

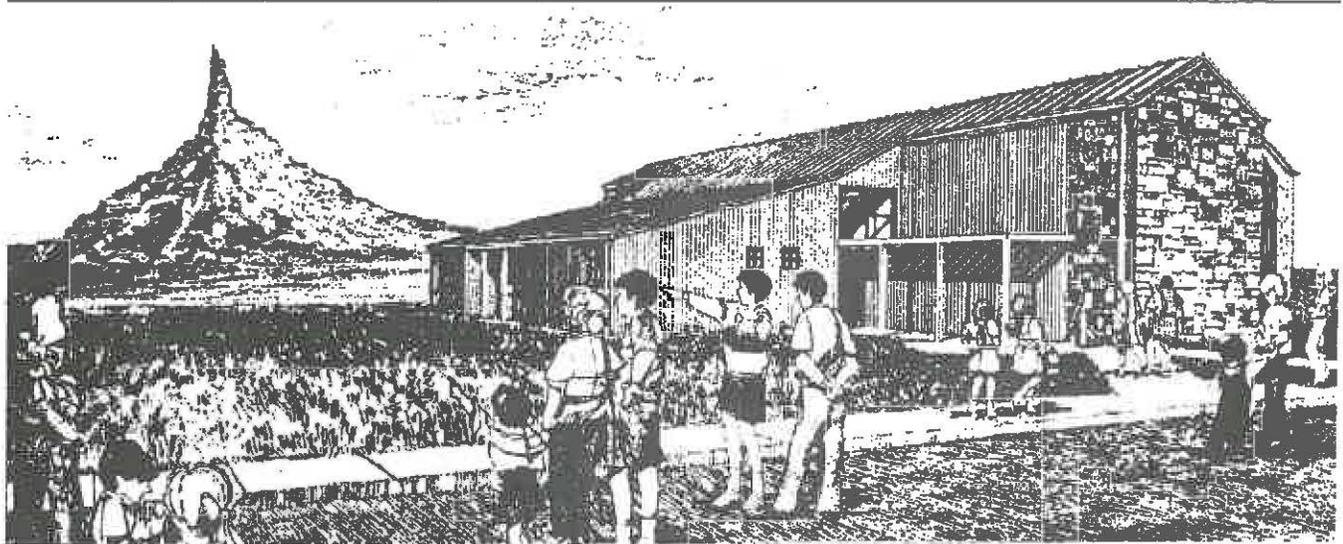


APRIL  
1993

# NEWS FROM THE PLAINS

THE OREGON-CALIFORNIA TRAILS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

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



## CHIMNEY ROCK VISITORS CENTER TO BE REALITY

by James Denney

Ground will be broken Friday, June 11, as the start of construction for the Nebraska State Historical Society's \$500,000 visitor center-museum at Chimney Rock National Historic Site near Bayard, Nebraska.

Lawrence Sommer, director of the society, made the announcement recently as a conclusion to a financial drive in which the society raised about \$613,000, all in contributions from foundations and individuals. The \$500,000 will be used for construction and the completion of exhibits. The remainder of the money will be for maintenance and upkeep.

The center will be open year-around except for Christmas and Thanksgiving. It replaces a temporary trailer that was installed in 1967 during the Nebraska Centennial. The trailer is virtually worn out, although it will still be in use during June, July and August this year as part of the Oregon California Trail's 150th anniversary observance in Nebraska.

An indication of how much importance Nebraska places on Chimney Rock is that it appears on the 1993 state auto license plates.

Sommer emphasized that the center will focus primarily on Chimney Rock itself and how it became the best known

landmark on the Oregon, California and Mormon Trails as well as the Pony Express. It will include a geological explanation of how it was formed into its unusual shape through erosion.

In his book, "The Great Platte River Road," Merrill Mattes of Littleton, CO, devotes an entire chapter to Chimney Rock and mentions that of all the landmarks on the trail, Chimney Rock was described in detail in more diaries than any other geological site.

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Members of OCTA are welcome to attend the ground-breaking ceremonies which are still being planned, Sommer said. He added his thanks to the many OCTA members who contributed to the financing of the center.

In 1990, members of the OCTA board of directors voted to endorse the project during a meeting in Independence, MO, after the dedication of the new OCTA Trails Center. They agreed to permit the Nebraska State Historical Society to use OCTA's mailing list which the society did. Many OCTA members made contributions.

The new center will be named in honor of Ethel and Christopher J. Abbott, long-time Nebraska residents. Both Ethel and her husband were pioneers in the Nebraska aviation industry.

Mrs. Abbott's husband was a rancher and banker. He was killed in an airplane crash near Shreveport, La. in 1954.

Mrs. Abbott died in Omaha last May. Her foundation, the Ethel Abbott Charities Foundation, made the final \$250,000 contribution to put the project over the top in its money raising efforts.

Sommer said the museum will not have many artifacts, although there will be clothing worn by a man and woman who are known to have stopped at Chimney Rock. There will be numerous copies of paintings and illustrations done by pioneer artists and trail travelers to show how Chimney Rock appeared to them.

Perhaps the most significant artifact will be trail blazer John C. Fremont's original maps of the trail. They were purchased for the society by a California organization known as "Californians for Nebraska."

A small theater will be available for a slide presentation and interpretation to and explain the importance of the rock both to trail travel and to American

Indians. School children of western Nebraska will be welcome to come to the center as part of their study of Nebraska history.

Land on which the center will be located was donated by Gordon Howard of Bayard, who operates a covered wagon concession near Chimney Rock in which he takes tourists on trips near the rock to see original ruts and for evening cookouts.

The center is in an ideal location for photographers, Sommer said. It will have an electronic map, allowing the movement of the Oregon and California trails across Nebraska.

Scheduled to be opened in the spring of 1994, the center will represent the fifth major visitor center-museum on the trails in Nebraska. The others are at Rock Creek Station, Fairbury; Fort Kearny, Kearney; Ash Hollow, Lewellen; and Scotts Bluff National Monument, Gering.

## MAJOR DONATION MADE TO OCTA TRAILS LIBRARY

Jeanne Watson, Donations Chair

A major resource for overland trails research will be added to the Merrill J. Mattes Library at the National Frontier Trails Center March 26 when the Oregon-California Trails Association holds its mid-year board meeting March 26 and 27.

Maps and journals related to the California and Oregon Trails will be donated in memory of historian Paul C. Henderson (1895-1979) of Bridgeport, NE, by his daughter, Mrs. Marjorie Henderson Waitman and her husband will be special guests of OCTA when these materials are unpacked.

The maps are her father's working copies, compiled during years of research along the western trails; the final set of maps is now part of the Henderson Collection at the University of Wyoming. The maps donated to OCTA were made between 1930 and 1970, showing changes as they were discovered and authenticated, Mrs. Waitman explained.

The journals, dating between 1921 and 1991, included publications of the state historical societies of Nebraska, Kansas, Wyoming, Montana, South Dakota, Colorado, Utah, and Nevada as well as back issues of such journals as American Heritage, Denver Westerners Roundup, the Chicago and the New York Westerners Brand Book. Many contain Mr. Henderson's research comments and annotations, providing additional source materials for researchers who consult these periodicals, which were part of his original library.

Mr. Henderson was remembered as "honored historian and map maker" by OCTA at its third annual convention in 1985 when a special monument was dedicated at the cemetery in Bridgeport, NE. With his wife, Helen, he "explored and recorded trail remains and shared his knowledge with a legion of trail followers." Hundreds of OCTA members contributed to the Henderson

Fund, which made this memorial to both Paul and Helen, possible. The monument, "presented to the people of Bridgeport and the people of America," is located along the trail, where it passes through the cemetery.

"Paul Henderson is recognized as a famous pioneer in the field of Oregon Trail research, so it will be an honor to have something of his work and source material incorporated in the OCTA Library," said Merrill J. Mattes, OCTA Board member emeritus, of Littleton, CO. The Library is named for Mr. Mattes, for many years superintendent for the National Park Service Center at Scotts Bluff and who donated research materials to OCTA. The Mattes Library also includes a research collection contributed by George Watkins, former OCTA board member now of Idaho.

# PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Just as was true the last time I wrote this column, I am looking out the window at a severe blizzard, maybe one of the worst in years in Kansas City. I can hardly wait for spring!

I am delighted with the attention being given to the Oregon Trail Sesquicentennial by the media, civic groups, and historical societies across the country. You can hardly pick up a magazine of any kind that does not have an Oregon Trail article in it. In 1993 the Oregon Trail will undoubtedly have a record number of tourists and vacationers traversing its length.

As you undoubtedly know, the U.S. Postal Service has issued an Oregon Trail commemorative stamp in support of the sesquicentennial. I have a large supply for future use . . . before rates go up again!

June 5 is National Trails Day. Great opportunity for local trails publicity. I would like to

encourage all chapters to plan something significant for the day. Trailhead Chapter will be leading the planning for a rededication of Watts Mill Park which was the Fitzhugh Mill where some of the '43 migration rendezvoused.

The annual mid-year board meeting has been scheduled for Saturday, March 27, 1993. The board will also meet on Friday informally to discuss feedback to a questionnaire I sent out to each of them on a broad range of topics for future planning. If you can make it to Independence, be glad to have you.

Soon, registration packets will be in the mail to you for the convention in Baker City, Oregon in August. What an exciting convention that will be as we celebrate 150 years of Oregon Trail!

Thank you for the work you all do for the emigrant trails.

Ross Marshall

## NEWS FROM HEADQUARTERS

Jeanne Miller, Headquarters Manager

The Independence Postmaster, Randy Fine, invited OCTA to join the National Frontier Trails Center in celebrating the first day of issue of the new Oregon Trail Stamp offered to honor the 150th anniversary of year of the largest migration of emigrants leaving the United States for Oregon territory. State and district postal officials were in attendance as well as employees and friends of both organizations.

OCTA and the Trails Center each received a beautiful walnut plaque on which was mounted a sheet of the Oregon Trail stamps and the following wording in brass:

**"THE BEGINNING"**  
PRESENTED TO OCTA  
BY THE INDEPENDENCE, MO POST OFFICE  
FEBRUARY 12, 1993

Bill Bullard, Director of the Trails Center, accepted the gift for the Trails Center, and James Budde and Jeanne Miller received the presentation for OCTA. OCTA's gift is mounted on the brick wall in the headquarters office.

Additionally, Mr. Fine gave both organizations an Oregon Trail sesquicentennial poster and two special envelopes marked First Day of Issue, February 12, 1993.

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### New Title offered:

*Women's Voices from the Oregon Trail*  
by Susan G. Butruille

In Part I, the author blends women's diaries, songs, history, poetry, recipes, and quilts to create her narration of women's roles in the opening of the west. In the second part, the author retraces the trail as it is today, showing where to find markers, signposts, landmarks, and historical sites that leave traces of women's presence on the Oregon Trail. Trails Center Director, Bill Bullard, is quoted.

Paperback, 254 pages,  
maps, illustrations, index, and bibliography. \$14.95  
Postage and Handling: \$3 first book, \$1 each additional book

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## LETTER RECEIVED FROM PETER MAHER

In the January issue of NFP, Lee Underbrink described a visit by the Wyoming Chapter to St. Mary's Station and Rocky Ridge. I am concerned that his commentary may have inadvertently given the impression to readers that it is difficult to gain access to the site when, in fact, the owners of the property are themselves members of OCTA and welcome visits by fellow members. As Lee correctly points out, however, the depredations of "potholers" have forced us to attempt to control access to the property in order to protect the site.

It occurred to me that some may be interested in the status of the property itself. St. Mary's Station is located on the Ellis Ranch, which is located approximately 35 miles (as a crow flies) southeast of Lander. The ranch encompasses both sides of the Sweetwater

River for a distance of about five miles, and the Oregon and Pony Express Trails run the length of the property. The owners have granted a conservation easement over the ranch to The Nature Conservancy, which means that the ranch itself, the Trails, and the site of St. Mary's Station are protected forever from any form of development or adverse activity, at least in a legal sense.

In addition to its historical importance, the ranch is also an important wildlife and fisheries habitat, and is managed accordingly under the terms of the easement.

Unfortunately, the task of preserving and protecting the features of the property cannot be accomplished merely by signing legal documents. Accordingly, we attempt to know who is on the property, and why, at all times. In order

to do this, we ask that visitors request prior permission to come onto the property. Anyone with an appropriate reason for doing so, such as a member of OCTA, is welcome.

In the past year, groups sponsored by the LDS Church, the State of Wyoming, local schools, and, of course, OCTA have visited the property, as have numerous individuals. This coming summer promises to be even more active, and we hope to meet many fellow members of OCTA as it progresses. Anyone wishing to visit the property, or who has an interest in or particular knowledge of it, can contact us at the below address or phone number.

Sincerely yours,

Peter and Jeanne Maher  
P.O. Box 3862  
Jackson, WY 83001  
(307)733-9323



## WHAT DOES THE OCTA HISTORIAN DO?

Among the list of OCTA committees with important and self-explanatory titles, such as Finances, Membership, Publications, Legislative, etc., you may notice that of History and Archives. This committee, with a membership of one, has never dealt with a crisis or with anything that could be remotely called a problem. The annual reports are a few sentences long. So you may well wonder what the historian does. Mostly the historian lives in a house big enough to hold lots of boxes, develops and nurtures pack-rat tendencies, sorts mail, buys and uses file folders, knows the letters of the alphabet in sequential order, and pleads with the membership, committees, and officers to send copies of EVERYTHING.

Then, every so many years, this benign life-style turns into something like an emergency of workaholicism. This is when the organization requests

the history be updated and published in some form for the membership. In OCTA this has come every five years. OCTA passed its first decade of existence last summer (with the appropriate fanfare) and now it is time for the second 5-year history to be written. This is now being done, and this is why this article will be short. There are boxes of material to go through, and yet not everything is here. If you want your activities recorded in the history, be sure your reports, newsletters, publications, and other materials are sent to the Historian. This second 5-years of OCTA has been a period of growth, accomplishments, activities, and even a few surprises. To study and write about this time is exciting. I hope you will find that reading about it is also appealing. Meanwhile, keep that mail coming.

Ruth Anderson, Historian

## PHOTOGRAPHIC TRAIL EXHIBIT

A sixty plus print photographic exhibit on the California-Oregon Trail will be on exhibit at the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial Museum, 11 North 4th Street, St. Louis, Missouri. The show will be on display for seven months from March 1 to November 1, 1993. The museum is located across the street from the St. Louis Arch, in the old Courthouse Building.

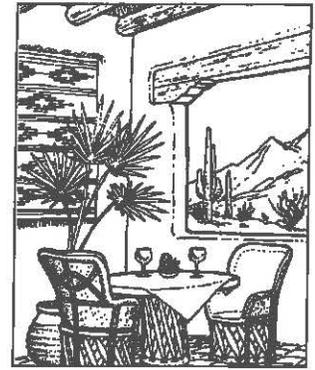
In this exhibit, large scale black and white photographs, along with text panels, depict the trail from Independence to Sacramento. These photographs show not only undisturbed traces of original trail but also document how contemporary land usage has invaded or otherwise covered locations where it used to be. In addition, marking and current use of the trail by history minded groups are depicted. The story of the migration is filled out through maps, text, and diary accounts which accompany the photographs.

The photographs were made by OCTA member Greg MacGregor of Oakland, CA over the past six years.

## IMPORTANT CORRECTION

Information in the last issue of *News From the Plains* about Larry Jones and the upcoming election of board members was incorrect.

Larry Jones was appointed at the St. Joseph Convention to fill a board vacancy caused by a resignation. The remaining term did not constitute serving a full-term, and, therefore, Larry is eligible to run again this year.



## FROM THE EDITOR

Due to the national and international publicity of this sesquicentennial year of the Oregon Trail, more people will read, learn, and travel the trail. Hopefully, some of them will also hear about OCTA and join the organization. Keep a few OCTA brochures in your car or in your back pocket to share with those you encounter along the way this summer.

Members have sent me a great deal of information about various sesquicentennial events that will be occurring this year. I hope you will understand that there is just not enough room to include the news about all of these wonderful activities in the limited pages of this newsletter. There are hard decisions to make about what to include, trying to reach members with the items they will want most to read. I encourage members to watch for information in their local areas and plan to attend some of these activities.

Thank you for responding to my request for more newsletter items, and again, understand that there is not always room for all the information I receive.

Hope to see you in Baker City at the convention. Every time I go to a convention, I enjoy meeting more of you.

Next deadline - June 1

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

## Excerpts from *NEBRASKA IN 1857*

by James M. Woolworth, (Barnes & Co., N.Y. 1857)

Omaha City is well built up with substantial brick blocks. It numbers eighteen hundred people. Its advantages are, first, it is the capital of the Territory. The United States have commenced building a capitol, which is situated on a handsome and commanding hill in the west of the town. Fifty thousand dollars have been expended in laying the foundations and carrying it up one story. A like sum has been appropriated by Congress to complete it. When finished, it will be a most elegant building.

The second advantage which Omaha City enjoys, is the fact that she lies directly opposite Council Bluffs, and is, at present at least, the head of navigation of the Missouri river. The first circumstance gives her the advantage of receiving the emigrant into the Territory. He sees her promise, and feels her enterprise, and makes her his home. She is the great town of Nebraska. The river fills her landings with the immense imports from the East which supply the Territory. She is, indeed, the main point of entry for the emigrant and for merchandise. In the coming season, at least one boat a day from St. Louis will unload at her landing.

A further advantage of Omaha City is the fact that she is the eastern terminus of the great route to the West. A year ago Congress established a military road from this place to new Fort Kearney, and appropriated fifty thousand dollars for its construction. That work is nearly complete, and runs up the valley of the Platte through all the principal settlements west of this. Congress has made the further appropriation of four hundred thousand dollars to construct a great wagon-road to the South Pass, and this is the eastern terminus. These factors give Omaha City a great impetus, in her growth into a commercial town. Far and wide over the country her name is known as well as that of the Territory itself. The great rush of emigration at the present time is to Omaha City. It has a fast start over all rivals which no ordinary advantage can overcome.

Florence lies about six miles north of Omaha City. It is a thriving place, with many advantages. It lies upon the same beautiful plateau as Omaha City. Opposite to it, on the Iowa side, is Crescent City, also a flourishing place. Its growth has been rapid and apparently substantial. Those interested in it claim for it a rock bottom landing, and that, at a short distance from the shore, is a rock island, and upon these two, it is believed, a substantial and cheap bridge can be constructed—a work which can not be accomplished elsewhere in consequence of the variable bed and current of the river. The great military road to Fort Kearney touches its western line, and much of the trade from the Platte valley stops here. The mercantile business of the place is heavy—commanding, as it does, the north, a portion of the west, and even a part of Iowa. We have stated elsewhere our beliefs that at some time a great city in the great line of New York, Albany, Buffalo, Detroit, Chicago, and Davenport, and sharing their importance, would grow up near these places. Severe argument has been long kept up between Omaha City and Florence, as to their relative claims for this great point. This fact surely favors Florence—that the road to pass through it makes a shorter route than by Omaha City. As to its rock landing and rock island, even surveyors differ, both as to their existence and advantage.

### Appropriations by Congress For Improvements and Expenditures in Nebraska

1. The Military Road from Omaha City to Fort Kearney	\$50,000
2. The First appropriation for the Capitol	\$50,000
3. Penitentiary	\$30,000
4. South Pass Wagon Road	\$400,000
5. Second appropriation for the Capitol	\$50,000
Total	\$580,000

# IDEAS TO BOOST MEMBERSHIP

Jackie Lewin, Membership Chair

## UTAH MEMBERS MAN OCTA DISPLAY

Several chapters have taken advantage of the opportunity to publicize OCTA and encourage membership through displays and booths at area events. Last November, the Utah Crossroads Chapter had such a display at the First Annual Conference on History and Heritage held in Salt Lake City. A great deal of interest was shown in the historic trails information presented by the chapter.

The conference was initiated by the Governor and the State Department of History to better enable history and heritage groups in Utah to help people benefit from and cherish their past. In addition to the exhibit booths sponsored by various businesses and organizations, workshops were held on a variety of subjects - from "How to Apply for a Grant," to "How to Do Heritage Exhibits Design." Utah Crossroads Chapter's goal at the conference was, according to President Al Mulder, "to get the word out on Utah Crossroads and OCTA and to let people attending know who we are and what we do. As a result of the exhibit, we recruited five new members and developed good working relationships with other state and federal organizations and agencies interested in and dealing with historic trails."

OCTA members Al Mulder, Shirlee Hart, Joyce Marsing and George Ivory set up and staffed the exhibit for the two-day conference.

*Right: Shirlee Hart, Public Information Chair for the Utah Crossroads Chapter, helped staff the chapter table at the Conference on History & Heritage in Salt Lake City recently. She was among the chapter members that worked to publicize OCTA and gain new members.*



## NEW MEMBER ADVERTISES OCTA!

OCTA members are great people and it always fun to meet one with enthusiasm like that of Tom McCutcheon of Overland Park, Kansas. Tom joined OCTA last March, although he has been interested in the trail for many years. Some of you may have met or at least have seen Tom at the '92 Rock Springs convention. He drove a van with the OCTA logo and name on the spare wheel cover. Since the convention, I have asked Tom to share some of his thoughts about OCTA and his decision to advertise the organization. His comments follow:

How did you hear of OCTA? "My study and love of literature on the west 1800-1870 took me to books and maps of Greg Franzwa who suggested I join his fine organization, but I procrastinated from '84 till now."

Thank you, Greg. As OCTA members we should be aware that even though someone does not join at our first invitation, the invitation may be acknowledged at a future time. Just continue to share your enthusiasm for the trails.

Can you describe your interest in the trails? "My interest in the trail has become an addiction. . . My wife was born and raised in Washington County, Kansas, (Note: The Independence Road

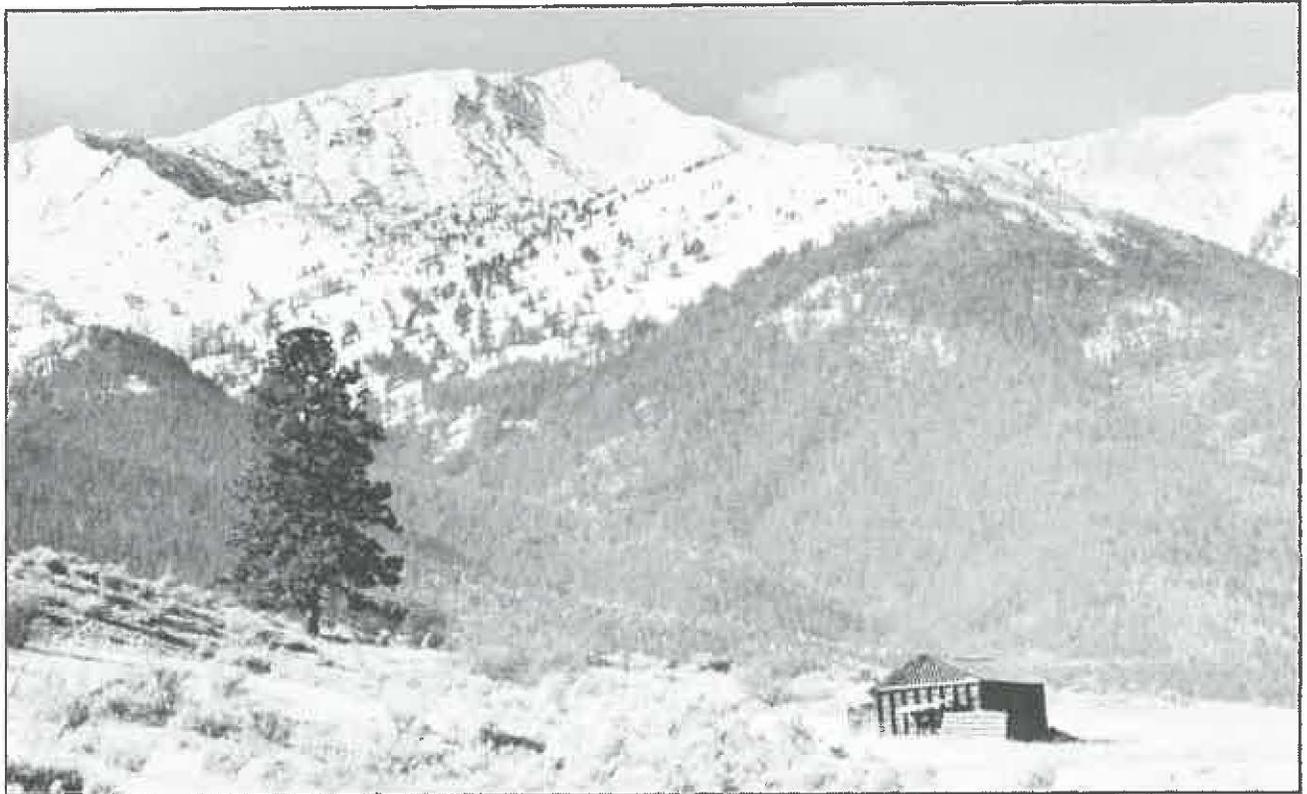


*Above: Tom McCutcheon shows off the distinctive wheel cover on his van. He is a traveling advertisement for OCTA.*

and the St. Joe Road met in present-day Washington County.) and I have been going from KC to her home for 48 years. That puts me on or near the trail. I also have a daughter in Rock Springs, Wyoming, a cousin in Rock River, Wyoming, and a good, good friend on the Sweetwater River. So, I know more about the trail in Wyoming than in Kansas. I also have a cousin in Idaho. He and I did the route from Glenn's Ferry to Huntington, Oregon. I have a son in Washington state so that gets me up to the Whitman Mission, Walla Walla, Pendleton, etc."

A trail trekking accomplishment of which Tom is particularly proud was that of "doing the Sublette Cut-off in 1989 with my son-in-law. The biggest thrill of that trip was going down that terrible hill to the Green River. How they did it in wagons is still a marvel."

Tom is now retired from Southwestern Bell Telephone Company and plans to spend more time traveling the west. It is a pleasure to have Tom as a new member of OCTA and if you see the van with the OCTA wheel cover out somewhere along the trail, please stop and visit with him.



*South side of Elkhorn Mountain Range in early spring.*

*photo by S. John Collins, Baker City Herald*

## **OCTA'S 10th ANNUAL CONVENTION BAKER CITY, OREGON AUGUST 11-14, 1993**

The Convention Committee has put together a real super convention package. Excellent historical information will be presented with plenty of fun time and camaraderie mixed in. It will be a convention we will all remember for a long time!

Activities actually start on Monday, August 9th with an archaeology workshop. On Tuesday August 10, along with a second day of the archaeology workshop and a Board of Directors meeting, there are three pre-convention tours: Oregon Trail hike, Hell's Canyon Snake River tour, and Sumpter Valley Gold Country tour.

On Wednesday August 11, there will be chapter meetings followed by the General Membership meeting. At 1:00 PM, Dr. Stephen Dow Beckham, keynote speaker will lead off the presentations of papers for the rest of the afternoon. At 6:30 PM there will be the opening reception and tenth anniversary party. Entertainment, food, drinks, sprinkled with humor, and a lot of good fellowship.

Thursday August 12 opens with more presentations of more papers followed by an afternoon at

the Bureau of Land Management's Trail Interpretive Center at Flagstaff Hill. That evening, dinner in the park with entertainment followed by Marv Ross' "Voices of the Trail" band and "Fanny". All of that makes for a spectacular day.

Friday August 13, there are bus tours of the trail both for hikers and non-hikers. Approximately half going north, the other going south. The half going north will also have the opportunity of meeting with Native Americans and learn of some of their thoughts and feelings of the great migration.

On Saturday another bus tour just reversing the directions from the day before. Saturday evening the Awards Banquet along with the presentation of awards. There will be music by the "Prairie Dog Band" and the convention raffle.

Your convention committee is a winning team and there is no doubt about it, this convention is going to be fun!

Dick Ackerman  
Baker City Convention Chairman

## CONVENTION HOSTS:

## NORTHWEST CHAPTER OCTA BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT BAKER COUNTY VISITOR & CONVENTION BUREAU

### **Northwest Chapter OCTA:**

We may be smaller in numbers, but we're enormous in enthusiasm and dedication! The Northwest Chapter has been active in promoting Oregon Trail preservation in cooperation with private landowners throughout the state. OCTA members have marked portions of the nearby trail across the Blue Mountains, the Boardman Bombing Range cross-country segment, and on private lands in Umatilla County and elsewhere in the state. Interpretive signs have been erected at the Sarah Chambers grave on the Meek Cut-off, and at the Buttercreek Crossing on the Oregon Trail.

The NW Chapter continues to work closely with the Bureau of Land Management, Forest Service, End of the Trail Center at Oregon City, and the Oregon Trail Coordinating Council. The NW Chapter welcomes you to Oregon during the 1993 Oregon Trail Sesquicentennial Celebration!

### **Bureau of Land Management:**

The Bureau of Land Management in Oregon-Washington places priority on the management of cultural heritage and recreation resources as part of its multiple use mission.

From the forested lands west of the Cascades to the drier sagebrush landscapes and pine forests of the east, the BLM manages 15.7 million acres of public land. On these lands of resource diversity, BLM manages for wildlife and fishery habitat, watersheds, forest products and forest health, wild horses, rangelands and grazing, minerals including gold, wild and scenic rivers, wilderness and scenic areas, scientific values, and remarkable historic and archaeological resources.

In 1987 the BLM, with support from local citizens, Baker County and the state of Oregon, began the process which led to the construction of the new National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center at Flagstaff Hill. The Center opened on May 25, 1992, and has welcomed more than 200,000 visitors. The Bureau of Land Management is proud to manage this one-of-a-kind federal facility.

In the past three years, the BLM has completed substantial improvements and new interpretive waysides at seven additional locations on the Oregon Trail on BLM lands. Recently the BLM began work on interpretive waysides along the Meek Cut Off and has co-sponsored a major new exhibit on the Lost Meek Wagon Train at the High Desert Museum.

Through the years, the BLM has worked closely with the Oregon-California Trails Association to further the preservation and interpretation of the Oregon Trail throughout the state and looks forward to continuing this positive partnership.

### **Baker County Visitor and Convention Bureau:**

Baker County is a wonderland of undiscovered historical sites and natural beauty. The emigrant road brought settlers to the rich grazing and timberlands of the high mountain valleys of north-east Oregon.

Baker County and Baker City will warmly greet you with smiles, and stories of the Oregon Trail in the valley of the Lone Tree on the banks of the Powder River.

## SPECIAL EVENTS SET FOR OCTA CONVENTION

Baker City is gearing up for a warm old-fashioned western welcome for participants at OCTA's 10th annual convention August 11 through 14, 1993. There will be special entertainment, special events, and great fun!

The opening reception on Wednesday August 11, will feature old time music complete with fiddlers, harmonica, and banjo music to celebrate OCTA's tenth birthday.

The Baker County Cowbells will lay out a barbecue beef sandwich - with all the trimmings dinner to be followed by entertainment at Baker High School. On Thursday night, August 12, Fanny and the Marv Ross Trail Band will present an evening of special entertainment. Fanny was a real person on the trail and is portrayed by her talented great-granddaughter, Joyce Badgley. The Marv Ross Trail Band presents an original musical production of the Oregon Trail era.

Come to the 10th annual OCTA convention and get a taste of a real, Western town.

## PAPERS AND PRESENTATIONS TO COVER MANY SUBJECTS OVER PARTS OF TWO DAYS

More than a dozen speakers or presentations are scheduled for OCTA's 1993 convention August 11-14, in Baker City Oregon. In addition, for the first time, cultural connections await conference goers. These short presentations illuminate the drama, poetry, music, and dreams of emigrants," explained convention chairman Dick Ackerman.

The keynote address will be presented by Dr. Stephen Dow Beckham. Using voices of the pioneer generation, Dr. Beckham will present motives and desires of westward-trekking emigrants.

"I'm really excited by the papers which will be presented," Ackerman continued. "I feel sure OCTA members will find information to delight and inspire them."

"We Were, We Are, We Will Be" is a presentation about the Cayuse, Walla Walla, and Umatilla Indian tribes before, during, and after the overland migration. The Native American point of view is a theme to be highlighted at the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Reservation's interpretive center scheduled to built near Pendelton, Oregon.

Other paper topics include:

- \* Song and poetry by women which provide revealing portrait of women emigrants
- \* Meek's Lost Wagon Train
- \* A description of the westward journey from a child's point of view
- \* How a researcher can pull from archival and field studies of emigrant roads in now urbanized areas
- \* Native plant communities and their uses by emigrants
- \* An alternate route used following the discovery of gold in Oregon's Blue Mountains
- \* Pioneer justice along the Oregon Trail
- \* The Joel Walker family travels
- \* Day-to-day cookery on the Oregon Trail
- \* Archaeological Surprises at the Umatilla Indian Agency.

Papers will be presented Wednesday afternoon (August 11) and Thursday morning (August 12) at Baker High School and Thursday afternoon at BLM's National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center. Look for more detailed information in your Convention Registration packet.

## FEEL THE EMOTION, DRAMA, AND COURAGE OF OREGON TRAIL EMIGRANTS

One-half day of OCTA's 10th annual convention has been set aside for all convention participants to be transported to the era of the Oregon Trail with a tour of the National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center. As an added treat, OCTA papers and BLM programs will be presented in the Leo Adler Theater at the Center during the tour, Thursday, August 12.

The world-class National Historic Oregon Trail Center, managed by the Bureau of Land Management, features remarkable, eye-popping realism. Visit the Center and see a full scale, indoor replica wagon train with emigrant figures, livestock, freeze-dried flies, and rattlesnakes.

Walk through a wagon train as you pass down the main gallery and over re-created Oregon Trail ruts. Art, artifacts, dioramas, and interactive exhibits bring the Oregon Trail to life as experienced by the emigrants. In three audio-visual shows, travel with a group of emigrants who leave from Independence, Missouri and arrive nearly 5 months later at Oregon City.

Follow trail markers throughout the Interpretive Center as you trace the route of the Oregon Trail. Come face-to-face with a buffalo. Pause at the Emigrant-Indian trading camp and an evening camp in sight of the Blue Mountains.

There are footpaths to the base of Flagstaff Hill where you may walk in the footsteps of the pioneers on the old Oregon Trail and 1862 Auburn Wagon Road.

More exhibits at the Interpretive Center interpret exploration, natural history, Native Americans, settlement, gold mining, and the General Land Office/BLM. Living history performers demonstrate Oregon Trail lifeways at the outdoor wagon encampment or explore the outdoor mining area.

The Flagstaff Gallery is scheduled for an exhibit of early art of the American West entitled "The Image and the Word."

SEE YOU IN BAKER CITY!

## PRE-CONVENTION TOURS AND BAKER COUNTY ATTRACTIONS

Unique, adventuresome, and fascinating special tours are planned for this year's OCTA convention. Sight-seeing in the deepest river gorge in North America; a narrated trail hike with special entertainment; or an excursion on a wood burning narrow gauge steam locomotive await the convention participants seeking a flavor of eastern Oregon's recreational opportunities.

All pre-convention tours have been scheduled for Tuesday, August 10. Departure time for the trail hike and Hells Canyon excursion will be at 8:00 a.m., the bus to the Sumpter Valley Railroad will depart 2 hours later.

**Oregon Trail Hike:** This eight mile hike will follow the trail from Pleasant Valley to Virtue Flat. Historical narration, a chuck wagon lunch and dinner, along with pioneer entertainment will enhance this pleasurable day hike.

**Hells Canyon Adventure:** First come first served on this delightful one day jet boat excursion into North America's deepest river gorge. Enjoy spectacular scenery, Indian pictographs, and abandoned homestead sites. On going narration will inform you about the canyon's geology, flora, fauna, wildlife, and of the early settlers in the area. Don't forget your camera. Swimming optional for those wishing to take a plunge during lunch.

**Sumpter Valley Railroad & Dredge Tour:** Ride the historic narrow gauge railroad as it chugs through a wildlife habitat preserve and dredge tailing in Sumpter Valley. Tour will include lunch in Sumpter, the liveliest ghost town in Oregon, and a stop at the Sumpter Dredge, one of the few remaining floating dredges in the world. Both the dredge and tailings are on the National Register.

A visit to the Bureau of Land Management's National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center and the Oregon Trail Regional Museum have been woven into the conference itinerary. Shuttle buses to the Interpretive Center will begin at 1:00 p.m. on Thursday, August 12. If this is your only planned visit to the Interpretive Center allow yourself 3-4 hours, at a minimum, to see this marvelous 10 million dollar facility.

Special living history and entertainment is being planned by the Bureau of Land Management staff. Some special OCTA convention papers will be presented in the Leo Adler Theater during the afternoon. If you are intending to hike down to the ruts, do it late in the afternoon, or early morning, and give yourself plenty of time. Better yet, plan on two or three visits to the Center because you won't be able to see it all in one outing.

## ARCHAEOLOGY WORKSHOP Documentation and Care of Historic Collections

What happens after any field archaeology work? Then it is time to analyze and properly curate objects which were recovered. A pre-convention workshop explains how, according to BLM archaeologist Mary Oman.

In collaboration with OCTA's Archaeology Committee, archaeologists and historian/curators from the Bureau of Land Management and the Oregon Trail Regional Museum will lend their expertise for a two-day workshop August 9 and 10. An archivist from the state of Oregon will provide additional expertise on the care of historic documents.

Hands-on work with historic collections and documents in storage at BLM's National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center and the Regional Museum will be incorporated into the workshop. Workshop participants are welcome to bring a historic object or document for identification or preservation discussion.

Topics to be covered include all aspects of properly documenting and preserving historic and archaeological collections including historic documents and journals, metal, glass, ceramics, textiles, art, and photographs. According to Mary Oman, collections in their historic context, uses of collections, identification of objects, and special problems in collections care, preservation, and management will be addressed.

Who will benefit from this workshop? Any OCTA members who work with historic records or emigrant journals and those who enjoy identifying and recording/documenting cultural resources on the emigrant trails.

See the registration packet for details. Registration is limited. Sign up for either one or both days of the workshop. Fee for a one day workshop is \$12 (one lunch and cost of materials); fee for participation in the entire two day workshop is \$18 (two lunches and materials).

## TWO DAYS OF BACKCOUNTRY BUS TOURS OFFERED

Two major bus tours will take OCTA conventioners south and north to explore the route of the Oregon Trail in eastern Oregon on August 13 and 14. Tour guides will entertain you with adventures told by pioneers of their trek over the emigrant road from the Snake River to the Blue Mountain crossing. Both tours have a hiking option for those who really want to get in touch with the emigrants' experience.

### Fort Boise and Keeney Pass Tour

*Prospects seem to darken entirely around us . . . Proceeded about five miles against an increasingly west wind over a very dusty road till it became so bad we could not see our teams . . . Cecelia Adams and Parthenia Blank, 1852*

The southbound tour begins in the Powder River valley, where the Lone Pine tree once stood as a sentinel along the emigrant road.

A landmark for the earliest travellers of the Oregon Trail, the Lone Pine was felled by an "inconsiderate" emigrant ax, as the first wagon train passed by in 1843. At the present day border between Oregon and Idaho, emigrants paused near the mud huts of the Hudson Bay Company's Fort Boise to recruit and barter for supplies from traders and salmon from the Paiute Indians.

Here both the North and South Alternate routes of the Oregon Trail merge into a single trace through a hollow in the hills to Keeney Pass, a natural "public highway" of regular descent, in the words of Osborne Cross in 1849. Imagine the pungent aroma of sagebrush, the choking clouds of dust, the fierce heat broken by a swift fresh

breeze, creaking wagons and sweating oxen that characterized this stretch of the emigrant road.

On both sides of Keeney Pass, visible ruts of the Oregon Trail are preserved in a designated National Register District on land administered by the Bureau of Land Management.

The tour stops at Keeney Pass for a hike to an overlook which provides a sweeping vista of the one-day, dry journey from Fort Boise to the Malheur River hot springs. For those who wish to walk in the footsteps of the pioneers, a one mile hiking descent from the pass will show the trail ruts to best advantage.

A stop in Vale for lunch under the grand trees at the City Park will allow time for a visit to the Rhinehart Stone House. Constructed in 1872, the Stone House served as a way station for latter day travellers. Weather permitting (the roads are raw), buses will proceed to the lonely, desolate landscape at BLM's Alkali Springs, where emigrants nooned and watered their stock before pushing on to Farewell Bend, their last sight of the Snake River. Finally, the difficulties of passage through the rugged, stony and twisting Burnt River Canyon will be highlighted on the return trip to Baker City.

### Blue Mountain Tour

*Commenced climbing the Blue Mountains this morning. It has been go up and go down. Such hills as never were viewed by us poor mortals before, or such beautiful tall straight pine trees . . . Maria Parsons Belshaw, 1853*

From the Powder River valley the emigrants caught their first glimpse of "winter green" trees, clothing the slopes of the forbidding Blue Mountains. "Their lofty peaks seemed a resting place for the clouds," wrote Medoram Crawford in 1842.

Crossing the numerous sloughs and branches of the twisting Powder River, the emigrant trains climbed a low pass. The startling beauty of the Grande Ronde valley caught them by surprise. Fertile soil and sparkling streams promised it was an oasis in the desert inhabited by the admired tribes of the Columbia Plateau.

At their evening camp in the valley, emigrants could relish fresh peas and potatoes, procured in trade from the Cayuse and Nez Perce. Now they faced the difficult ascent of the Blues. They doubled their teams, cut their way through downed trees, steeled their nerves against the calls of the cougar, and hurried lest they be caught by early snows.

Our tour will stop in the Grande Ronde Valley at the side of the rushing Grande Ronde River. We will follow in the footsteps of those who crossed the Blue Mountains, with a visit to the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest Blue Mountain Crossing wayside. Miles of deep wagon rut swales traverse the ridges and meadows through lovely ponderosa pine forests. Lunch will be under a tree so tall it takes three looks to see the top!

If you plan on hiking, be prepared to go both up and down, through an area that promises to be a feast for the eyes.

## NOMINATIONS FOR OCTA AWARDS REQUESTED

To assure recognition of members and organizations who make exceptional contributions in furthering OCTA's objectives, nominations are requested for OCTA's Meritorious Achievement Award, Volunteer of the Year Award and National Certificates of Appreciation. These awards will be given at the national convention in August in Baker City.

**The Meritorious Achievement Award**, which is OCTA's highest accolade, is presented for outstanding achievements of lasting significance in the service of the organization and trail preservation. Recipients of the award may be individuals or organizations (such as agencies, cities, or private groups).

**The Volunteer of the Year Award** is presented for an outstanding volunteer contribution by an OCTA member.

**National Certificates of Appreciation** are given to those who have contributed significantly to the achievement of an OCTA goal.

Nominations for these awards should be sent prior to June 1, 1992, to:

**Larry R. Jones  
6230 San Luis Way  
Boise, Idaho 83709**

## MEET WITH THE EDITORS OF OCTA'S PUBLICATIONS

On Friday evening at the Baker Convention, OCTA's publications group will be holding an informal question-and-answer session for anyone interested in contributing materials for publication or wanting to know more about the *Overland Journal*, *News From the Plains*, or our forthcoming new special publications monographs, the *Emigrant Trails Historical Studies Series*. All three editors will be there to answer your questions and explain what they are in need of — Lois Daniels, Rose Ann Tompkins, and Susan Badger Doyle. The informal session will begin at 7:00 P. M. in the Oregon Trail Room at the Quality Inn.

Don Buck, Publications Chair

## TRAVEL PLANNING ASSISTANCE

All trails in '93 lead to Baker City; but many of you have not started making your travel arrangements yet! The convention committee has taken steps to assist you in making those arrangements.

Travel'Lyn of Baker City is the official travel agency for the 1993 OCTA Convention. They can assist you with any of your travel needs, whether it be Amtrak, airline, or car rental. For further information contact: Travel'Lyn Inc., 1919 Washington, Baker City, Oregon 97814 or call, 1-800537-8818.

For motel, RV parking, bed & breakfast, or any accommodation questions, consult your registration packet or call the Baker County Visitor & Convention Bureau at: 1-800-523-1235



*Left: Hikers participated in the National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center's Grand Opening in Baker City last year.*

## EXPLORE THE WONDERS OF OREGON

Following the discovery of gold in 1861, Baker City became known as the Queen City of the Mines. During subsequent mining booms businesses and citizens prospered. Historic Baker City's downtown district is on the National Register of Historic Places.

Unique sight-seeing opportunities in the area include ghost towns such as Sumpter, Granite, and Sparta. Much of gold country's historic sights can be enjoyed by following the WallowaWhitman National Forest Elkhorn Scenic Byway through the Blue Mountains. The Elkhorn loop takes you past historic Granite, Chinese mining areas, and beautiful Anthony Lakes. Excellent warm water fishing is available along the reservoirs of the Snake River between Huntington and Hells Canyon Dam.

Ride the Sumpter Valley Narrow Gauge Steam Railroad or hike in the Eagle Cap or Hells Canyon Wilderness. The Hells Canyon Scenic Byway takes mountain roads over the Wallowas from Halfway to Wallowa Lake, paralleling portions of a winter journey traveled by Captain Bonneville in 1834.

### Related Events Around the State

**End of the Oregon Trail Center:** At the end of the Barlow Road, an exciting preview center is now under construction in Oregon City for the 1993 Sesquicentennial.

**Wandering Wagons: Meek's Lost Emigrants Exhibit:** A new exhibit on the Meek Wagon Train of 1845 will open on March 20 at the High Desert Museum in Bend, Oregon, with primary funding from the Bureau of Land Management.

**1993 Sesquicentennial Wagon Train:** The Idaho-Oregon Sesquicentennial wagon train will be traveling through Baker and Union County the weekend prior to the opening of the OCTA convention (August 4-August 8). During the OCTA convention the wagon train will be stopping at the Umatilla Indian Reservation and in Pendleton (August 12-14). The public is welcome to visit the wagon train at their evening encampments across the state. For information about the wagon train, call (503) 223-6191.

**BLM Interpretive Sites on Oregon Trail and Meek Cut Off:** Oregon BLM will have completed seven new interpretive waysides across the Vale, Prineville, and Salem Districts in anticipation of the Sesquicentennial. Interpretive waysides are planned for the route of the Meek Cut-off across Central Oregon on Vale, Burns and Prineville District BLM lands. Information may be obtained by writing to the BLM Districts or to:

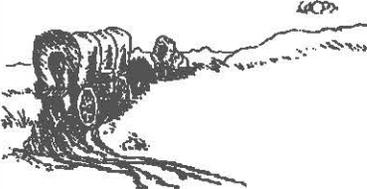
Oregon State Office, BLM  
P.O.Box 2965  
Portland, Oregon 97208

### CONVENTION CONTACT PERSONS:

**Dick Ackerman**  
Convention Chairman  
(503) 581-0328

**Jonne Hower**  
**Ric Ingham**  
**Mary Oman**  
(503) 523-6391 or  
1-(800)-523-1235

SEE THE RUTS, THE TERRAIN, AND THE LANDMARKS  
AS IF YOU WERE TRAVELING WEST  
DURING THE 1840'S AND 1850'S.



**THE TRAIL  
TO OREGON**

A 50-minute video for pioneers of all ages.

Commended by:  
Gregory Franzwa, author of MAPS OF THE OREGON TRAIL

Recipient of the 1990 "Yummy Award" for outstanding  
contribution to Community Access Television.  
Yamhill County, Oregon, settled in 1843.

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Everything you view in **THE TRAIL TO OREGON** was recorded on actual sites along the trail from Missouri to Oregon.

This is the only video that shows the **Columbia River Route** as well as the complete **Barlow Road**. Settlement scenes from the **Willamette Valley** are included to complete this accurate historical documentary. Typical instrumental music and personal interest tidbits from emigrants enhance the program.

**THE TRAIL TO OREGON** VHS video was researched, videotaped and produced by Oregon History teachers Gene and Betty Comfort and is currently being used in schools and homes in Idaho and Oregon and Washington.

The 50-minute format is divided into two 25-minute segments.

Program 1: Missouri to Fort Hall

Program 2: Fort Hall to the Willamette Valley

To order send \$25 to:

**THE TRAIL TO OREGON**  
Gene and Betty Comfort  
941 S.W. Red Hills Drive  
Dundee, Oregon 97115

Teacher's Supplement available upon request.  
(Free with order)

## KNOW ANY GOOD FOUNDATIONS?

During its meeting in Rock Springs, board members and committee chairs discussed the desirability of finding sources of funding in addition to membership dues to fund some of OCTA's projects. As a result, I have begun looking into the possibilities of obtaining some grant funding from private foundations. A number of directories and indexes exist to help identify potential sources of funding, but we don't want to overlook another potential gold mine of information: our members.

Are you familiar with any foundations that have funded historic preservation or educational programs in the past? Do you know a foundation that might be interested in paying for an OCTA project, such as a site sign? Do you work for a corporation that also runs a grant-making foundation? Do you have friends who work for grant-making foundations? Are there specific corporations you know about that might be interested in OCTA's programs because of their proximity to a trail site? If you have any suggestions about possible grant sources, please drop me a note.

By the time you read this, the Sesquicentennial celebration will have begun! There will be lots of excitement on the Trail this summer with both wagon trains and bike enthusiasts set to make the crossing. Festivals chautauquas, seminars, treks, rendezvous, reunions, historic re-enactments and special displays are all being planned. Many national magazines will be covering the celebration and the March April issue of *Historic Preservation* has an interesting article about the BLM Flagstaff Hill Center which you might want to read before heading to the Baker City convention. If you see press coverage on the Sesquicentennial, please send me a copy. But do get out and enjoy the party!

Lesley Wischmann, Chair  
OCTA Public Relations Comm .  
712 South Second Street  
Laramie, WY 82070  
phone: 307-742-5449

## DEATHS

### BARESEL

OCTA Charter Member, Karl G. Baresel of Hanson, MA, passed away on December 29, 1992.

Karl was a graduate Chemical Engineer from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, a U.S. Army veteran of WWII. His interest in history was diverse and included the American Revolution, the War of 1812, the building of the period wooden ships and New England pioneer blast furnaces.

During the late 1970s, while on vacation in the Donner Lake area of California, Karl's keen interest in the Overland Trails took root. Despite advancing years, in the Spring of 1983 Karl, with his wife Dottie, hiked along the Oregon-California Trail from Independence, Missouri, to Glenrock, Wyoming. On this hike there began what would be lasting friendships with several Nebraska Ranchers. Such rapport and on-site evaluations, together with study of trail diaries, enabled Karl and Dottie to write an exacting study of the complex Oregon-California Trail crossing areas of the North and South Platte rivers—an area which extends from the present-day city of North Platte westward to Brule, Nebraska.

Their research and findings were presented in an article entitled "Trails and Fords Above the Junction of the North and South Platte Rivers" published in the *Overland Journal*, Vol. 6, No. 2, Spring 1988. Subsequently Karl led a most successful OCTA Nebraska Chapter trek to the Trail crossing areas in the Summer of 1988.

The gradual, debilitating, effect of Parkinson's disease began to take its dreadful toll. Karl would not come west again although his interest in the old trails never faltered, his spirits remained high, several OCTA members can attest to this. Dottie has said Karl never once complained but simply said "the sands of time are running out".

In a sense Karl exemplified the qualities and strength of character so often fondly attributed to the New England "Yankee". His wise counsel and his firm friendship will be sadly missed but never forgotten.

May we extend sincere condolences to Dottie and the Baresel family.

Reg and Dorothy Duffin  
La Grange Park, IL

### CHUINARD

We are indeed saddened to learn of the death of one of OCTA's charter members, Dr. Eldon George "Frenchy" Chuinard. He died February 9, 1993 at Lacey, Washington. He was 88.

He served as a Board member for one year during the formation of OCTA and is also a founder of the National Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation.

He was raised in Kelso, Washington and once carried water to replenish Ezra Meeker's oxen. According to Frenchy, Ezra gave him a nickel after he finished his task which he spent immediately for candy.

His book on the Lewis and Clark expedition, *Only One Man Died* deals with the medical aspects of the journey and is considered a master piece on health care of the early 1800s. He was devoted to the preservation of all western trails and lobbied effectively for OCTA's cause. Above all he was a true friend to all rut nuts and a great companion to be with. He will be missed!

Fritzi, his wife, survives.

(Notice received from the Northwest Chapter)



# **The Oregon Trail comes alive!**

*A brand-new epic television series from an Emmy award-winning producer*

## **THE OREGON TRAIL**

Now, for the first time on video, the complete story of the hardy pioneers who changed the course of American history. Three years in the making, this landmark project is now available to OCTA members at a very special price.

### **What makes this series so special?**

#### Quality

Immediately, you'll notice the distinctive cinematography of the Emmy-award winning crew. They traveled the entire length of the Trail, filming the untouched scenic vistas that still exist along much of the route. The soundtrack also reflects a dedication to the utmost in quality. The composer/musician of *The Oregon Trail* previously created music for Oscar-winner *Dances With Wolves*.

#### Accuracy

Great care was taken to ensure historical accuracy. Every rut you'll see is the actual Oregon Trail; every still image is from the Trail's glory years. The producers spent three years just doing research—sifting through archives, reading old diaries—because they wanted it to be done right.

#### Rare images

Woven into the film are hundreds of rare paintings, photos and sketches from the mid-1800s. The filmmakers relentlessly searched archives from coast to coast to compile an incredible collection of the Trail's most fascinating historic images.

#### Top Historians

Interspersed throughout are fascinating comments from the Trail's top historians—Merrill Mattes, William Hill, Larry Jones and Charlie Martin Sr.

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# CHAPTER NEWS

## TRAILS HEAD

### NEW OFFICERS ELECTED IN NOVEMBER

Dr. James Lee, Jr. - pre-seident  
Eric Fowler - vice-president  
Donna Bullard - secretary  
Judy Budde - treasurer

### ARCHAEOLOGY PROGRAM

In January a program on the archaeology dig at the original townsite of Kansas City was presented by Dr. Mary Adair of the University of Kansas, who oversees the project, and Glen Leroy of the Kansas City Port Authority. Long range plans include a park where visitors may witness archaeologists at work.

### FITZHUGH'S/WATTS MILL PAST! PRESENT! FUTURE?

This was the topic presented by the chapter in partnership with the Historical Society of New Santa Fe on Feb. 27. A panel of ten speakers represented all the facets of development at the site: the Kansas City City Council, Kansas City Parks Dept., U.S. Corp of Engineers, Missouri Dept. of Natural Resources, Missouri Highway Dept. and Kansas Dept. of Transportation.

Dr. Lee presented the chapter's interests and Ross Marshall gave a brief history of Fitzhugh's and the trails in the region, part of which was shown on the news that evening. A committee has been formed to explore cooperation on development and signage.

This site was the subject of an *Overland Journal* article (Vol. 9, #4). A large wagon train, a part of the 1843 migration, left from Fitzhugh's Mill, now called Watt's Mill. In recent times a number of plans have been proposed for the site. This program was designed to exchange information between the agencies involved, and look to the future of the site.

Barbara Magerl

## NEBRASKA

### NATIONAL TRAILS DAY PROGRAM

The chapter will co-sponsor with the Historical Society of Douglas County, a program celebrating National Trails Day. It will be on Sunday, June 6, 2 P.M. at the Fort Omaha campus, 30th & Fort St., Building Ten. Charles Martin will present a slide presentation and talk on the Oregon-California Trail in Nebraska. In honor of the sesquicentennial, Mr. Martin provided material and assistance in creating an exhibit on display at the General Crook House Museum on the Fort Omaha campus. This exhibit entitled, "The Oregon Trek: Ridges, Rivers and Ruts" will be displayed from Mar. 14 thru Oct. 31, 1993.

### TRAIL DAYS AT THE STUHR MUSEUM IN GRAND ISLAND

Jim Denney will represent the chapter at the Stuhr Museum living history weekend, devoted to life on the trail. Mr. Denney will present a program on the Nebraska trails on Sunday, June 27 at 2 P.M. This will be an excellent opportunity to promote the 1995 OCTA convention in Grand Island.

### SPRING TRAIL TREK

The trail committee is planning a trail trek in June in western Nebraska to include California Hill and Ash Hollow. Chapter members will receive further information when plans are finalized. If anyone living outside of Nebraska is interested in attending, please contact:

Helen Sundell  
939 So. 106 Plaza #304  
Omaha, NE 68114  
(402) 397-9794

If anyone wishes a schedule of local community activities celebrating the Oregon Trail Sesquicentennial in Nebraska, please contact the above or OCTA headquarters.

Helen Sundell

## GATEWAY

### CHAPTER PLANS SEVERAL PROGRAMS

1993 is St. Joseph's Sesquicentennial Year. OCTA will participate with other historic and civic organizations in the celebrations. Reenactments, displays booths, and other activities are being planned around historic downtown St. Joseph on August 20-22.

St. Joseph Historic Society will sponsor the Robidoux Rendezvous in May. Activities will honor Joseph Robidoux III, Indian trader, trapper and founder of old St. Joe.

Our first field trip of the year will be March 13. We are heading west on the St. Joe Road. A landowner will show us items, including a hide pouch containing dried meat, recovered from sites along the trail. Sites include emigrant graves uncovered in the 1930s. Stop include the Prairie Spring campground and the Iowa, Sac, Fox Indian Mission mentioned in many diaries.

Other programs include:

May 11 - 7:00 P.M. at the Pony Express Stables, St. Joe. A tour of the recently expanded museum and a program about the project.

July 17 - Field trip to explore the trails coming into St. Joseph from the East.

If you're in our area, you're welcome to join our activities. For information call:

Dave Martin (816) 232-8125.

## WYOMING

### OFFICERS:

Frank Ellis - President  
Jude Carino - Vice President  
Secretary - Levida Hileman  
Treasurer - Brock Hileman

# UTAH CROSSROADS

## SPRING PLANS

The chapter's spring plans include several work days at the Donner Springs site for our marking project, a lecture meeting on Thursday, April 22, and our spring field trip over the Hensley Salt Lake Cutoff from Wells, Nevada to Granite Pass in Idaho.

## THE TRAILS BEFORE EMIGRATION

Just as the "winter sojourners" who were forced by weather to stop in Salt Lake City until spring some one-hundred and forty years ago, chapter members were growing restless to be on the trails again. Record-breaking snows were proving frustrating and cabin fever had reached epidemic proportions. But as was so often the case with the emigrants, a mountain man led the way out of our doldrums. At our winter Crossroads lecture meeting in January, Fred Gowans, renown for his knowledge of the fur-trading influence on Western history, satisfied our current hunger for the trails and whetted our appetites for hitting the trail once more when the grass grows green and the waters flow.

Dr. Gowans began his highly interesting and informative lecture by telling us that the history of the Oregon and California trails and the opening of the West for emigration began nearly a hundred years before the first emigrants were on the trails and that "by 1843 a blind man could have followed the trail west." French-Canadian fur traders had been in the areas of the Platte and Missouri Rivers by the time the French and Indian Wars ended in treaty between Britain and France in 1863. With French influence out of the picture, the Canadian fur traders stayed in the wilderness but now worked for the British companies, the Hudson Bay Company and later the Northwest Company. These trappers traveled extensively across what was later to become American soil. Meanwhile, fur trade along the Pacific Northwest coast was beginning to make rich men in England, America, and Russia.

Rivalries grew intense and Spain, who claimed the American Southwest as well as the Pacific coast, was not to be excluded without a struggle. As Spain lost out on the coastal trade, it wanted to strengthen its hold on the interior. Finding no Spaniard willing to explore up the Missouri River from St. Louis, the local Spanish government hired James McKay, a Scotsman who had become a Spanish citizen by virtue of economic expediency, to do the exploring. John Evans accompanied him, making extensive and fairly accurate maps.

Ill-fated Spain, however, lost the land of the Missouri and Platte countries by secret treaty with France. Then France sold this same land to the U.S. in the Louisiana Purchase. Throughout this time, prominent St. Louis families were making fortunes in trade with the Indians who did the trapping and traded their furs to the wandering traders.

For reasons more economic than scientific, President Jefferson sent out the Lewis and Clark expedition to find a route of commerce to the Northwest Coast. William Clark was the strength of the expedition, but Merriweather Lewis was the intellectual genius. Through Clark's leadership and Lewis' gathering of information, the expedition was an enormous success and kicked off the American involvement in the fur trade. They carried with them Evans' maps made on the McKay expedition. Lewis and Clark can be given credit for exploring the Oregon Trail along the lower Columbia River.

John Colter was part of this expedition. He chose to stay in the mountains of Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming, becoming one of America's earliest and most famous mountain men. Colter became a trader for Manuel Lisa, owner of a prominent St. Louis fur trading company. Other eager young men also joined the company, among them Andrew Henry. Adventures and explorations were plentiful during this early stage of American competition.

In 1810 Andrew Henry took a group of men from the Three Forks of the Missouri over the Teton Mountains to Henry's Fork of the Snake River. There they wintered. Three of Henry's men, Hoback, Robinson, and Reznor, return-

ing East, met Wilson Price Hunt who was leading Astor's Overland Astorians westward. The three agreed to guide the Astorians over the route they had followed from the Snake. They then remained in the Snake River Country until the next year.

The Astorians eventually made it to the Oregon coast and Astor's fort at the mouth of the Columbia. The following year, under Robert Stuart, they made their way back East, going over South Pass, thus discovering that section of what was to become the Oregon Trail.

This account is a great simplification of the spell-binding details shared by Dr. Gowans in his fine story-telling narrative style. Time crunched in on our meeting, but Fred promised to finish the story with the contributions of the trappers from various American companies and from the Hudson's Bay Company on the trail routes at a subsequent Crossroads "rendezvous".

Lyndia Carter

## NORTHWEST

### OFFICERS:

Lowell Tiller - President  
Glenn Harrison - Vice President  
Lois McCarthy - Secretary  
Joyce Bolerjack - Treasurer

**April 7** - The Governor of Oregon will dedicate a new historical marker to Madame Marie Dorion on Hwy 237 just east of I-84, near the community of North Powder. Madame Dorion, a Native American from Iowa, traveled west as the wife of Pierre Dorion. He was a member of Astor's expedition in 1811. She was the first woman to make the journey across the great plains into the Oregon Territory to settle.

**June 5** - The chapter will have an activity to celebrate National Trails Day.

**June 26** - A one day outing at Stevenson, Washington.

**October 24** - End of the year meeting in Albany. The documentary "The Roads Less Taken" will be shown.

## CA-NV-HI

### SCHEDULE

**April 24-25: Mini-convention or Second Annual Symposium** in Jackson, CA. Includes speakers sessions all day Saturday, Saturday night dinner, and a COED workshop on Sunday morning. For details on this extensive weekend, including special room rates, contact: Mary Ann Tortorich, P.O. Box 1242, Jackson, CA 95642 phone (209) 223-3315.

**May 22-23: Forty Mile Desert.** Highlights include Boiling Spring and trail traces on the Truckee Route and the Salt Creek Crossing, Parran Flat, and the sand dunes on the Carson Route. Overnight camping. High clearance vehicles a must (4WD not necessary). Moderate hiking. Contact: Jim McClain, 11786 Tree Top Circle, Nevada City, CA 95959 phone (916) 477-7750.

**June 5-6: National Trail Day Project.** Joint work outing with the Idaho Chapter to construct two informational Kiosks, and time permitting, mark the California Trail along the Thousand Spring Ranch Scenic Byway, north-east of Wells, NV. Contact: Tom Hunt, 950 Old Trace Rd., Palo Alto, CA 94306, phone (415) 941-0815.

**June 5: Mormon/Carson Trail at Carson Pass.** National Trails Day Recognition. Contact: Bill Watson, 3 Drum Hill Dr., Summit, NJ 07901.

**June 4-6: Beckwourth Trail.** First OCTA trip over this trail researched and verified by the Hammonds. Limited caravan due to narrow deadend logging roads. 4WD not necessary, unless it rains. One night camping at the foot of Grizzly Ridge, end third day near Oroville Dam. Contact: Andy Hammond, 1637 W. Sacramento Ave., Chico, CA 95926 phone (916) 343-5971.

**June 26: Historical Archaeology and the Donner Party.** Meet at the Donner Camp Picnic area on Hwy 89N, 2 miles north of Truckee. Interpretive talk on the results of the excavation at this site and the implication for interpreting the Donner families winter of 1846/47. Emphasis on how historical archaeology can add to our understand-

ing of history. Contact: Carrie Smith, 10342 Hwy 89N, Truckee, CA 96161, phone (916) 587-3558.

**July - date TBA: Archaeology Survey: Summit City.** Limited to 10-15 people, a workshop outing of 3-5 days. Participants will be trained and directed in proper archaeology procedures. This is not a dig. A daily hike of 4 miles in and 4 miles out. Camping at Blue Lakes. Contact: Frank Tortorich (see address above).

**July - date TBA: Mormon/Carson Trail.** Contact Tom Mahach, 6830 Aerie Rd., Pollock Pines, CA 95726, phone (916) 644-4384.

**July - date TBA: Johnson Cutoff.** Contact Dana Supernowicz, 5441 Rolling Rock Rd., Placerville, CA 95667, phone (916) 677-1615.

Mary Mueller  
Activities Coordinator  
(408) 268-7389

## SOUTHWEST

### SCHEDULE

**March 20-21: Southern Trail in New Mexico.** Sites will be visited along the Southern Trail, and will include travel through Cooke's Pass and the Coyote Hills.

**May 15-16: Mapping Workshop,** Flagstaff, AZ. Participants will learn how to use the mapping guidelines that OCTA has developed for mapping the trails on USGS topographic maps. This will include field work along the Beale Road in the Flagstaff area. Contact: Harland & Rose Ann Tompkins, 1125 W. Mission Rd., Chandler, AZ 85224, phone (602) 963-3565.

**July 17-18: Annual Planning Weekend** on Mt. Lemmon, outside Tucson, AZ.

## TRAIL BITS

### WALKING THROUGH HISTORY WITH CLYDE

This is the theme of an April 13 tribute to Clyde Arbuckle on the occasion of his 90th birthday. A coalition of historical organization (including OCTA) is hosting a special reception at the Santa Clara County Fairgrounds in San Jose, CA. A working historian for many years, Clyde is well known in historical circles for his teaching, writing and narrated field trips.

As a tribute to him and a desire to have his work continue, a scholarship fund is being established for the study of history. Part of the proceeds of the reception will go to the Arbuckle Scholarship Fund for the continuing development and documentation of the history of the emigrant trails and the people. However, other donations by those wishing to contribute to this fund can be accepted. For more information, contact Mary Mueller (408-268-7389) and she will help you make contact with those in charge of the fund.

### BOZEMAN TRAIL DAYS

June 18, 19, 20, 1993

**Fort Phil Kearny Historic Site, WY**  
On Friday evening, the 18th, Dr. Susan Badger Doyle, Historian and OCTA board member, will be among three speakers. She is presently editing 40 emigrant diaries of the Bozeman Trail for publication by the Montana Historical Society. This presentation, entitled "Bozeman Trail Diaries", is based on her research. On Saturday, Susan will serve as a guide on the bus tour along the trail.

### HAVE YOU SEEN?

"Packing Up for the Unknown: 'See Before You Start That You Have Forgotten Nothing.'" by Mary Lou Lyon appeared in *The Californians*, Sept./Oct. 1992. Mary Lou gave a version of this article in a talk at the Boise convention.

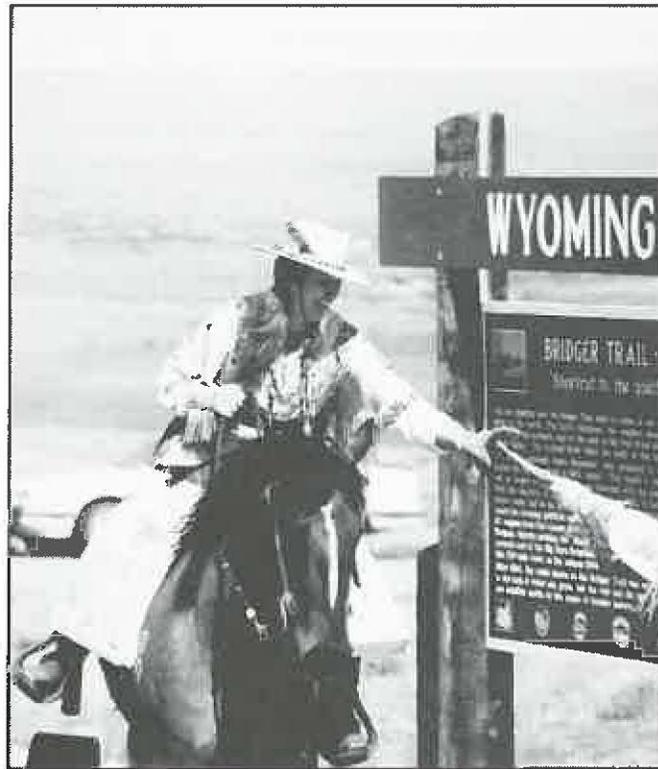
## BRIDGER TRAIL HISTORICAL MARKER

Signs are now in place alongside highway 16 announcing the new historical marker for the Bridger Trail put up on BLM land. The marker sets near the trail, 5 miles west of Burlington, Wyoming, where the highway crosses over the trail south of Bridger Butte. The artwork on the sign was painted by Larry Edgar of Cody, WY. It depicts Jim Bridger along the Trail named after him.

The new historical marker is the combined efforts of several groups, including the Bunkhouse Outlaws Pony Express (a non-profit historical re-enactment group).

Last July, a dedication ceremony was held at the marker location. About 200 people attended the ceremony on the sunny sagebrush rise. The Bunkhouse Outlaws Pony Express group presented the colors via horseback, as Louis Moore from Cody played the "Star Spangled Banner" on his trumpet.

Wyoming State Historical Society president Dale Morris gave the "welcome" address and Bob Edgar, historian from Cody, gave a brief history on the life of famed mountain man, Jim Bridger. The Yellowstone Mountain Men performed a black powder gun salute, as SageCreek Annie (Phyllis Preator), of the Bunkhouse Outlaws, spoke briefly on pioneer integrity and



Left: Elänna Skorupa, "Quackgrass Sally", was part of the mail-carrying relay at the dedication of the Bridger Trail marker.

the importance of early day communication, especially the Pony Express.

A special U.S. Postal cancellation designed by the Bunkhouse Outlaws, helped commemorate the dedication day at the nearby Emblem Post Office. Pony Express riders from the group relayed bona-fide U.S. mail via horseback, starting at Cody and the site of Corbett's Shebang.

During the ceremony, two Express riders; Quackgrass Sally (Elänna Skorupa) of Bridger, MT and Aspen Dancer (Barb McManus) of Cody, WY, arrived with mail "Pony Express style" doing a mail exchange at the marker site. Pony riders, Dan and Danielle Peters of Riverton, WY received the mail with a whoop and left at a gallop over the sagebrush flats, for Burlington and Emblem.

Following the dedication ceremony, a picnic lunch was served by the Big Horn County Historical Society in Emblem. Specially designed cache envelopes were then stamped with the special hand cancellation as well as over 250 pieces of mail, all carried via Pony Express.

This was a fun and historic event for all involved, as well as another grand marker dedication for those who come after. I hope everyone passing along highway 16 in Wyoming will take the minutes to stop and see this historical marker... and look across the silent sagebrush to the horizon beyond, along the ol' Bridger Trail.

Elänna Skorupa

### NEWS FROM THE PLAINS

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Rose Ann Tompkins, Editor

1993  
OCTA Convention  
Baker City, Oregon  
August 11-14

1994  
Salt Lake City, Utah

1995  
Grand Island,  
Nebraska

1996  
Elko, Nevada

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