Canterbury and Julia Ann (Tucker) Haney came from Iowa to Solano County, California with their children; Caroline, Benjamin, Mary Jane, Virginia Ann, Fidella, Melissa, John, Sarah Ellen (my grandmother) and Edmund. The route that the Haney's took is unknown to me.

I would be most grateful to anyone supplying me with additional information on these families, especially notes from diaries or journals concerning their Journeys West. I am pleased to have recently become a member of OCTA and I am anxiously planning to attend my first convention at Elko.

Franklin L. Smith

P.O. Box 1352, Buena Vista, CO 81211

Norton Jacob, a member of the Brigham Young 1847 Pioneer Party, kept a journal of the trip across the plains. In the May 6 entry he spells "historian" as "hysterian." This is done more than once. At first I thought this a little unusual or even "hysterical," since he spelled history correctly. In pondering this spelling further I thought that many of us who have spent hours in historical research have, on occasion, certainly known that frame of mind of "hysterian." He was not so far off in his spelling after all.

—Levida Hileman, Casper, Wyoming

# Buffalo Chips

*Do you like guessing games? If you do, you'll like answering and even creating riddles. Riddles are a kind of guessing game to see if you can figure something out by the clues. There are lots of different ways to write the clues for riddles, but here is a formula that works pretty well. Maybe you'd like to write some!*

## Each Riddle Should:

1. Contain three lines, with one or more clues per line.
2. Have the endings of all lines rhyme.
3. Be rather tricky so the guesser has to think.
4. Be challenging but not impossible.
5. End with a fourth line that asks: Who Am I? or What Am I?

## Look at these examples:

- A. Often homemade of rags, straw or wood, but stores did stock it  
As special to a pioneer girl as any golden locket  
Patty Reed carried a tiny one in her pocket  
What Am I? (Answer=a doll)
- B. At rest a long black snake-like coil  
When lashed out and snapped I make the oxen toil  
My sound like thunder will their slowness foil  
What Am I? (Answer=a bullwhip)

*Here are some for you to try and figure out. Don't look at the answers on page 16 until you are sure you have given up. Chances are you can figure out most of them by thinking carefully.*

1. Off I hurried to find the gold  
Sometimes I was young; sometimes I was old  
Free as the wind and twice as bold  
Who Am I?
2. On four sore feet I plodded along  
My bellows of displeasure were my only song  
Sometimes the family pet, patient, enduring and strong  
What Am I?
3. Sometimes the ladies sewed me by hand  
A top for the wagon going to the new land  
I kept out the sun, rain, dust, and blowing sand  
What Am I?
4. Memories sewn in me calmed the painful fear  
I am something treasured for many a year  
Covering the sleeping children so very dear  
What Am I?
5. Experience learned in the old trapper days  
Finding the campsites, water, and easier ways  
Leading the wagon train to the setting sun's rays  
Who Am I?
6. The emigrants feared me hiding 'round every bend  
Their cattle and horses so tempting, they'd better tend

## RIDDLES

by

Lyndia Carter

- Sometimes their enemy, but I'm often their friend  
Who Am I?
7. So gradual that I seem nearly flat  
In the middle of the Rocky Mountains on the trail I sat  
Once through me at Pacific Springs the pioneers will chat  
What Am I?
  8. My fertile farming land and forests will pioneers entice  
A five or six month's journey to the Northwest should suffice  
You couldn't find a better home in the west at any price  
What Am I?
  9. Barefooted we walk all day with sore feet and hips  
We look for and gather up the best buffalo chips  
The sun and the wind chap our young skin and crack our lips  
Who Are We?
  10. For washing the clothes I am the place  
I'm used for cleaning the dust off the emigrant's face  
Ladies in long skirts cross me with very little grace  
What Am I?
  11. With a hammer, a forge and iron I am a master  
Pioneers happy with me along to fix a broken wagon disaster  
With new shoes made by me the oxen and horses move faster  
Who Am I?
  12. With back and forth motions I soothe babies with care  
I'm loved by grandmas with their snow white hair  
When the load gets too heavy, I'm left on the trail out there  
What Am I?
  13. I wanted to bring to the Indians Christian salvation  
I was one of the leaders of the Great Emigration  
I helped bring the Oregon Country into the American nation  
Who Am I?
  14. I consist of two wheels, a crossbar and a shallow box  
To pull me you don't need the help of an ox  
With me as transportation everyone walks!  
What Am I?
  15. I dreamed up a salt desert short cut  
It looked good to me if all went well but  
My Cutoff led to disaster when the mountain pass was shut  
Who Am I?

*Writing riddles is as fun as trying to guess them. You can write some riddles about the journey west, the trails, the wagons or equipment, and the emigrants.*

ANSWERS ARE ON PAGE 16

## SPANISH, ART, AND MUSIC IN THE WILD WEST

by Sam Burness and Keira McCulloch

We have been doing interesting things in music, Spanish and art. They all have something to do with our Westward Movement unit. In Spanish we are learning a cowboy dance. Would you believe that almost all cowboys spoke Spanish? Many of our cowboy words came from the Spanish. "La reata" became "lariat," or lasso. The Spanish word "chaparajos" became "chaps," the trousers worn by the cowboys to protect their legs from the thorny bushes. In art we are making trunks out of foam board. If you were a pioneer you wouldn't take much with you. In a trunk you would take special family belongings, such as the Bible, clothing, and maybe a special doll. In music we are singing western songs. One of our favorites, "Blood on the Saddle," is a fairly gruesome song about a cowboy who gets his head bashed in. If that doesn't please a fifth grade crowd, nothing will.

During our Western Shindig our families will be watching our Spanish dance, hearing our presentations as Western characters, seeing our trunks and singing cowboy songs.

## HENRY'S JOURNAL

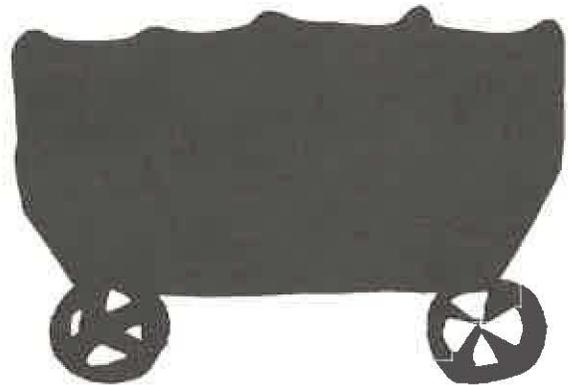
by Elizabeth Williams, Anna Stagg, Paul French and Jenny Halperin

"Today the going has been hard, the oxen have tender feet, and the going is very slow..."

Do you know what it's like to travel west to Oregon? We learned about many of the hardships and experiences that pioneers faced as they as they forced themselves onward into the Wild West. We read aloud a journal written by Henry Pomeroy, Janet's great-great-uncle. He left an eye witness account of his trip from Nebraska to California. Henry started his journey with a lot of hope and faith in the Gold Rush time. His journey began in 1859 towards the end of the Gold Rush. In his journal he lists the number of miles that he traveled each day so that we can make a map of his travels. He traveled along the Oregon Trail speaking of the highlights of his trip. The most interesting sights included Chimney Rock and the intriguing Platte River. We soon had become quite involved in Henry's travels through the West. After about six months Henry finally reached Placerville, California. He had taken with him few foods, and he was glad to get fresh meat. He had finally reached his goal of traveling west. In conclusion, we have enjoyed Henry's Journal throughout his travels. It gives us an idea of how the Westward Movement changed our lives today.

## CLASSROOM OF THE QUARTER

Since we received no submissions for this issue's Buffalo Chips, we're recycling some of the great material sent in from our last Classroom of the Quarter, Janet Krakauer's fifth graders at the Duke Middle School, 3716 Old Erwin Rd, Durham, NC 27705. We again thank Janet, and encourage other educators to send us information about your trail-related projects. Otherwise, Buffalo Chips will go up in smoke!



Wagon by Nadia

## WESTERN BOOKS

by Kelly Hebrank, Erik Knelson, Adam Kimbrough and Anne Beckwith

Sacajawea, Rose Wilder Lane, William Clark—What do these people have in common? They are the subjects of some of the books we are reading. Each kid got to choose a book to read. All of the books were related to the Westward Movement. Some of the popular books were Canyons, On to Oregon, Hugh Glass and Little Farm in the Ozarks.

Different people had different ideas about books. Take Canyons by Gary Paulson. Erik thought it gave a good perspective of the Indians' point of view. Jeffrey, on the other hand, thought the book was good, but he did not think it had to do with Westward Movement. Overall, most of the people enjoyed their books. We hope to have more fun assignments like this as we progress through our Westward Movement project.

## BUFFALO CHIPS NEEDS YOUR HELP!

Kids and teachers, these are your pages—let's fill them up. Send articles, poems, stories and above all, lots of puzzles and pictures to Buffalo Chips, 1451 Kensington Ave., SLC, UT 84105.

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## WHAT'S NEW IN THE *News*?

- ☞ Coverage of the 1996 OCTA convention at Elko starts on page 1 with a story about pioneer Rebecca Winters and a salute to the winners of this year's Meritorious Achievement Award.
- ☞ Full reports on the Elko convention begin on page 4 and continue throughout this issue.
- ☞ Voice your opinions on OCTA's publications—and find out why you'll be paying more for them. Page 7.
- ☞ What you've always wanted—a poetry page—though some might argue this ain't poetry!
- ☞ There's one last straggler on the trail of the Donner party. Page 12.
- ☞ Chapter News. Pages 13–15.
- ☞ This may be the *last* Buffalo Chips—so enjoy! See pages 18-19.