

News from the Plains



Volume XI, No. 4

Newsletter of the Oregon-California Trails Association

October 1997

First-Hand Account

Re-Living History With the Mormon Wagon Train

From April 16 until July 22 of this year, modern-day trail-riders re-created the 1847 journey of Brigham Young and his followers from Winter Quarters to the Valley of the Great Salt Lake

Starting in Iowa, the 20th Century wagon train followed the original Mormon route through present-day Nebraska, Wyoming and finally into Utah, entering the Salt Lake Valley at This Is The Place State Park.

One of the participants in the re-enactment was OCTA-member Candy Moulton, a freelance writer and author who lives in Encampment, Wyoming, and reported on the Sesquicentennial observance for the Casper Star-Tribune.

A member of numerous historical and writing organizations, she agreed to share her perspective with News From The Plains. "I recently read Thomas Bullock's journals," she told us, "and was struck by the similarities of the 1847 journey and our 1997 trek. We experienced weather problems, as did they. We tipped wagons over and had runaways IN THE SAME LOCATIONS where they had done the same. Of course, we had cell phones, fresh water, and porta-potties, while they had none of those conveniences."

Turn to Page 10 for Candy's account of what it's like to relive history.



Left to Right, new OCTA Vice President Dave Welch, outgoing President Jackie Lewin and incoming President Roger Blair.

— Photo by Rose Ann Tompkins

OCTA Observes 15th Convention

Nearly 700 trail lovers found their way to Pocatello, Idaho, for the 15th annual convention of the Oregon-California Trails Association. The week-long gathering was one history-rich highlight after another, from the pre-convention tours of the Lander Road and the Hudspeth Cutoff to the post-convention tours of the Bidwell-Bartleson Trail and Goodale-Jeffrey Cutoff.

In between, conventioners visited the original Fort Hall site, Soda Springs, Massacre Rocks on the California Trail, and the Fort Hall Shoshone-Bannock Indian Reservation. They also heard entertaining presentations from scholars, visited the Fort Hall Replica and increased their knowledge of and appreciation for our trails history. They left Pocatello doubly impressed, first with the historical significance of southeastern Idaho and the Snake River valley and second with the hard work and effort convention co-chairs Mike Bateman and Jim Allen put into planning an educational and entertaining convention.

In this issue of *News From the Plains*, we've got reports, in words and pictures, of some of the highlights of the 1997 OCTA Convention. And we are pleased to tell you that planning is well underway for the 1998 Convention, scheduled the week of August 10th in Pendleton, Oregon. Mark your calendars now!

From the Editor's Desk . . .

The growth of the Oregon-California Trails Association is impressive. We have 2,700 members, nearly double what we counted on the membership roles less than 10 years ago. And the convention in Pocatello attracted almost 700 people, a throng which was both enlightened and entertained.

Beyond numbers, however, OCTA's growth is even more impressive when you consider the scope of the activities in which we have involved ourselves. OCTA's impact is everywhere, from the national level work of people like Trails Preservation Officer Tom Hunt and Trails Liaison Committee Chairs Bill & Jeanne Watson, all the way down to individuals like Lowell Tiller and Dick Ackerman of Oregon, who have been recognized for maintaining trail markers.

It's no wonder that OCTA is the nation's leading trails preservation organization. As individuals, we enjoy getting out on the trails and we take pride in calling ourselves "rut nuts." But our work in preserving the heritage of the trails for future generations is arguably our most important work. It's a popular mission. Just try to find anyone anywhere who doesn't agree that trails preservation is an important and worthwhile activity.

With all that said, it was with great interest that I read the pre-convention report of Mary Mueller, the indefatigable chair of OCTA's Membership Committee. One of the points she made was the need to attract members in the 20 to 50-year-old age range. You don't have to hang around too many OCTA functions to discern a distinctly gray tint to our membership.

"OCTA is not alone in seeking a younger population for

membership," Mary notes. "Most of the Historical Societies, Grange and Lodges (have) aging members. The younger people are not attracted to organizations....their families and careers come first. I hear this from my children, the 40-50 generation, who support my interest and envy the freedom I have earned to give time and resources to OCTA."

That's a valid point, of course. If there's a common denominator among active rank-and-file OCTA members it is that they are retired from full-time employment and have the time to pursue interests they may have held in check during their working years. However, that shouldn't stop us from expanding our membership base among trail supporters of all ages. If you have an idea about how we can do that, I urge you to contact Mary Mueller. She would be happy to hear from you.

Meanwhile, I have one suggestion. One way to grow is through our existing membership. I'd like to suggest that each OCTA member make it a point to find one new member during the next year. Think of someone within your circle of family and friends who shares your appreciation for our historical trails heritage. Invite them on a chapter outing. Get them some membership information. Better yet, give them the gift of an OCTA membership. It's only \$35 for an individual membership (\$40 for a family). Some of them may not continue as members when your gift expires. But I think a lot of them will, once they've been exposed to our work. The net result could be a larger and stronger OCTA, one better equipped to carry out its mission into the next century.

— Bill Martin

Submission Guidelines

News From The Plains welcomes timely submissions of news, features and photos related to the work of the organization and its members and the preservation of our trails heritage.

Material is due 30 days prior to publication dates.

Material is best sent either on a computer disk (in DOS or text format but make sure you include a hard copy) or via e-mail.

Pictures are appreciated but cannot always be returned.

If you have any questions, please call

Editor Bill Martin at (702) 747-2860 or e-mail at words@worldnet.att.net.

Next Deadline Is December 1, 1997

NEWS FROM THE PLAINS

Editor **Bill Martin**

Contributing Editors

Jeanne Miller

Lyndia Carter

Roger Blair

Mail Submissions To:

1908 Tuolumne Drive

Reno NV 89523-1228

(702) 747-2860

e-mail: words@worldnet.att.net

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P.O. Box 1019 Independence, MO 64051-0519

(816) 252-2276 Fax (816) 836-0989

e-mail: octahqts@gvi.net

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From The President . . .

The recently completed annual convention was, as usual, quite successful. It was good to see old friends and make new acquaintances, in addition to taking the tours and enjoying the presentations. Mike Batemen and Jim Allen put together a most interesting panel of speakers and tours and then worked tirelessly throughout the week to see that everything went smoothly. The highlight for many was the Old Fort Hall tour and participation of the Shoshone-Bannock tribe, especially tour guide Red Perry. Members unable to attend missed a rare opportunity to visit the fort site. Mike is to be congratulated and thanked for working with the tribe to make the site available to OCTA for the convention. It was a well planned and educational convention.



The Board of Directors meeting was held on Tuesday before the general activities got underway. A few highlights of the meeting follow.

One of the first actions by the Board was to fill the vacancy on the Board created by the resignation of Doyle Reed. Vic Bolon was approved to fill the remaining year left in Doyle's term. Doyle served on the Board for five years, but felt compelled to resign for health reasons. He was a faithful member and Director and his presence will be missed.

Four Board positions were contested in the recent election. Kathy Roubal completed her second three-year term and therefore was ineligible to run again. Three incumbent Directors were eligible to seek a second term. I chose not to seek re-election, in order to concentrate on affairs of the office of President. Jeanne Watson and Ross Marshall were eligible and were returned by the membership for their second terms. Lesley Wischmann, from Wyoming, and Ken Martin, from the Kanza Chapter, were elected to fill Kathy's and my vacancies.

In addition to seating the new Board members, a new slate of officers assumed office at the conclusion of the convention. Continuing in their roles are Jim Budde as Treasurer, Tom Hunt as National Preservation Officer, and Helen Sundell as Secretary. David Welch from Steilacoom, Washington, who also currently serves as Northwest Chapter President, has assumed the duties of Vice-President. I have undertaken the role of President and assuming the daunting task of performing up to the standards of outgoing President Jackie Lewin. Jackie will continue participating in the office of Past President.

On a sad note, this meeting was the last for Jeanne Miller in her official capacity of Executive Director. As reported in the last *News From the Plains*, Jeanne retires September 30 after nearly ten years of service to OCTA, although she will be available for special projects. Since the summer of 1988 Jeanne has attended every convention except last year when family matters prevented her attendance. During her tenure, OCTA membership grew from 1,428 to 2,665. She was honored at the Saturday night Awards Banquet and was presented an inscribed

desk clock as an expression of OCTA's gratitude. Jeanne will be difficult to replace and OCTA owes her a well-deserved thanks for her years of service. An Executive Committee will seek to fill her vacancy. Until a permanent replacement is found, Kathy Conway and Ardis Everett will pick up the slack at headquarters.

OCTA finished Fiscal Year 1996-97 in good financial shape, in part due to the dues increase approved last year. I thank each of you for your continued membership. The current fiscal year, however, brings a new set of financial challenges, especially with the loss of our Executive Director.

The Challenge Cost Share Program has received a boost with "The Sandy's," Sandy Dragoo and Sandy Waggoner, assuming the administrative lead for OCTA's participation in this valuable funding source through the National Park Service (NPS). Federal funding for this program, however, is in jeopardy since no monies are currently in the federal budget bill. Bill and Jeanne Watson will be working to get funding reinstated during House and Senate conference committee deliberations.

Preservation Officer Tom Hunt reported on negotiations with NPS for completing a Comprehensive Management Plan (CMP) for the California, Pony Express, Mormon Pioneer, and Oregon National Historic Trails. Jere Krakow, Superintendent of the NPS Long Distance Trails Office, outlined the time constraints for the planning effort. A draft CMP must be completed by September 30, 1997, although questions about the detail and comprehensiveness remain unresolved.

The convention book room was a success, as usual. The second volume in OCTA's Emigrant Trails Historical Studies Series arrived just in time for the convention. *The 1854 Oregon Trail Journal of Winfield Scott Ebey*, edited by Fred Dykes and Susan Badger Doyle, was particularly appropriate for release at Pocatello since Ebey's party traveled the Jeffrey/Goodale Cutoff.

Finally, I want to extend my personal thanks and gratitude to Jackie Lewin for her commendable service as President over the last two years. Under her direction OCTA sustained its role as the premier historic trails preservation advocate. I look forward to working with the Board, Chapter Presidents, and all the volunteers over the next year in trying to live up to the standards set by Jackie as well as carrying on OCTA's mission of trail preservation and education.

— Roger Blair

Mid-Year Board Meeting

The Mid-Year Meeting of the National Board of Directors of the Oregon-California Trails Association will be held on Saturday, March 28, in Phoenix, Arizona. More details about the meeting will be coming in the January issue of News From the Plains. All OCTA members are welcome to attend.

OCTA Cost Share Update

Sandra Dragoo and Sandra Waggoner of Greenfield, Indiana, have recently been given the assignment of coordinating the Challenge Cost Share Program for OCTA. They submitted the following report for News From The Plains.

Is there a project to enhance the Oregon-California Trail in your area that you and your chapter would like to do, but you don't have the money to do it? The National Park Service has a cost share program to assist in financing such efforts.

The Challenge Cost Share Program requires planning, paperwork, record keeping, your time and your effort to match or exceed the government's monetary contribution. Since we are working through the Long Distance Trails Office, the projects must involve at least one of the four major trails through the central Oregon-California Trails corridor.

Some of the previously funded cost share projects include: Mapping and marking of the trail, Aerial reconnaissance of trails and sites, Wayside interpretive exhibits, Development of brochures and videos, Diary archival research, Archaeological surveys, Development of auto tour routes and narratives, Trail center exhibit expansion, Development of educational courses, and Installation of prairie habitat landscaping

If you and your chapter are interested, your chapter president and your chapter preservation officer have copies of the project requirements and application forms. As the coordinators of OCTA's cost share projects, we are collecting applications for the National Park Service's consideration. We want to establish a reservoir of worthwhile, well-planned projects so that as federal funding becomes available, OCTA will have several projects ready to submit.

If you have questions, feel free to contact us: OCTA Challenge Cost Share Coordinators, Sandra Sue Dragoo & Sandra J. Waggoner, 2304 Wayne Drive, Greenfield, IN 46140-8846



Tour guide Afton Patrick, president of the Idaho Chapter, points out features at Soda Springs during a Pocatello tour.

— Photo by Douglas Cray

Jeanne Miller Retires



Jeanne Miller, Executive Director of OCTA since 1988, was honored at the OCTA Awards Banquet in advance of her retirement on September 30. In a special presentation by Jackie Lewin, Dick Ackerman and Elaine McNabney, Jeanne was recognized for her role in helping OCTA grow into the nation's leading trails preservation organization. Jeanne will be available for special assignments while the Executive Committee seeks a replacement.

Ebey Diaries Published

The second edition in OCTA's Emigrant Trails Historical Studies Series is now available in both cloth and paperback. *The 1854 Oregon Trail Diary of Winfield Scott Ebey* was edited by Susan Badger Doyle and Fred W. Dykes.

Twenty-two-year-old Winfield Scott Ebey traveled from Adair County, Missouri, to Whidbey Island, Washington Territory, with his parents and other family members in 1854. He kept a detailed, lengthy diary on the journey. He rewrote it in 1857, adding clarifications and additional information. The OCTA edition presents his expanded rewritten diary and provides comprehensive background and extensive annotations on contemporary social history and the emigrant trails.

Ebey's diary is particularly important for his descriptions of the Jeffrey Cutoff in Idaho and the Naches Pass Trail in Washington. During his journey he met several significant western men, including traders Richard and Johnny Grant, entrepreneur John Jeffrey, and legendary trails figure Ezra Meeker. He also witnessed the aftermath of the Ward train massacre near Fort Boise in which seventeen members of the Ward train were killed by Snake River Indians. The diary provides a wealth of biographical, descriptive, and factual information. It is one of the fullest, richest accounts of the Oregon Trail and the emigrant experience in the 1850s.

The more than 250-page book includes illustrations, maps, appendixes, bibliography and indexes. The cost is \$27.95 cloth and \$14.95 in paperback. Send orders to OCTA at P.O. Box 1019, Independence, MO 64051-0519. Order form, Page 15.

OCTA Presents 1997 Achievement Awards

One of the highlights of the OCTA convention is the recognition of volunteers who give of their time and who are committed to the mission of preserving the nation's endangered trail system. Here is a summary of this year's winners.

Al Mulder and William Hill Meritorious Achievement Awards

Al Mulder of Murray, Utah, and William Hill of Centereach, New York, each received the Meritorious Achievement Award, OCTA's highest honor, given to those who have contributed substantially to the goals of OCTA for a number of years.

Mr. Mulder was one of OCTA's first members in Utah and was instrumental in organizing the state's Crossroads Chapter in 1989. He served as Chapter President from 1991 to 1994 and is currently its preservation chairman. He has served on the Utah Historic Trails Consortium, whose mission is to identify and preserve the state's historic pioneer trails, and the Utah Pioneer Sesquicentennial Coordinating Council, helping coordinate activities commemorating the Mormon Pioneer Trail and the arrival of Brigham Young's first pioneer company in the Salt Lake Valley in 1847. He also was co-chairman of the committee sponsoring OCTA's 1994 national convention in Salt Lake City.

His leadership on these public committees has been matched by his dedicated work to identify and mark Utah's historic trails and landmarks for the benefit of future generations. He helped finance, design and build the handsome historic marker at Donner Spring on the Hastings Cutoff and helped map the Mormon-California Trail from Fort Bridger to Salt Lake City, as well as long stretches of the Hastings and Hensley's Salt Lake cutoffs of the California Trail.

Mr. Hill is a charter member of OCTA and has attended all fifteen of the organization's national conventions. He also served on the National Board of Directors from 1987 until 1992. Mr. Hill has authored several books on the trails, including the series *Yesterday and Today on the Oregon, California and Mormon Trails*. These books, with their painstakingly collected series of "then and now" drawings and photographs are of great value to trail fans and have helped win many converts to the issue of trail preservation. Mr. Hill is also the author of two educational study books for students, *Reading, Writing and Riding Along the California-Oregon Trails* and *Finding the Right Place*.

Mr. Hill was also the creator and first and only chair of OCTA's Education Committee, which is dedicated to bringing trail history to teachers and school children of all ages. His efforts led to OCTA's "Outstanding Educator" award.

Lesley Wischmann, Volunteer of the Year

Lesley Wischmann of Laramie, Wyoming, has been honored with the Volunteer of the Year Award.

Ms. Wischmann's award recognizes her work in creating, designing and maintaining a website for OCTA on the World Wide Web. In addition, Ms. Wischmann serves as co-moderator of the Overland Trails Mailing List, a discussion group on the



Left to Right, OCTA Award winners Olive Donaldson, Al Mulder, Lesley Wischmann and Bill Hill.

—Photo by Rose Ann Tompkins

Internet dedicated to the westward emigrant trails and the emigrant experience. The website currently receives approximately one-third of a million hits per year from individuals throughout the world seeking information about the emigrant trails. It contains information about the routes, the emigrants, the graves which still exist, related tourism sites in the various trail states, related links, photographs, as well as other information about OCTA and its activities.

The mailing list currently has about 250 subscribers and sponsors a lively debate about trail-related activities.

Gerald & Patricia Mick, Friends of the Trail

Gerald and Patricia Mick of Bellwood, Nebraska, have been named "Friends of the Trail" by the Oregon-California Trails Association.

The Micks own land on the emigrant route known as the Ox Bow Trail. To protect the remnants of the great westward migration, the Micks have marked and fenced the ruts and swales which cross their family property. The Micks welcome anyone interested in the Ox Bow Trail, willingly sharing their time, historic research, emigrant diaries, and maps of the area. Last April, they hosted nearly six hundred visitors as the Ox Bow Wagon Train, a part of the Mormon Trail Sesquicentennial Wagon Train, camped on their property overnight.

The Micks have also devoted much time and effort to landscaping a twenty-four acre section of their property along the trail to create the Ox Bow Memorial Park which was to be formally dedicated on September 6.

Richard L. Dyer, Merrill J. Mattes Award

Richard L. Dyer of Sonora, California, has received the first Merrill J. Mattes Award.

The Mattes Award, named for famed western historian Merrill Mattes, honors the author of the best article

(continued on next page)

Outstanding Educator Awards



Outstanding Educator Awards were presented at the 1997 OCTA convention to, from left to right, David Vixie, of Paradise, Calif., for middle schools; Frank Tortorich, of Pine Grove, Calif., for post secondary-adult education; Richard Forcelle of Sidney, Montana, for high schools; and Judy Gunnett, of Romona, Calif., for elementary schools. — Photo By Rose Ann Tompkins

Awards

(continued from previous page)

published during the previous year in the *Overland Journal*, the quarterly journal of scholarly research into the emigrant trails published by OCTA.

Mr. Dyer received the award for his article, entitled "*Jedediah Strong Smith: Trails West*" which appeared in the Autumn, 1996 issue. Noting that 1999 will mark the bicentennial of Jedediah Smith's birth, the manuscript invited OCTA's members to "assist in the transformation of Jedediah Strong Smith from an often unappreciated mountain man into an exemplary western hero." Mr. Dyer is an instructor of American History (emeritus) at Columbia College. He has been a student and instructor of the American West for more than thirty years.

Certificates of Appreciation

OCTA presented Certificates of Appreciation to eight individuals and two organizations.

Lyn Ryder of Boulder, Colorado, was recognized for her creative contributions to OCTA's website on the World Wide Web. Ms. Ryder, a native of Estes Park and graduate of the University of Northern Colorado, has worked for a research institute at the University of Colorado for the past seven years. She is the author of two books related to the trails: *Tragedy at the Little Blue* and *Road Ranches Along the Oregon Trail - 1858 to 1868*.

Dr. Robert R. Wier of Ouray, Colorado, was recognized for

his work in helping to maintain a website for OCTA on the World Wide Web and for serving as co-moderator of the Overland Trails Mailing List. Dr. Wier is a professor of computer technology who previously taught at Texas A&M in Commerce, Texas. This fall, he assumed a new position with Rocky Mountain College in Billings, Montana.

Olive Donaldson of Redding, California, was honored for her many years of entertaining OCTA members at their annual convention with music from the trails. Ms. Donaldson has helped to produce and distribute two tapes of trail music and, at each convention, she helps to organize the "OCTA Band" which plays trail music for the enjoyment of convention participants.

Other Certificates of Appreciation were presented for activities in conjunction with the OCTA convention. They included:

Robert "Red" Perry and the Shoshone Bannock Indian Tribal Council, "for outstanding effort and service which added to the enjoyment of the convention."

Mike Bateman and Jim Allen, OCTA Convention Co-Chairmen, "for many long hours devoted to making the 1997 OCTA Convention a resounding success."

Ward R. Crowley, "for efforts to secure a special Commemorative 1997 OCTA Convention Postal Cancellation."

Barbara Palleria and the United States Postal Service, "for providing a special Commemorative 1997 OCTA Convention Postal Cancellation."

Roger Blair, Dave Welch Assume Top OCTA Positions

The 1997 OCTA convention in Pocatello included the installation of the officers and board members who will guide the organization for the next year. In addition to the officers listed below, Jim Budde of Kansas City, Missouri, will continue as OCTA Treasurer, Helen E. Sundell, of Omaha, Nebraska, will continue as Secretary, and Tom Hunt Palo Alto, Calif. as National Preservation Officer.

President - Roger Blair

Dr. Roger Blair of Pendleton, Oregon, one of the co-founders of the Oregon-California Trails Association, was elected president of the organization.

Dr. Blair was present at the founding meeting of OCTA in August 1982 and has served the organization in many capacities, including on the Board of the Northwest Chapter and as Vice President of the Wyoming Chapter. He just completed a term on the national Board of Directors and for the last two years was Vice President of OCTA, chairing the nominating and leadership committees.

Dr. Blair received a bachelor's degree in Forestry from the University of Illinois and a master's degree from the University of Missouri. After two years as Director of Parks and Recreation in Washington County, Oregon, he spent 12 years as an outdoor recreation planner and natural resource specialist for the U.S. Department of Interior. He served as a member of the National Park Service study team evaluating the 1776 Dominguez-Escalante Trail for addition to the National Historic Trails System. Dr. Blair also worked for the Bureau of Land Management in Wyoming, overseeing portions of the Oregon, California, Mormon Pioneer and Pony Express Trails.

In 1984, Dr. Blair left federal employment to attend medical school at Creighton University in Omaha, Nebraska. He served his residency in radiology at Sacred Heart Medical Center in Spokane, Washington before accepting a position at Northern Wyoming Diagnostic Radiology in Sheridan, Wyoming. Earlier this year, Dr. Blair moved to Pendleton, Oregon, where he is employed at St. Anthony Hospital.

Vice President - Dave Welch

Dave Welch of Steilacoom, Washington, has been elected Vice President of OCTA. Mr. Welch joined OCTA in 1988 and became active in 1993 when OCTA held its convention in Baker City, Oregon, where Mr. Welch served as a tour guide. In 1995, he was elected president of the Northwest Chapter.

A native of Sacramento, Mr. Welch is descended from numerous trail emigrants. His earliest emigrant ancestors followed the Applegate Trail to Oregon in 1847. Mr. Welch is particularly interested in improving the knowledge and documentation of trail extensions into the state of Washington, including routes to the Whitman Mission (from 1836), the Naches Pass Road (1853), and the Cowlitz River-Tumwater Route (1845). Mr. Welch belongs to the Washington and Oregon State Historical Societies as well as the Steilacoom Historical Museum Association (SHMA) where he serves as vice president. Mr. Welch also serves on the Steilacoom Town Council.

Mr. Welch holds a B.S.E. in Aeronautical Engineering from the University of Michigan. After serving in management positions in both large and small corporations, he currently operates his own research consulting firm.

Five Board Members Elected

OCTA membership has re-elected two board members, elected two new members, and a fifth person has been selected to fill an unexpired term on the board.

Elected to serve second three-year terms were **Ross Marshall** of Merriam, Kansas, and **Jeanne Watson** of Summit, New Jersey and Orinda, Calif.

Mr. Marshall is a past president of OCTA, currently chairs the Chapters Committee and serves on the Long-Range Planning Committee. He is also completing a two-year term as president of the Santa Fe Trail Association. His interests in these trails have made him a frequently sought after speaker on trail history to various groups in the Kansas City area.

Ms. Watson is co-chair of OCTA's Legislative Committee and spearheaded efforts to have the California and Pony Express Trails included as National Historic Trails in 1992. She has written extensively about the trails and her book, *To the Land of Gold and Wickedness: The 1848-59 Diary of Lorena L. Hays*, received a New Jersey Writer's Award and a Certificate of Commendation from the American Association for State and Local History.

Newly elected to three-year terms on the board were **Lesley Wischmann** of Laramie, Wyoming, and **Ken Martin** of Oketo, Kansas.

A Wyoming resident since 1977, Ms. Wischmann has explored nearly the entire length of the Oregon, Mormon, and Bozeman Trails. A freelance writer, Ms. Wischmann has written about the trails for numerous national magazines and newspapers. She has just completed her first book, a biography of the 19th century fur trader Alexander Culbertson. Since 1991, Ms. Wischmann has served as the chair of OCTA's public relations committee and helped create OCTA's webpage.

Mr. Martin previously served as president of the National Pony Express Association. In this capacity, Ken worked with OCTA's Legislative Committee in a successful campaign to lobby Congress to designate the California and Pony Express Trails as National Historic Trails in 1992. Mr. Martin also served on the Kansas Tourism Board during the Sesquicentennial celebration of the Oregon Trail in 1993. He is a charter member and current vice president of OCTA's newest regional chapter, the KANZA chapter.

Dr. Victor Bolon of Sequim, Washington, has been selected to fill an unexpired term on the national Board of Directors.

A self-proclaimed "relative newcomer" to OCTA, Dr. Bolon has had a long-time interest in western history, especially the Oregon Trail, Indian wars, military campaigns, and the fur trade. Since joining OCTA, Bolon has served three terms as a Chapter director, playing an active role in trail location, mapping and marking, convention planning and fund raising.

From England To Pocatello



Richard & Ffion Wilkes traveled all the way from England for the 1997 OCTA convention in Pocatello.— Photo by Mary Mueller

Trail buffs came from all over for the 1997 OCTA convention in Pocatello, but none traveled further than Richard and Ffion Wilkes of Sussex, England.

Richard Wilkes said he got interested in trails history after seeing "Death of A Wagon Train," the Donner Party story, on British television.

Wilkes decided that he would like to travel the original Donner Party route — "I thought, naively," he admits, "that no one had ever done that before" — so he and some friends traveled to the U.S. and followed the trail from Independence, Missouri, to Donner Lake.

Fascinated, he became an OCTA member and he and Ffion decided to "go on holiday" and attend the convention in Pocatello.

"As relative newcomers to the world of 'trail buffs' and 'rut nuts' and from the UK!, we had been a little hesitant about attending," the Wilkes wrote *NFP*. "But the reassurance that we received from our good friend Al Mulder, who we had met in Grantsville last year, turned out to be fully justified. We could not have been made more welcome and quickly found ourselves feeling very much part of a family of wonderful friendly people.

"As expected," they added, "the time spent at Pocatello greatly added to our knowledge and understanding of American history, whetting our appetite for more of the same and, following quite a few visits to the Book Room, we now have plenty of reading to do this winter!" — *Bill Martin*

Oregon OCTA Members Cited

OCTA members Lowell Tiller and Richard Ackerman have been presented Certificates of Appreciation signed by Oregon Governor John Kitzhaber and Cheryl Gribskov, executive director of Oregon's Travel Information Council.

Ackerman and Tiller are long-time members of Oregon's Historical Marker Committee and in recent years have also been involved personally restoring some of the committee markers.

They have also applied wood preservative to all of the markers the organization has scattered throughout the state.

"Dick and Lowell have done great work in establishing and maintaining markers along Oregon's highways," said Dave Welch, president of the Northwest Chapter. "Often the maintenance side is neglected once the 'ribbon cutting' is done, but they are pushing to insure that markers are there for the long run. They have recruited volunteers to do much of the repair and restoration work."

— *Dave Welch*



Ackerman, left, and Tiller

Award For Randy Brown

On National Trails Day, June 7, OCTA member Randy Brown of Douglas, Wyoming, was named the 1997 VIBRAM Volunteer of the Year for the State of Wyoming.

Vibram Soles, a charter sponsor of National Trails Day, presented the award and it was nice to have a historian receive the award instead of limiting it to backpackers and hikers. There is no doubt that Randy has worn out some shoe soles with his extensive marking of the Oregon-California-Mormon trail.

The award consisted of a very nice plaque, shirts, trail books, gear bag, sport socks, insect repellents, etc. A nice little package of goodies.

The recent Mormon Wagon Train didn't have any problem following the trails. All they had to do is follow the OCTA trail markers, most of which were installed by Brown.

— *Lee Underbrink*

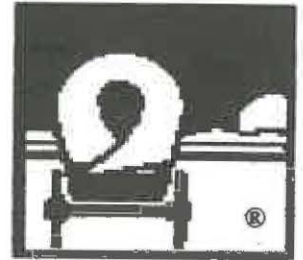
"The Gold Rush" on PBS

The 150th anniversary of the start of the California Gold Rush will be marked with a PBS special scheduled for Tuesday, January 20, 1998. Gold was discovered on January 24, 1848, kicking off a flood of overland travel to California. "The Gold Rush," underwritten by Wells Fargo Bank, was produced by Steven Boettcher and Michael Trinklein, who collaborated on PBS' "The Oregon Trail" in 1995. Consult your local PBS station for exact broadcast times. for "The Gold Rush."



WAGON WHEELS ON THE INTERNET

Visit the Oregon-California Trails Association website
<http://bobcat.etsu.edu/octa/>



HOT LINKS ON THE INTERNET TRAIL

Website Is Moving

The OCTA website will be moving!! For the time being, it can still be accessed at:

<http://bobcat.tamu-commerce.edu/octa/>

but it will soon be following Bob Wier to Rocky Mountain College in Billings, Montana.

We are working very hard to make sure that the transition is smooth and fairly painless for everyone but there may be some glitches along the way — this is technology, after all — but we hope that there will be a minimum of disruption in the service.

The Overland Trails mailing list will also be moving but this should have virtually no impact on current subscribers. We will let everyone know the new address for the website and also the new subscribing directions for the Overland Trails mailing list as soon as it is available.

— Lesley Wischmann

Crossroads Website

At the Internet workshop in Pocatello, I made an appeal to the OCTA chapters to develop their own websites to be linked into the OCTA website.

Well, I am happy (thrilled is more like it!) to announce that Steve Berlin, who found out about OCTA through our website and came to Pocatello because of the info he found there, picked up the ball for the Crossroads (Utah) chapter and has developed a great website.

Since we are in the process of moving the OCTA website, it will be a bit before we get it linked in, but in the meantime, you can see Steve's work by going directly to:

<http://www.metrogourmet.com/crossroads>

Steve has also graciously offered to talk with any of the chapters about his efforts and, of course, Lyn Ryder and I are always out here ready to assist. Come on, chapters, let's get all of you on line!!

— Lesley Wischmann

Getting Started

Here's a recent posting on the Overland Trails List Server that might be of interest to many amateur trails researchers. It started with a question:

"I have just joined the list and don't know where to start in my search of my California trail g-g-grandparents. Are there histories/lists of various wagon trains/masters? I know, by family myths (one of which can't be true according to dates) that the Smith family and the Card family came over Oregon/Calif. trails, possibly together. Have info after arrival in Calif. Can you lead me in the 'right' direction?"

A quick response came from OCTA member Lyn Ryder:

"Well, I will jump in here and submit that you check into the archival material held by the Oregon-California Trails Association (OCTA). The web site is:

<http://bobcat.tamu-commerce.edu/octa/>

"The COED program within OCTA is designed to survey and record all instances of names, dates, place names, etc. from known journals, diaries, letters, etc. of people who traveled the trails west. There is a fee for a search of their data base, as well as for a search of their other program, OEN, which is a data base of names.

"That would be a bit of a start for you at least. Also a check of the records in the historical society of the city or county where your ancestors moved to/lived in California might be helpful if you have not done so."

A New Website

As a service to undergraduates in Cal-Berkeley's introductory U.S. History courses, I have been compiling a list of on-line resources for state and local histories in the American West.

At the moment, this list is organized by state and province for both the U.S. and Canada. Because the standard search engines overlook so many useful sites, I want to invite you to submit your favorite links either to me directly at

jeseim@uclink2.berkeley.edu

or by filling out the form at my web page,

<http://www.geocities.com/Yosemite/7835/states.htm>

For now, I am interested in sites that deal with state and local histories only, particularly because Catherine Lavender's WestWeb (at <http://ucsu.Colorado.EDU/~frontera/>) already undertakes to provide a comprehensive catalog of western-related web sites.

— Jody Seim Timmins - jeseim@uclink2.berkeley.edu

Learning To "WebCrawl"

Trying to figure out how to find the information you need on the World Wide Web? Here's a tutorial tool passed along by Lesley Wischmann at her Internet Workshop in Pocatello. It's called "Learning To WebCrawl" and you can find it at:

<http://www.lib.uwyo.edu/webcrawl>

It is an introduction to searching the World Wide Web. WebCrawler emphasizes the fundamental process and preparation for searching and can be applied to any search program. It's easy to follow and a real door opener for anyone who might feel a little intimidated by the WWW.

On The Mormon Trail . . . A "Pilgrim's" Report

By Candy Moulton

Day after day, for 91 consecutive days, modern-day pioneers — "pilgrims" they called themselves — trekked over the Mormon Trail from the Missouri River communities of Council Bluffs and Omaha to Salt Lake City.

And when they arrived in July, tens of thousands of people came to greet them, and to express appreciation for what they'd done. At This Is The Place State Park on July 22, some 51,000 people yelled and waved, sang and cried as the Mormon Trail Wagon Train arrived.

The welcome continued on July 24 when the wagons and walkers who had gone the

entire distance appeared in the Days of '47 Parade through downtown Salt Lake City. The wagon train was the next to last entry in the two-hour parade and as it started down South Temple Street the thousands upon thousands of people — an estimated 300,000 to 400,000 — became a wave.

They stood and cheered. They saluted and they signaled "I love you" in sign language. Everyone on the wagon train was overwhelmed by the three-day welcome as they realized just how much this trip had focused the eyes of the world on the historic migration.

The Mormon migration is unique in the western settlement story for it is the tale of an entire community of people—70,000 of them—who packed their belongings and started new lives in an unknown land.

The Mormon story is one of people seeking to preserve fundamental freedoms, and it is tempered with the sobering

reality of the Willie and Martin handcart companies. Those travelers became stranded in the Sweetwater Valley in October 1856 and more than 200 died of starvation and exposure in the greatest tragedy of all the western migration epic.

This was not my first wagon train. I'd traveled on and reported from the Bridger Trail in 1990 as part of the Wyoming Centennial and I'd done the same in 1993 on the Oregon Trail. The Mormon Trail wagon train involved 30 wagons that went the entire distance, many of which had traveled last year from Nauvoo to Omaha, and this year it also had a handcart company



The 1997 Mormon Wagon Train Re-Enactment, on the trail southwest of Farson, Wyoming, in early July.

— Photo by L.A. Jansen

of ten carts and 20 people. Another 30 wagons and more than twice that many handcarts joined for short stretches on the trail.

In many ways the 1997 trek was historically accurate. Most participants wore 19th century attire, many slept in their wagons or in tents (although quite a few had motor homes with conveniences such as microwaves, TVs, and showers), some cooked for themselves using 19th century foods and cooking utensils. However, there were modern influences — particularly cellular telephones and radios used by wagon masters to stay in touch with each other and to contact officials such as highway, railroad, and county authorities.

"Along the trail people collapsed from heat exhaustion, they went to hospitals with broken ribs and injured legs, some had diarrhea or upset stomachs, most had blisters and chapped lips ..."

Teamsters and walkers disagreed with decisions made by wagon masters at times questioning their actions. In Utah they castigated Wagon Masters Bob and Gordon Lowe for taking the wagons down an incredibly steep hill without requiring extra space between each wagon and the one preceding it and

without putting on skid shoes or tying extra horses onto the back of wagons to hold them from going too steeply down the hill. That decision to descend at East Canyon led to a spectacular wagon crash and the near destruction of the wagon itself. Injuries in that incident for the most part were minor.

Along the trail people collapsed from heat exhaustion, they went to hospitals with broken ribs and injured legs, some had diarrhea or upset stomachs, most had blisters and chapped lips, nearly everyone had a sore throat or cold at some point on the trip. Mosquitos chewed hungrily and every morning the



Mormon wagon crossing the Green River at Lombard Ferry, Wyoming.

— Photo by L.A. Jansen

roosters crowed to awaken the camp.

As a journalist it was my job to chronicle the trip, to write of the people, the participants in this trek. As a person it became impossible not to become a participant myself. I helped feed and water horses and mules, pitched a tent at night and took it down before dawn, drove the mules, rode in the wagon, walked, and got to know many of the thousands of people who also participated.

I clearly recall the first day I met Joseph Johnstun, who walked the entire Mormon Trail from Nauvoo to Salt Lake City. We'd stopped for lunch in eastern Nebraska and

I asked him why he was on the trail. He pulled a sock from his leather bag and carefully took two small photographs in antique frames out of it. The people in the pictures were his great-grandparents, who had crossed the trail.

The rallying cry of PILGRIMS! by Tennessee John and the handcart cadence led by Heber Dew are written in my pages of notes. And etched permanently in my mind and on film is the picture of Bob Johnson leaning into the wind of the Sweetwater valley and carrying the American flag. There are many other similar situations carefully chronicled in my reporter's notebooks, snippets of trail life captured as I shared an 1,175-mile journey.

July 21, when I walked up Big Mountain with Elizabeth Pietsch of Vienna, and first saw the Salt Lake Valley from that vantage point, I couldn't keep from thinking of my children's forebears, who crossed that same divide on foot in November 1856, survivors of the Willie Handcart ordeal.

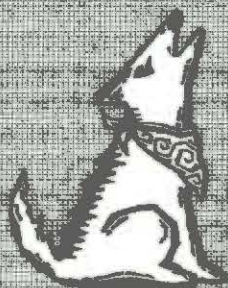
And as the wagon moved through Salt Lake City the reaction from the Days of '47 Parade watchers truly stunned me. As they'd done for three days, many people yelled and clapped, they shouted "thank you." I caught the eyes of one woman with tears rolling down her cheeks who said, "Thank you so very much for making this trip." And my own tears fell.

—
Candy Moulton is the author of seven nonfiction historical books, including *Roadside History of Nebraska*, *Roadside History of Wyoming*, *Salt Lake City Uncovered*, and *Wagon Wheels: A Contemporary Journey on the Oregon Trail*. The text for her Mormon Trail articles are available on the Internet at <http://www.mormontrail.net>, a site developed by the Casper Star-Tribune.



Mormon re-enactment camp at Lombard Ferry, Wyoming.

— Photo by Lesley Wischmann



NEWS FROM THE CHAPTERS

KANZA

Youth relived a part of the past and learned more about the history of the Oregon-California Trail during the KANZA Chapter's first "Kids Day" on Sunday, June 22. We asked each OCTA member to bring kids, grandkids or borrow a kid. In this way, we had kids of all ages and could see what age group to target in the future.

The day started at the Hollenberg Pony Express Station, a restored original site, near Hanover. Each kid was given a ribbon to wear and a "possibles" bag, made by chapter members. Duane Durst, curator of the historic site, sat down on the grass amongst the youngsters and gave a short talk on its history. Afterwards the group was given a tour of the old station and each one was given a souvenir token.

Games such as kids would have played after a long day's trek over the trail were enjoyed by all. Our first game was a stick horse race, with horses, complete with *mochila*, provided by Bill and Molly Ledeboer. Even a couple of older kids (OCTA members) took part. Next the kids chased barrel hoops, made by Ernie White. This was quite a challenge, but some of them managed it real well.

Each child present helped to drive a carsonite post marking the spot where the Oregon-California and Pony Express Trails crossed Cottonwood Creek south of the station. We then visited the new Visitors Center and were served cookies and cold pop by the Friends of Hollenberg.

The group then journeyed to Alcove Spring, a major camping spot on the Oregon Trail, south of Marysville, to hear a member of the Alcove Spring Preservation Association tell about the history of this site. There, Yvonne Larson and Nancy Nolte, dressed in period clothing, demonstrated how to do laundry in a stream. The children took turns washing items with homemade lye soap.

While the adults went over to a meadow to prepare for a cookout, Glenn Larson took the kids on a hike to view swales in the area. Mike and Janice Lyhane, Mike Philbrick and Rosemary Forst provided the food.

After eating, the youngsters got to make ropes on a rope-making machine provided by Doc Maskill, while under the shade trees, others were grinding wheat on a grinding stone which was used by Indians and found on the Scott Farm near Westmoreland. Before leaving, each kid received a packet of handouts with Oregon Trail information. Our chapter plans on making this an annual event.

— Arleta Martin



Ben White, son of OCTA members Ernie and Della White, leads a group of youngsters measuring for a carsonite marker near Hollenberg Station during the KANZA Chapter's Kids Day.

California-Nevada

Some 150 CA-NV chapter members attended the Pocatello convention, including 15 first-timers. They brought back good memories and great photographs.

Now, the chapter is already meeting to plan the 1999 OCTA convention in Chico. Preliminary plans include a visit to Bruff's Camp on the Lassen Trail and, a day at the Empire Mine in Nevada City. Pre-convention tours of the 40-Mile Desert and over the Carson and Beckwourth Trails are in the works.

In Pocatello, three California teachers were honored at the convention for educational efforts, including Judy Gunnett of Ramona, David Vixie of Paradise and Frank Tortorich of Pine Grove. Doyle Reed of Davis received a certificate of appreciation for his five years on the national board and his many years on the chapter board.

— Pat Loomis

MORE NEWS FROM THE CHAPTERS

Northwest

Approximately 40 members of the Northwest Chapter travelled to Pocatello to partake in the grand rendezvous known as the OCTA Convention. As usual, it was a splendid event with good friends, good trails and a great overall presentation by Mike Bateman and his team. I am not sure that Pendleton can match the added drama of the pre-convention tours that was provided by the embellishments of thunder, lightning and ankle deep hail. But we will try.

The Northwest chapter's primary activities during the past three months have been convention planning and trail marking. The 1998 convention will bring you "Out of the Blues" and onto the plateau of Eastern Oregon. Your own walk down the last hill while marking the route with the NPS/OCTA markers is planned. With luck, a clear day will provide a view to the volcanoes of the Cascades as described by Narcissa Whitman in 1836. Dick Ackerman, Lowell Tiller and Carol Ann Buss are leading convention activities.

Nebraska

The Nebraska OCTA chapter spring trail trek over the OxBow Trail on April 26 was a great opportunity to explore an area new to all attending. Gerald and Patricia Mick of Bellwood, Nebraska, graciously led the group.

Our tour followed the trail southeast of Bellwood west into Polk County. We saw the Platte River Valley from the spot the pioneers first saw it. Excerpts from the *Journal of Western Travel* by John McTurk Gibson, read by great-great-grandson Weldon Hoppe, gave us the pioneer description of the valley. The pioneer music we heard perfectly described the weather of this day, a bit cool.

We explored the Shinn's Ferry site. Rope marks left by the ferry are still visible on a tree on the south bank. Our tour took us near the Gardiner ranch and Savannah, long ago the Butler County seat, no longer in existence, the site of an Indian village and other road ranches in the area. Pleasant View Cemetery, on the trail, was another of our stops. This cemetery will be rededicated when the OxBow Wagon Train stops here April 30.

A visit to the OxBow Memorial Park was most enjoyable. From the park, our route took us to some very impressive swales. We followed swales in Polk County, our last stop was near the site of the Newell ranch and trading post. Future tours on this trail are planned. The OxBow Trail, from old Fort Kearney, Nebraska City, to near new Fort Kearny west of Grand Island, was traveled from the mid-1840s until the shorter Nebraska City cut off was surveyed in the mid 1860s. The OxBow Memorial Park, 24 beautifully landscaped acres, is on private property owned by Gerald and Patricia Mick. For access, please write or call the owners at Route 1 Box 158, Bellwood, NE 68624. Phone (402) 538-3955.

— Corrine Rickner

As a result of the receipt of a Challenge Cost Share Grant from the National Park Service, trail marking is in full swing. The work is focused on the portion of the Oregon Trail from LaGrande to Echo. The project includes an overall survey of trail condition, revisiting and documenting previously marked segments, identifying landowners and marking new segments. GPS measurements are used to record each marker location. Vic Bolon is leading this work.

The Northwest Chapter's final event for this year is a two-day meeting in Walla Walla on October 4-5. Saturday afternoon will include presentations on routes in the Walla Walla area, with emphasis on those leading to the Whitman Mission. Sources state that emigrants left the trail after descending the Blues to go north to the Whitman Mission. One might conclude that there is one obvious route; however, preliminary research indicates that there were in fact many alternatives. Driving tours will be offered on Sunday to explore some of the routes discussed the previous day. Lethene and Dick Parks are responsible for this event.

— Dave Welch

Upcoming Activities

Selected events sponsored by OCTA Chapters. Schedule subject to change. If no contact name is provided, contact individual chapters for details.

October 18 -- Nebraska Chapter, OxBow Trail Trek. Meet at 10 a.m. the John McBride Belnap Memorial, northside of Silver Street Bridge, Auburn, Nebraska.

October 29 - November 5 -- (TENTATIVE) -- Southwest Chapter Fall Trail Mapping in New Mexico. Contact: Rose Ann Tompkins, (602) 963-3565.

November 9 - Kanza Chapter General Meeting, 2 p.m., Sunflower Room at Westmoreland. Call Vern Osborne, (785) 494-2449.

November 25 - Trails Head Chapter Annual Meeting, 6:45 p.m., West Wyandotte Library, Kansas City. Contact: Mary Conrad, (913) 278-4405.

December 14 - Kanza Chapter, Old Fashioned Christmas at Hollenberg Station.

February 7, 1998 - California-Nevada Chapter Winter Seminar at Mariposa.

FROM THE CHAPTERS

Trails Head

This has been a busy year for the Trails Head chapter, starting last January when Jim Lee, Howard Magerl and Jim Budde staffed a table at the Kansas Day event at Johnson County Community College to promote the chapter and historic trails.

In the spring, Trails Head awarded cash prizes to two entries at the two regional History Day contests in the Kansas City metropolitan area. At the Kansas regional held at Shawnee Mission Northwest High School, Barbara Magerl and Ross Marshall judged the entries related to historic trails. Barbara also judged at the Missouri regional held at the Wornall House. Trails Head soon will consider whether to sponsor cash prizes for the upcoming History Day season for which the theme will be "Migrations in History."

In May, Jim Budde attended a fact-finding meeting of the Raytown Sesquicentennial Commission as a representative of Trails Head. The city of Raytown is exploring possibilities for trail signage. Jim suggested the city again use green signs shaped like covered wagons. Years ago, Boy Scouts put up such signs in the Raytown area. Only three of these "wagon" signs remain.

In June, the Trails Head executive committee voted a \$200 donation to assist in the printing of 5,000 copies of a trail map developed by the Kansas City Area Trail Association. The trail map will include Johnson, Leavenworth and Wyandotte counties of Kansas.

On June 21, Trails Head sponsored a bus tour from Westport Landing to Westport. Ross Marshall provided commentary throughout the day. The focus of the tour was the early trail system linking the Missouri River to Westport and downtown Kansas City. These routes developed between the 1820s and 1850s. The first stop on the tour was the Andrew Drips Park, the first park in Kansas City. Next the group took a short walking tour in the area of Lewis and Clark Point. When stopped at the River Market area, the mural at the Arabia Museum was used to discuss the terrain from Westport Landing to Westport. The group picnicked at Penn Valley Park.

The Santa Fe Trail marker beside the former St. Mary's Hospital was the first stop after lunch. The participants then took a walking tour of Union Cemetery. After another short bus ride, the group took a walking tour of Westport. An unplanned bonus was a tour of Kelly's Bar, which was the E. Boone store in early Westport. When the group was standing outside the building, Jersey Bob, a Kelly's bartender, invited the walkers to hear about the inside of the building. Jersey Bob even took the group into the basement. The day of touring ended at the historical markers in the Westport Shopping Center.

— Mary Conrad

OCTA Store Policies

The OCTA Store is the official distributor of books, maps and other merchandise produced by OCTA and other publishers and manufacturers. The Store sells merchandise at the Annual Convention, through the Annual OCTA Catalog, and in the Museum Shop at the National Frontier Trails Center in Independence. All funds derived from the sale of merchandise are returned to OCTA's General Fund.

The OCTA Store is always interested in selling trail-related publications and merchandise. Individuals and organizations who desire to have the Store sell their merchandise need to contact the Store Manager at OCTA Headquarters in Independence to ascertain the conditions under which their merchandise will be considered for sale. A sample of the merchandise should accompany each request. The sample will not be returned. A written response to each request will be provided regarding saleability and suitability for OCTA's customers.

During the last several conventions a number of individuals and organizations have come to the Annual Convention with merchandise and requested the OCTA Store to display and sell their products. While these requests have been infrequent, they have reached a level that has become burdensome. Therefore, the OCTA Store has adopted a policy of not accepting any items for sale at the convention unless prior arrangements have been made with the Store Manager.

Charlie Yount Passing

All trail enthusiasts, preservationists and rut nuts lost a real friend with the death of Charles (Charlie) Yount of Gering, Nebraska in July. Charlie was owner of the Robidoux Pass Ranch, the last ranch on the right along the gravel road up to the top of Robidoux Pass.

He was very proud that his ranch was crossed by the original Oregon Trail and still had extant ruts and swales. He was willing to spend his time to show anyone where the trail was located and knew the history of the migration through this part of Nebraska.

I first met Charlie in 1988 at Robidoux Pass during my first experience of following the Oregon Trail. He took two hours of his day to drive me around and show me the trail and the sites. Every year I visited after that, I remember his commanding voice, "Get in my truck, I have something to show you." I would get in and he would spend as much time as it would take to show me what he wanted me to see.

Any trail fan heading down Robidoux Pass Road and running into Charlie would be in for an exciting experience and make a friend with this outgoing, warm and delightful person. If you ever met Charlie, you know what I mean. If you didn't, you missed a real friend of the Trails. Cards and memorials can be sent to The Charles Yount Family, P.O. Box 441, Gering, NB 69341.

— Ken Sosalla

From the National Trails Preservation Office

The following is excerpted from National Preservation Officer Tom Hunt's report to the Board of Directors in August.

The participation and cooperation of OCTA members in the mapping and sites and segments selections for the National Park Service's Comprehensive Management Plan has been nothing less than magnificent. We will meet our goal of making the technical aspects of this CMP as good as humanly possible. The cause of historic trails preservation owes an unending vote of thanks to these members who are giving so generously and freely of their expertise, time and energy.

In other areas:

Black Rock/High Rock, Nevada -- The Winnemucca BLM is holding scoping meetings on either a revision or a complete rewrite of its Black Rock Desert Management Plan, which is now 15 or 20 years old. So far, the public input has been most supportive of protection for the area and particularly for the historic trails. In fact, the public has been asking for greater protection and over a larger area than is in the proposed National Conservation Area proposal. This is very encouraging, but the mining interests have not entered the fray yet, so it is difficult to say what the final BLM response is going to be. The mining interests always have big political clout in Nevada politics.

City of Rocks, Idaho -- OCTA has received official confirmation that the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation supports the NPS in its decision to declare Twin Sisters off limits to rock climbers. The Access Fund (the rock

climbing organization which requested that the NPS decision be reversed) can still go into court to ask that the decision be reversed, but the Advisory Council support greatly strengthens the NPS position in this matter. The Access Fund is a very persistent group, however, and it should not be underestimated. Just recently they forced (by threatening a suit) the BLM to open a cave in Nevada to continued climbing after the BLM had closed it due to dangerous conditions. OCTA will have to keep a close eye on this one.



*The Fort Hall Replica was a popular spot for shutterbugs.
-- Photo by Bill Martin*

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Postcards From Pocatello



The OCTA Band performs in Pocatello.

-- Photo by Bill Martin



Convention co-chair Mike Bateman welcomes OCTA to Pocatello..

-- Photo by Bill Martin



Dancers from the Shoshone-Bannock Tribe entertained OCTA..

-- Photo by Bill Martin



Left to right, Bill Hill, Dock Farren, Eloise Crary, Gordon Perry and Jan Hill at the Fort Hall Replica.

— Photo by Douglas Crary



OCTA members walked in the actual footsteps of emigrants during a convention outing.

— Photo by Douglas Crary

Postcards From Pocatello



*A crowded book room during Author's Night in Pocatello.
-- Photo by Bill Martin*



*"Mountainman" Gordon Perry with a display of antique weaponry at the Fort Hall Replica..
-- Photo by Bill Martin*

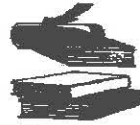


*Ranch owner Carol Woodbury shows a preserved grave site during one of OCTA's Pocatello field trips.
-- Photo by Douglas Crary*



*Red Perry of the Shoshone-Bannock Tribe gives OCTA his unique perspective during the outing at Portneuf Point..
-- Photo by Bill Martin*

The Reading Trail



by Lyndia Carter

It has just dawned on me that I am not writing this column for kids, but for adults, like myself, (namely, grandparents, teachers, maybe even some parents), who are associated with kids. As such, I have a confession to make. I read children's and young adult books mostly because I like them. I enjoyed them as a child and I have never outgrown the love. I hope I never do. It is nice to have a legitimate, grown-up type reason for reading these books, that is pretending to be some kind of expert who can recommend them to children and to adults who work with children or who want to find good reading material for their children or grandchildren. It makes a good excuse to give my husband, anyway. However, without the cover of "Buffalo Chips", I have to come out of the closet and admit this love relationship I have with children's books. Then, too, I must face the fact that I am really writing for adult members of the Oregon-California Trails Association. I hope you adults will be as forgiving of my style (and enthusiasm) as my students, kids, and grandkids have been through the years. I like to think that there are some of you, like myself, that just plain find kids' books a good, relaxing read, and will want to read some of these for yourself. However, if your students, kids, or grandkids are lucky, you will share these books with them. I do sincerely recommend "read-aloud" with them; you and the kids both win with that method, even the older ones who you may mistakenly think are too big to enjoy the activity. Try it, you'll like it, (and so will they), and that's a promise!

Every journey along the Oregon-California-Mormon Trail had to begin somewhere and some kind of life preceded the journey. Many families that took the trail had already been on the move and had previously built homes in the wilderness, on the frontier that was constantly moving west. This first book, **A Pioneer Sampler: The Daily Life of a Pioneer Family in 1840**, tells what was involved in being a pioneer and what life was like for those who settled in the wilderness in the 1840's. Settling in Oregon, Utah or California in those years would have been no different, only more isolated, and perhaps more difficult. Author Barbara Greenwood fashioned a great treasure when she wrote this book and illustrator Heather Collins enriched the wonderful text with profuse and lovely pictures that are sure to warm the heart, as well as educate. Houghton Mifflin Company of Boston is the publisher (copyright 1994). The book is basically factual, but utilizes a fictional family, the Robertsons, and fictional setting to teach about history. A story line runs through the book,

keeping up children's interest. Side-bars and diagrams, and learning pages are interspersed frequently between the episodes. There are even many "hands-on" learning activities. It is really an irresistible combination. Between the covers of this book a vast amount of history lurks to entertain and inform children about the past and enlighten them about pioneer living. I recommend it highly, and teachers, I really think this book will be an asset to your classroom teaching that you would not want to do without. It is a great addition to the student reading shelf. This book is 238 pages of enjoyable and worthwhile learning! Kids from six to sixteen can find much to learn in this book, although the story-line is probably best for the elementary grades. Look for this book in better children's bookstores and your public library, or order from the publisher, Houghton Mifflin Company, 215 Park Avenue South, New York, NY, 10003.

This next book is a fictional trail story. **Facing West: A Story of the Oregon Trail** by Kathleen V. Kudlinski is part of the "Once Upon America" series published by Puffin Books. In 1845 Ben's family decides to make the journey to Oregon. His father wants to follow his dream of owning land and being a farmer and also sees the new country as a possible cure for Ben's severe asthma. As with all families going west, they must face many "elephants." For Ben the danger is surviving his attacks of asthma; for others it is illness, dangerous river crossings, the desert, fear of Indians, never-ending dust, and the many other frightening forms the "elephant" takes. Ben learns to cope with his asthma and has many adventures during the journey. He makes friends with the train's mountainman guide, Pete, and a rough and tumble kid named Zack who keep Ben's life exciting. Because of his asthma, Ben is assigned to keep the family journal since he cannot do hard work. But Ben finds a friend in the pages of the journal and learns to express himself through his words and drawings. The journey to Oregon is long and hard, and Ben sometimes wonders if his asthma has sent him and his family on a trip they will regret. But Ben conquers the trail and his illness. Young readers ages eight to thirteen will enjoy traveling with Ben, Pete and Zack. The many illustrations add charm to an already highly-interesting story. This book can be found at most bookstores that sell young people's fiction or can be ordered from Puffin Books, 375 Hudson Street, New York, NY

10014, (copyright 1994).

The most admirable thing about this next book is that it is a pure delight to read. It will tickle the funny-bone and warm the heart and maybe even teach a little history. I recommend this to junior high school readers for pleasure reading on their own and for families of elementary children for a fun read-aloud with parents. I even recommended this book to my seventy-two-year old mother for enjoyment. I hope you will forgive me that this isn't a trail book, but every journey came to an end, you know. Then there were adjustments to be made in the new homeland and that adjustment is a part of the story of the westward movement, as well. For a young adolescent learning to be happy in an alien place with strangers was not always easy. **The Ballad of Lucy Whipple** by Karen Cushman lightheartedly tells the fictional tale of one twelve-year old's adjustment, or rather her determination not to become adjusted, to life in a California gold camp from 1849 to 1852. California Morning Whipple's family traveled by sea to California in 1849, her mother trying to fulfill the dream she shared with her husband before he died in the East. After arriving at the gold fields, California Morning helps her mother run a boarding house,

or rather boarding tent, for miners. Detesting the name California Morning because she hates California, she changes her name to Lucy. Through her letters to her grandparents back in Massachusetts and her delightful first-person narrative, Lucy shares her thoughts, emotions, and experiences. The book is clever and witty; the characterization rich. The reader cannot help but fall in love with Lucy, her family, and her other associates in Lucky Diggins. This story also gives some interesting insights into family relationships, friendship, and life during the gold rush. Admittedly it is not the best history, but then again it really isn't too bad; however, any child who has had to move because his/her parents moved will relate to this young girl and will smile a lot and cry a little as they read her adventures. You should be able to locate this book in many bookstores; if they don't have it, they can likely order it for you. Also try your public library. It is published by Clarion Books, a division of Houghton Mifflin Company (copyright 1996), whose address is listed with A Pioneer Sampler.

Have a joyous journey on the reading trail.

— Lyndia Carter

Letters...Letters...Letters...Letters...Letters...Letters

Letters are always welcome, but are subject to editing due to space considerations. Letters should be sent to Editor, News From The Plains, 1908 Tuolumne Dr., Reno NV 89523-1228. They also may be sent via e-mail to: words@worldnet.att.net.

Editor, NFP

I was pleased to see my letter about "son of a gun" stew used in the latest issue of *News From The Plains*, but wondered what had happened to the Spanish name for milk gut, *tripas de leche*, which came out *trips de leech*. Did you turn the spelling over to a word processor that does not know Spanish? I have managed to look foolish often enough of my own without getting done in by a darn microchip or whatever it was.

Dick Chamberlain

Flournoy, Calif.

Ed: I wish I had a micro-processor to blame this one on. Can only blame it on editorial fallibility.

Editor, NFP

In researching a claim that 3,000 Shasta Indian Warriors were poisoned on November 4, 1851, in Scott Valley, Siskiyou County, California, I find that the only contemporary account is a copy of an article, presented by modern Shasta Indians, from the *Jefferson Barracks Gazette*, dated May 7, 1866. I am

looking for any copies of any date of any papers published at Jefferson Barracks, Missouri, in order to compare an authentic copy with the one presented here in Siskiyou County.

Keith Arnold

2131 Wickow Woods Drive

Yreka, CA 96097-9579

Editor, NFP

As a result of attending the Pocatello OCTA Convention, I learned that Peter Gabriel was a guide for Frederick W. Lander during the survey and building of the Lander Road. I also, recently, learned that my Great Grandmother's maiden name was Gabriel. A connection? I will now be looking for any information on Peter Gabriel, the fur trapper and mountain man. If anyone has information on Peter Gabriel or can send me in the right direction to find out, please call or write.

Ken Sosalla

1764 Blackhawk Trail

Waukesha WI 53186

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