



April
1994

NEWS FROM THE PLAINS

THE OREGON-CALIFORNIA TRAILS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

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

ELISHA STEPHENS

of the Stephens-Townsend-Murphy party of 1944

A Brief History - by Jim Rose, OCTA member and Chairman of the Nevada County (California) Historical Landmarks Commission

Elisha Stephens was born in South Carolina in 1804. The family later moved to Georgia where he was raised and learned the trade of blacksmithing. During the 1820s & 1830s, Stephens worked as a trapper in the Northwest fur trade, sharpening his skills as a mountain man, which would come to serve him well in later events of his life. He was employed as a blacksmith with the Indian subagency at Council Bluffs, Iowa, when in 1844, the lure of the west moved him to join the wagon parties of

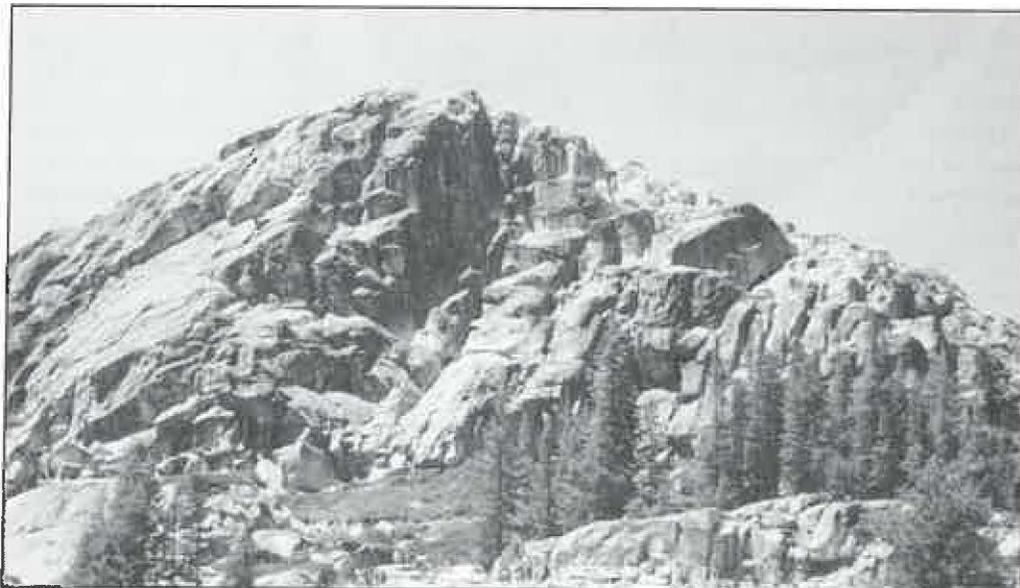
Dr. John Townsend, Martin Murphy, Sr., and others which were preparing to cross the plains to California in May of that year.

Although Elisha Stephens was considered by some to be somewhat eccentric, taciturn and solitary, his will was unyielding, and his leadership qualities were easily recognized by the other members of the wagon party, and he was elected their captain. One of the party members later wrote in his recollections of Captain Stephens, "We had

great confidence in our leader." Although some historians have chosen to spell his name "Stevens," numerous recorded documents prove that not only was he literate, but he signed his name "Elisha Stephens."

The Stephens-Townsend-Murphy party consisted of 50 men, women and children, with 11 wagons. They followed the existing Oregon Trail from Council Bluffs, Iowa, and along the way, in the high plains desert region of western Wyoming, they would pioneer

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Left: Mount Elisha Stephens, taken near the Sierra Nevada Pass (Donner Pass), looking in a north-west direction. (elevation - 7,250')

Photo by Jim Rose

**Convention
News
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Next NFP deadline June 1, 1994

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Greenwood's Cutoff," named after the man who was hired as their guide, Caleb Greenwood. This cutoff was later known as Sublett's Cutoff. When they reached Fort Hall, Idaho, they departed the Oregon Trail and followed the wagon wheel tracks laid down by the Walker-Chiles party of the previous year as far as the Humboldt Sink. From the Humboldt Sink they crossed the "Forty-Mile Desert" in present central Nevada, pioneering a new trail as they went. With the guidance of a Paiute Indian Chief whom they called Truckee, they followed a river which flowed easterly from the Sierra Nevada mountains, which they named in his honor, the "Truckee River."

Captain Stephens then led the wagon party up the treacherous Truckee River canyon, frequently having to cross the river from bank to bank, and at times having to travel directly in the river bed itself. They eventually worked their way up the Truckee River, to a beautiful Alpine mountain lake near the base of the Sierra summit. Again, honoring their Indian friend, they called it "Truckee's Lake." later to be renamed "Donner Lake." At this point, it was decided that six members of the main wagon party, four men and two women, would branch off on horseback and continue to follow the Truckee River. The plan was for the horseback party to reach Sutter's New Helvetia and send back help and supplies for the wagon party. Along the way, the members of the horseback party would become the first white people to stand on the shores of Lake Tahoe. Also it was decided to leave six wagons at Truckee's Lake in the charge of two men and a boy of eighteen, Moses Schallenberger. They quickly built a crude log cabin for shelter from the winter storms which were already upon them. This cabin

would play a significant role two years later, providing life saving shelter for the Breen family, and other members of the ill fated Donner-Reed party.

With nearly two feet of snow on the ground, Elisha Stephens led the remaining wagons up to the summit where they encountered a vertical ledge of granite. At first it seemed insurmount-

able, but after much searching, they located a narrow opening in the ledge, just wide enough to take the oxen through. With great determination and hard work by all party members they got the wagons over the mighty Sierra Nevada summit, on November 25, 1844; the first emigrant wagon party to accomplish this feat. The Stephens-Townsend-Murphy party eventually made it to Sutter's Fort at New Helvetia, thus pioneering the first practicable wagon route across the Sierra Nevada to the Sacramento Valley.

This was to be known later as the "Truckee Route of the California Trail" - one of the three major branches of the Overland Emigrant Trail to California.

Due in large part to the courage and cooperation by the members of the party, as well as the sound leadership and judgment of Captain Elisha Stephens, all members, including two babies born along the way, completed their journey safely. This was truly a remarkable accomplishment considering the hardships and obstacles they encountered during their emigration west to California.

Elisha Stephens settled for several years in the lush foothill region of Santa Clara Valley, Ca., returning to his solitary life as a trapper and also trying his hand at farming, eventually owning over three hundred acres of land. Several years later, feeling that the area was getting too crowded for his liking, he sold his land, and in 1861 he settled on a forty acre ranch near present Bakersfield, Ca., raising poultry and bees. He is considered to be one the first white settlers of the Kern County area. He continued to lead a rather unassuming life for many years as a rancher until suffering a stroke, which left him partially paralyzed. He remained hospitalized for the



Above: This photo of Elisha Stephens is a copy of the only known photograph ever taken of Stephens. It was taken at the "J. H. Heering Studio," in San Jose, CA, in 1864. Notice the shrubbery, and the backdrop, carefully placed to produce that pioneer look. The story is that the young daughter of a family friend insisted that Captain Stephens have a photograph taken of himself, with his "pioneer" clothes on.

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years of his life, and died in 1887 at the age of 83. He was buried in an unmarked potter's grave at the Union Cemetery, in Bakersfield, Ca. There is no record of Stephens ever having been married, nor of any other immediate family members living in California.

History has not dealt generously with Elisha Stephens. It is true that his solitary lifestyle did nothing to help garner him a more recognized place in the history books. But by all rights, his name should have been applied to the pass that was discovered under his leadership. But because of the notoriety connected with the Donner-Reed tragedy in the winter of 1846, the pass, a lake, and a nearby mountain peak, along with a state park, were given the name of Donner. The maps of California preserve Stephens' name only with the misspelled "Stevens Creek," located in Santa Clara County.

Several years ago an unsuccessful attempt was made by various historical organizations to rename Donner Pass to Stephens Pass. Rather than again attempt that effort, the Nevada County Historical Landmarks Commission has applied to the U.S.G.S. to name a mountain peak in honor of Elisha Stephens. "Mount Elisha Stephens" is located adjacent to and overlooking the pass which he helped pioneer, 150 years ago this year a just and deserved honor, long overdue.

The "NCHLC" is also in the process of securing funding to construct a monument to be located near the pass, honoring the Stephens-Townsend-Murphy party, in this, the sesquicentennial year of their historic journey west to California. A dedication date of September 24, 1994 has been set, and if all goes well, we hope to see many of our fellow "OCTA" members there to celebrate the event.

OCTA'S DIRECTOR EMERITUS CONTINUES HIS TRAIL ACTIVITIES

Keeping busy, I wrote three mini-biographies of frontiersmen for the *Encyclopedia of the American West*. Also I was drafted to write prefaces for three books: a third printing of *Time Exposure*, the autobiography of William H. Jackson; a second edition of the 1862 overland diary of William Smedle; and a booklet composed by Dorothy Meade, the granddaughter of James Cook. Cook had a ranch near the agate fossil quarries that are now a national monument, to be dedicated this year. It will include the assemblage of gifts to Cook by Chief Red Cloud and his people who made annual pilgrimages from the reservation in South Dakota to their great friend's ranch. This area is about 50 miles north of Scotts Bluff.

Speaking of Scotts Bluff, that national monument is 75 years old this year, being among the early designations by Presidential proclamation authorized by the Antiquities Act of 1906. According to an article by OCTA member James Denney in the Omaha World-Herald I am to be invited up there to help celebrate sometime this summer.

The Nebraska State Historical Society gave me it's A. E. Sheldon award at it's annual meeting at Lincoln on October 30. The city of Fremont, Nebraska is to give me the John C. Fremont award on August 13. Unfortunately this conflicts with the OCTA convention at Salt Lake City, but I may be able to fly to Omaha on the 12th.

I am working with John Mark Lambertson on ways and means of expanding our overland diary collection at the National Frontier Trails Center. He has provided me with a checklist of over 900 diaries that are already on hand at the library.

I am fussing with the National Park Service in Omaha about errors in their plans for the authorized Council Bluffs Trails Center, which errors include a proposed "Oregon Trail" out of Council Bluffs (which never existed as such) and the complete omission of the California National Historic Trail, which ran along both sides of the Platte River, as I have demonstrated conclusively in my books, *Great Platte River Road*, and *Platte River Road Narratives*.

Merrill Mattes

OUR WEST CONFERENCE

June 19-25, 1994

*Learn about the West;
Experience the West*

Western Wyoming
Community College
P.O. Box 428
Rock Springs, WY 82902
(307) 382-1725





From the Editor

It has been suggested that the chapter newsletters be sent directly to all the board members and officers, as well as to headquarters, the OCTA historian and other newsletter editors. This increases the cost of postage for the chapter, but it keeps these areas better informed. Headquarters has been making copies and sending them to the above, but this method increases the time period. These names and addresses may be obtained from the OCTA roster, or you can contact me for a list.

This year's convention in Salt Lake City promises to be a good one. The committee there has been working hard. I look forward to seeing you there.

Send all newsletter items to me at the address below. Again, my thanks to all of you who send me items. This newsletter would not exist without you.

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

NFP deadlines:

June 1
for the July Issue

September 1
for the October Issue

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE LAUDS HUNT AND HAINES ON FORT HALL WORK

Two leaders of OCTA's preservation efforts over the years, Tom Hunt and Aubrey Haines, have won high praise from the National Park Service for their contributions to the Fort Hall National Historic Landmark.

In advising President Dave Bigler that the first stage of negotiations and work for the Landmark is nearly complete, Thomas L. Burge, Chief of the Western Region's Interagency Archaeological Services at San Francisco, said that "in helping the NPS, Tribes, and other agencies through this first phase, OCTA has exhibited strong public commitment."

"In particular," he said, "our office wishes to recognize the efforts of the OCTA National Trails Preservation Officer, Thomas H. Hunt of Palo Alto, California."

"We also wish to recognize the assistance that Aubrey L. Haines, historian and OCTA member, has given our office," he went on. "His 1958 map of Fort Hall proved to be an accurate guide for the Eastern Washington University excavation."

Thanks to Hunt and Haines, Thomas Burge said "the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes and responsible Federal and State agencies are now in a better position to work together to address the preservation needs of the Fort Hall site."

He expressed the hope that OCTA will continue its high level of interest and participation as preservation efforts at Fort Hall go forward.

In the meantime, the association appreciates his recognition and expression of continued partnership in this vital project.



REVENUE ENHANCEMENT PLAN - UPDATE

In the last issue of the NFP, I reported some preliminary results of the fund raising drive for the Special Publication Fund which we started last spring (\$5400.00 had been raised by mid November 1993). We were quite pleased with the response. Early in December, 1993, we sent each member a letter explaining the fund raising program and asked for their help in preserving our emigrant trail heritage. Once again, we were pleased with our members' generous response. The first contributions were recorded on December 10th and after eleven weeks, they are still arriving. I hope they continue! The results of the fund raising drive are as follows:

Endowment Fund:	1870.00
Annual Fund:	2680.00
Designated Funds:	
Preservation	320.00
Archeology	162.50
Trail Marking, G & S	742.50
Trail Mapping	275.00
COED	100.00
Education	-0-
Special Publications	<u>6255.00</u>
Total Designated Funds	<u>7855.00</u>
As of February 21, 1994	<u>\$12405.00</u>

Pretty impressive for OCTA's first attempt at fund raising! So far we have received contributions from 144 members (6.4% of the membership), the CA-NV-HI Chapter, a state historical society, and one nonmember (OCTA's accountant). The contributions have ranged from \$5 to \$1,000 and we are quite pleased at the response so far. Special thanks to the 144 members who have helped us off to a good start. However, for those who have not yet contributed, it is not too late to join in our effort

Jim Budde.

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

David
Bigler

Thanks to the dedicated efforts of many, OCTA has truly grown over a dozen years into an effective instrument for historic trails preservation and a respected authority on the western emigration. This was made abundantly clear to me by the role OCTA has played on several fronts in recent weeks.

Late last February, Director Bill Watson, Legislative Action chairman, and I met at Denver with Michael Snyder, Associate Regional Director, Michael Duwe, Long Distance Trail Coordinator, and other National Park Service officials. Also attending were Garn Hatch and Stan Kimball of the Mormon Trails Association and Ken and Arleta Martin from the National Pony Express Association.

Purpose of the session was to learn the latest NPS thinking on future development of the California, Pony Express and Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trails. In return, we outlined our views on what the agency should do to support our own program.

The session was especially productive because NPS, like many private businesses today, expects soon to undergo a reorganization to streamline its operations and reduce personnel. Accordingly, Mike Snyder stressed the need to get the most from those assigned to work on historic trails.

Participants agreed that NPS could best coordinate trail activities among private and public groups and provide technical and profes-

sional support to these efforts. There was little doubt in anyone's mind that the real work of historic preservation in the future will rest where it has in the past and truly belongs — on the men and women of OCTA and other private organizations.

Bill Watson and I expressed OCTA's support for Mike Duwe and his good trails work in recent years and strongly recommended that in any future reorganization he be located in an accessible place, like Denver. We also called for maximum cooperation on trails preservation among the NPS, Bureau of Land Management and U. S. Forest Service.

I am convinced that our input will make a difference in the future and wish to express our appreciation to Bill Watson for setting up this session.

Another sign of OCTA's growing influence came earlier this year when officers of Utah Crossroads Chapter and I took the lead in gaining passage by the Utah State Legislature of a measure to commemorate the 1996-97 sesquicentennial of the Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trail. To plan and coordinate activities commemorating this event, the measure will create and fund a Utah Pioneer Trail Sesquicentennial Council whose membership will include by law a representative of OCTA.

Other Utah leaders and historic preservation organizations supporting this worthy effort include Mormon Trails Association, Daughters

of Utah Pioneers, Sons of Utah Pioneers, Utah Division, National Pony Express Association, Utah Westerners, and others. In this effort, especially noteworthy has been the leadership of C. Booth Wallentine, President, Mormon Pioneer Trail Foundation, and Garn Hatch, OCTA and MTA.

These examples from both national and state levels point up the potential OCTA enjoys today to make a difference in preserving the story of America's move West. But greater participation and leadership by our members is needed today more than ever if we are to make the most of it.

The association today offers its members the opportunity to take an active role in ten chapters and some two dozen committees, listed in the latest Membership Roster. In addition, a number of leadership positions in preservation, conventions, publications, fund raising and other important activities on both national and chapter fronts are expected to open up in future months.

Field trips and conventions are fun. But more satisfying in a larger sense is a contribution to preserve some of our country's great heritage for future generations. You are urged to volunteer now or suggest someone you think is suited for a leadership role.

To do so, contact any of the committee heads or chapter presidents listed in the Directory or write to me at 11696 So. Oak Manor Dr., Sandy, Utah 84092. I would like to hear from you.

NEW VISITOR CENTER SEEKS TRAIL ITEMS

This summer a new visitor center will open on the Oregon-California Trail near Chimney Rock in Western Nebraska. We who live on the Trail between Chimney Rock and Scotts Bluff National Monument are interested in acquiring authentic pioneer articles for display in the new museum. Like

most others, we would welcome donations to the museum, we are also prepared to purchase items of value.

If any of you own or know the whereabouts of diaries, photographs, sketches, maps or household items that were taken across the trails in Nebraska, please contact Jamalee Clark, Sec/Treas

of the Chimney Rock Visitor Center Task Force, at 308-436-5548 or P.O.Box 531, Gering, NE 69341. You may also contact the Nebraska State Historical Society in Lincoln, Nebraska at 1-800-833-6747.

COED NEWS

ACCOLADES FOR HERMAN ZITTEL

Thanks to all those OCTA members who have sent in COED Name Searches since the database opened in July 1993. Between July and mid-February COED has received 129 name inquiries from 90 individual requestors. If you have any questions or comments on the database products you receive from a name search, we are always interested in hearing from you.

Winter seems to have been pretty severe over most of the country so far. I can tell from the number of surveys that have been completed so far during this post holiday season. Between the Baker City convention and the end of February 185 surveys were entered into the COED database. The most recent numbers for the database look like this:

NUMBER OF DOCUMENTS	1,514
NUMBER OF NAMES ENTRIES	48,958
NUMBER OF LOCATIONS ENTRIES	58,048
NUMBER OF INDIAN INCIDENTS	9,898

In January 1994, Jim Budde announced to the members of OCTA the new Revenue Enhancement Program (REP). COED has already received several hundred dollars in donations for which we are very pleased and grateful. These donations will help COED with purchasing some items that until now, have only been on the wish list. For instance, a new printer is needed at headquarters to print out name search requests. As documents become harder for our survey volunteers to find, we will buy copies from the various repositories that have them. These copies will be placed in the Merrill J. Mattes Research Library after surveying for the benefit of all trails researchers. Also needed will be a users guide to the on line database when COED has dial-up capability. There will be a cost to print and mail the guides to interested parties and the REP donations will help to defray that. Thanks again to all who helped COED with their contributions.

Kathy Roubal,
National COED Administrator
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The Huntington project began about two years ago. Within about a year, the Huntington fulfilled its contract with OCTA, except for three documents, but to our surprise the documents came in the form of microfilm reels - unlabeled at that! It was when they were unraveled that the missing three came to light. It was necessary to print the documents from microfilm onto paper, Darkness settings varied as did manuscript quality and paper size. Many documents required two to four shots per page because the pages were larger than the screen. However, the Sacramento Main Library has state of the art machines, so the best copies possible were obtained. The shots were then pieced and pasted together to make a whole and recopied for binding.

When word first reached Herman Zittel about the COED Huntington Project, he came forward and volunteered to bind the purchased documents. As the volunteer surveyors complete their assignments, the bound documents will be sent to Independence to become part of OCTA's Merrill J. Mattes Library. What a beautiful job of binding Herman has done. The Huntington documents sport a "hymnal-blue" cover with gold stencilling on the spine. For control purposes it was necessary to have each document bound separately rather than combining several small ones together. So, it was no easy job to come up with sufficient thickness to stencil the spine, but clever Herman added some hidden thickness where necessary. Those of you who signed up to survey these Huntington documents know what a great job of binding Herman did. The rest of you will want to see these handsome books on their shelf when you next visit The National Frontier Trails Center in Independence.

The Huntington collection consists of thirty-four hard copy documents, plus eight more on microfilm (not copied because they had already been surveyed). There were twenty-four volunteer surveyors and fourteen of the thirty-four documents have already been surveyed and returned. If this Huntington

example continues to go well, perhaps other libraries will be willing to enter into a contract with OCTA.

Thanks to Tom Hunt for beginning this project with The Huntington, to Kathy Roubal for the nitty-gritty follow-up with The Huntington, to Herman Zittel for the binding, and to the volunteers who are surveying!

Shann Rupp,
Assignments Coordinator

LOGO REGISTERED

You may recall that we obtained trademark status for the OCTA logo in March, 1992. Because of the rapid growth and the increasing recognition by the public of our COED program, we applied for a trademark for the COED logo.

Recently, we were notified that the United States Patent and Trademark Office has issued a registration # (#1,802,271) for the COED logo on November 2, 1993. Therefore, any future use of this logo by any individual or organization without the express permission of OCTA will not be permitted. This registration is not intended to discourage the headquarters, the chapters, or individual members from utilizing the logo on official organizational business, but it is intended to prevent other individuals and organizations from using the logo without OCTA's written permission.

Future use of the COED logo should include the placement of the letter "R" in a circle immediately following the last letter of the logo. (See example below)

COED[®]

The effectiveness of this registration is dependent upon the members of OCTA's use of the logo only for official organizational matters. Any other use of the logo is not permitted.

If there are any questions concerning the use of the logo, or if any member discovers a questionable use, they should report it to the Headquarter's Manager immediately!

Jim Budde

NEWS FROM HEADQUARTERS

Jeanne Miller, Headquarters Manager

By the time you receive this *News From the Plains* you will have received the registration packet for the 1994 Convention to be held in Salt Lake City in August. Should it have not yet arrived, please let us know, and we'll send another.

Again this year, OCTA and other booksellers will have tables in the Book Room. Please come by and visit with all of us.

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OCTA'S OWN PUBLICATIONS

THE OVERLAND MEMOIR OF CHARLES FREDERICK TRUE

A Teenager on the California Trail, 1859, edited by Sally Ralston True

When he was in his seventies, Charles Frederick True wrote this memoir of his 1859 trip over the California Trail at the age of 16. It was edited and published by his granddaughter Sally Ralston True in 1966 entitled *Covered Wagon Pioneers*. This book is a 1993 reprint, with revised preface and maps, of this engaging and informative account of the overland experience through the eyes of a teenager.

Charles True was observant and had a delightful sense of humor. His account of pioneer life in Minnesota and his overland trip is lively, rich in colorful detail, and is enhanced with the inclusion of letters written by his father to family members remaining behind. This book will appeal to anyone interested in first person accounts of emigrant overland travel.

Sally Ralston True has a Ph.D. in Education from the University of Wisconsin. She taught English Literature to teachers before retiring to Honolulu, Hawaii.

109 pages, 5 illustrations, 2 maps

\$7.95

P&H 3.00

READING, WRITING, AND RIDING ALONG THE OREGON-CALIFORNIA TRAILS

An Educational Activity Book, by William E. Hill

This book offers the reader an informative and entertaining way to learn about the history and challenges of nineteenth-century overland emigrant travel. It is perfect for middle school students and adults who are just beginning to learn about the overland trails.

The book's activities all relate to emigrant trail history and experience. Some are just fun, others require more interpretation and skill. They include timelines, crossword puzzles, word searches, map work, reading comprehension, charts, and graphs. At the end, there is a section for the reader to write a sample travel journal.

William E. Hill is a high school Social Studies teacher in Commack, New York. He has traveled and explored the trails for more than 25 years and is the well-known author of the "Yesterday and Today" books about the Oregon, California, and Santa Fe Trails.

\$6.95

P&H 2.00

GRAVES AND SITES ON THE OREGON AND CALIFORNIA TRAILS

A Chapter in OCTA's Efforts to Preserve the Trails, by Reg Duffin with additions by Randy Brown.

OCTA's preservation efforts with description of the graves and sites plus directions to reach them is presented in this book. Black and white photos accompany most sites, and OCTA information markers are reproduced giving the history of the grave or site. Sites on private land are noted.

Spiral-bound paperback

\$7.95

P&H 3.00

Order from: OCTA, P.O. Box 1019, Independence, MO 64051-0519

Just a reminder:

WHEN YOU RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP, PLEASE GIVE US YOUR 9 DIGIT ZIP CODE.

Thanks
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OREGON-CALIFORNIA TRAILS ASSOCIATION
STATEMENT OF SUPPORT, REVENUES, AND EXPENSES

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	1992-1993		OVER (UNDER) BUDGET	1991-1992
	ANNUAL BUDGET	ACTUAL		ACTUAL
SUPPORT AND REVENUE:				
SUPPORT:				
Dues income	\$70,000	\$77,075	\$7,075	\$69,064
Life memberships		3,000	3,000	1,000
Donations	3,000	5,701	2,701	4,428
Grants-convention		5,367	5,367	4,000
TOTAL SUPPORT	73,000	91,143	18,143	78,492
REVENUES:				
Overland Journal & NFP revenue	3,000	5,757	2,757	4,299
COED fees		1,077	1,077	
OCTA merchandise revenue (net of costs)	21,000	31,976 *	10,976	17,176
Convention revenue (net of expenses)	10,000	30,441	20,441	17,353
Interest income	1,000	3,155	2,155	3,546
TOTAL REVENUES:	35,000	72,406	37,406	42,374
TOTAL SUPPORT AND REVENUES	108,000	163,549	55,549	120,866
EXPENSES:				
OFFICERS	7,000	5,347	(1,653)	3,887
COMMITTEES	14,600	9,458	(5,142)	10,259
HEADQUARTERS	43,250	40,770	(2,480)	33,267
PRESERVATION	13,100	9,161	(3,939)	10,199
PUBLICATIONS	47,180	40,231	(6,949)	43,106
OTHER (CAPITAL EQUIPMENT)	3,000	2,962	(38)	180
TOTAL EXPENSES	128,130	107,929	(20,201)	100,898
EXCESS OF REVENUES OVER EXPENSES	(\$20,130)	\$55,620	\$75,750	\$19,968
NET REVENUE FROM VARIOUS ACTIVITIES:				
		1993		1992
CONVENTION		\$35,808		\$21,353
OCTA STORE		\$31,976		\$17,176
PUBLICATIONS		(\$33,653)		(\$37,848)

MAP
WET
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AN UNSOLVED TRAIL MYSTERY

Recently, I posted a notice about OCTA on the Internet genealogy bulletin board service, ROOTS-L. A number of people requested more information and at least one has joined OCTA as a result. We also received copies of two trail-crossing accounts and some fascinating materials about early Oregon settlers as a result.

The posting also brought a request from Debra Spindle, a librarian at the University of Oklahoma. She is anxious to learn more about an Indian attack that claimed the life of her great-great-grandfather in 1863. So, read carefully. Maybe YOU can help solve a mystery!

In the spring of 1863, John Washington BALL, accompanied by his wife, Elizabeth WILLIS BALL, their 18-NFP April 1994 - page 8

month-old daughter, Martha Jane, and two of his brothers, William Thomas (or Thomas William) and Henry S. BALL, left Warren County, IA (just south of Des Moines) for the West. Debra believes they were headed for California, but she is not completely sure of that. On August 26, 1863, their wagon train was attacked by Indians. John Washington BALL and his brother, William Thomas BALL, were both killed. Henry BALL, Elizabeth WILLIS BALL and the young child, Martha Jane BALL, survived. There were apparently other survivors but Debra knows nothing about others who may have been in the wagon train.

According to BALL family history, Elizabeth and her baby, Martha Jane, survived on cactus blossoms for

9 days while the surviving men went for help. Apparently, the survivors were eventually taken to Salt Lake City where Henry BALL may have spent the winter before he returned to Iowa. Elizabeth BALL and her young daughter continued their journey, presumably reaching California (if that was the destination) later that year. Elizabeth apparently remarried and Debra's grandmother said her husband was "a gambler." Debra, however, points out that this may be her grandmother's "embroidery." In any case, Elizabeth didn't live much longer. (Could she have been wounded in the attack and succumbed later?) One family legend says that Elizabeth was buried in Virginia City. By 1870, young Martha Jane BALL,

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**REPORT OF THE
TREASURER FOR THE
YEAR ENDING
SEPTEMBER 30, 1993**

On these two pages is a Summary Report of the Association's fiscal activities for FY 1992-93 (October, 1992 to September 30, 1993). For purposes of comparison you may wish to consult last years Financial Report which appeared in the January, 1993 NFP.

This has been an extraordinary year for OCTA. A year of great significance and accomplishment for the Association and we look forward to the future with more confidence and optimism than at any time in our history. None of this could have been carried out without the strong support and active participation of our membership. Thank you for your dedication and encouragement.

Jim Budde, Treasurer

OREGON-CALIFORNIA TRAILS ASSOCIATION BALANCE SHEET

<u>ASSETS</u>	<u>September 30, 1993</u>		<u>September 30, 1992</u>	
Cash:				
Petty cash-checking account	\$2,000		\$1,000	
Operating account	17,900		29,404	
Convention account	40,837		18,381	
OCTA store account	<u>30,973</u>	91,710	<u>10,364</u>	59,149
Menucha/MoKan account		15,586		3,731
Certificates of deposit		29,335		34,325
Mutual fund investment-Scudder		10,230		
Grant receivable				4,000
Prepaid publications expense		2,275		
Advance-convention Salt Lake City		1,000		
Inventory- merchandise:				
True diary	2,162			
Reading, Writing, workbook	6,231			
Maps	5,812		2,074	
All other merchandise	<u>11,233</u>	25,438	<u>8,175</u>	10,249
Fixed assets:				
Furniture & fixtures	7,647		6,828	
Office equipment	7,150		5,000	
Less: accumulated depreciation	<u>(14,797)</u>	0	<u>(11,828)</u>	0
Land-California Hill		6,260		6,260
TOTAL ASSETS		<u>\$181,834</u>		<u>\$117,714</u>
LIABILITIES				
Accounts payable		\$120		\$3,697
Payroll taxes payable		222		
Menucha/MoKan deferred revenue		<u>15,586</u>		<u>3,731</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES		<u>15,928</u>		<u>7,428</u>
FUND BALANCES				
Retained revenue over expenses		110,286		90,318
Current revenue over expenses		<u>55,620</u>		<u>19,968</u>
TOTAL FUND BALANCES		<u>165,906</u>		<u>110,286</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES & FUND BALANCES		<u>\$181,834</u>		<u>\$117,714</u>

See Accountant's Compilation Expense

• • • • continued

Debra's great-great-grandmother, was back in Iowa, living with her grandparents.

The information that Debra has comes primarily from oral history told to her by her own grandmother, Martha Jane's granddaughter. Since Debra's grandmother knew Martha Jane, most of the story presumably came from her. (But how much could this woman who was only 18 months old when the attack occurred really have known?) The general outlines of the story are also contained in a history of Warren Co., IA and it has also been corroborated by another of Debra's relatives, who is descended from one of the BALL brothers who opted not to go to the West.

Trying to learn more about this episode is complicated by many factors: (1) 1863 was an exceptionally bad year for Indian attacks; (2) Debra is not sure of the wagon train's destination; (3) Debra does not know where the attack occurred; (4) there is no way to know what route they might have taken; and (5) the date comes from probate records in Iowa and therefore may or may not be the exact date of the attack.

Despite all these obstacles, I assured Debra that if this mystery could be solved, OCTA members were the ones most likely to do it. So, everyone, please search your memories and your reference books and your generalized

knowledge of the westward emigration and let's try and help Debra find out what really happened to her great-great-grandfather! Maybe this episode will sound familiar to one of the COED volunteers.

If you have any information or suggestions, please drop me a note or give me a call and I will either put you in touch with Debra directly or relay your information or suggestions. Thanks for whatever help you can provide!

Lesley Wischmann, Chair, Public Relations Committee 712 S. Second Street, Laramie, WY 82070

(307) 742-5449



1994 OCTA

AUGUST 10 - 13 in

Crossroads Chapter Strives to Make '94 Convention the Best Ever

Utilizing the full resources of its 170 plus Crossroads Chapter members, with the enthusiastic cooperation of federal, state, city and LDS Church offices, the 1994 OCTA National Convention in Salt Lake City, August 10-13, promises to be a totally memorable experience.

Activities will begin with choice of pre-convention tours on Monday, August 8, 1994. The selections will offer: Hastings Cutoff across portions of the Salt Lake Valley; Hastings Pass and an overview of the Salt Desert; Along the Mormon Trail from Fort Bridger; The Pony Express Trail; The Old California Trail, Donner Springs and more.

Registration for those not previously registered will begin Tuesday August 9th. An archeology field workshop will be conducted in the morning, and a tour of Mormon Church facilities in the afternoon. The convention will officially open Wednesday, August 10th.

Conventioneers will have a broad menu of fascinating events from which to choose. Papers being presented are listed at right. In addition, various workshops will be available. They include an all day pre-convention Archeology Workshop on Tuesday, August 9th as well as Wednesday afternoon, August 10th workshops in Genealogy; Preservation; COED; COED Data Entry; Mapping; and National Conventions.

The exciting slate of field trips is described on the next page together with information on pre and post convention activities.

The following scholars and researchers have been scheduled to speak:

- Dr. Fred R. Gowans** - - "The Fur Trade and the Opening of the Trails"
Dr. Stanley Kimball - - "The Mormon Migrations of 1846-68 in Perspective"
Roy D. Tea - - - - - "The First Wagons Across Utah, The Bartelson-Bidwell Party"
Will Bagley - - - - - "Lansford W. Hastings, Scoundrel or Visionary."
Dr. LaMar C. Berrett - - "This is the Place - The Mormon Trail from Fort Bridger to Salt Lake Valley."
Rush Spedden - - - - - "The Fearful Long Drive - The Hastings Cutoff Over the Salt Desert."
Dr. Floyd W. O'Neil - - "Gold Rushers Meet the Saints - The Kingdom at the Crossroads"
Lyndia Carter - - - - - "Pushing It Too far - The Drama and Drudgery of the Mormon Handcart Emigrants."
Prof. Norman Wright - "Measuring the Distance, Pioneer Odometers"
Dr. Kenneth Owens - - "From California to Utah in 1848 - Gold Rich Saints and the Opening of the Mormon Carson Emigrant Trail."
Dr. Brigham Madsen - "The Trail North to Montana - Corinne to Ft. Benton."
Steven K. Madsen - - - "The Spanish Trail - Santa Fe to L.A."
Michael N. Landon - - - "The Opening of the Salt Lake Cutoff."
William B. Smart - - - - "The Roughest Country You Ever Seen - Carving a Mormon Wagon Road Across the Colorado Plateau."
John M. Townley - - - - "The Overland Stage West - or With Gun and Camera Through Wildest Texas to California."
Dr. David B. Madsen - - "Excavation of the Donner-Reed Wagons on the Great Salt Lake Desert."
Melvin L. Bashore - - - "On The Heels of the Handcart Tragedy - Mormonism's Forgotten 1856 Wagon Companies."
Patricia K.A. Fletcher - "Salt Lake City and Terminus of the Cherokee Trail."
Barbara R. Sullivan - - "What Women Were Told - Mid-19th Century America."
Dr. Loren K. Hansen - "Mormon Colony at Mission San Jose."

CONVENTION

SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH



Convention Tours Have Something for Everyone

Planning to the minutest detail has characterized the development of the '94 Convention field trips. Scouting runs to determine accessibility, time requirements, food, refreshment, and rest stop needs, have been conducted. Each tour guide has been selected for personal knowledge of the trail and printed tour guides for individual participants are being published. Personnel from the BLM, State and National Parks, and other government bureaus have been involved in the planning and will continue to provide services throughout the Convention.



Tour A: Mormon (Donner) Trail - The portion from Yellow Creek, Wyoming, to the Salt Lake Valley. Includes sections of the Hastings and Salt Lake Cutoffs of the California Trail and the Pony Express Trail.

Above: Donner Spring and the new fence erected by the Utah Crossroads Chapter. The Salt Desert and Donner-Reed Pass are in the background. Photo by Vern Gorzitze

Tour B: Mormon (Donner) Trail Hike - 4.6 Mile walk from top of Big Mountain in the Wasatch Range, to Mormon Flat on East Canyon Creek.

Tour C: Hensley's Salt Lake Cutoff - From the Mormon settlements to the California Trail. Includes Fort Buenaventura, Hampton Ford, the Bidwell-Bartleson crossing site of the Bear River, and the Golden Spike Memorial.

Tour D: Hastings Cutoff - Includes the Donner Reed Museum in Grantsville, Burnt Spring in Skull Valley, Hastings Pass, Salt Desert, Lunch at Donner Spring at the base of Pilot Peak.

Tour E: Salt Lake Valley - Brigham Young's home and family cemetery, Daughters of the Pioneers Museum, This is the Place Monument, University of Utah, and historic sites mentioned in Burton's *City of the Saints*.

Special Pre and Post Convention Tours

Hastings-Donner-Mormon-California-Pony Express Trail: Guide, Dr. LaMar C. Berrett, Monday August 8, From Fort Bridger, Wyoming to Yellow Creek. Requires CB equipped, four wheel drive vehicles. Limited to 20 vehicles.

Hastings Cutoff: Guide, Rush Spedden. Monday August 8, from Skull Valley to Grayback Hills. Will include Hope Wells, Redlum Spring, cross Hastings Pass and 1/2 mile hike to the top of Grayback Hills. Requires 4 wheel drive with CB recommended. Limited to 20 vehicles.

Hastings Cutoff: Guide, Roy Tea. Sunday August 14, Floating Island and overview discussion of the abandoned wagons site, then a 1/2 mile hike to the trail. Continue to Silver Island hike, and Donner Spring dedication. Requires truck or 4 wheel drive. CB recommended. Limited to 20 vehicles.

Pony Express Trail: Sunday August 14, West from Salt Lake City to include Cedar Fort, Old Camp Floyd, Lookout Pass, Simpson Springs, and Riverbed Stations. Inclement weather may require 4WD or utility vehicle. CB recommended.

CONVENTION SCHEDULE

These scheduled times and activities are subject to change.
A final schedule will be provided at registration.

Monday, August 8

8:00 Pre-Tour, Hastings Cutoff to Grayback
9:00 Pre-Tour, Fort Bridger to The Needles

Tuesday, August 9

8:30-4:00 Board of Directors Meeting
9:00-5:00 Archaeology Field Workshop
1:00-5:00 Tour of Temple Square, LDS Museum of Church History and Art

Wednesday, August 10

7:00-8:00 Chapter Presidents Breakfast
8:00-8:45 Annual Membership Meeting
9:00-9:30 Welcome and Orientation
9:40-10:50 Plenary Paper: "The Fur Trade and the Opening of the Trails"
11:00-12:00 Concurrent Papers
11:45-1:00 National Committee Chair Lunch
12:00 Lunch on your own
1:30-4:00 Workshops
4:30-5:30 COED Data Entry
Chapter Meetings
7:00-9:00 Get-Acquainted Social

Thursday, August 11

Field Trips & Adventures

7:00-5:00 Tour A — Mormon (Donner) Trail
Tour B — Mormon (Donner) Trail Hike
Tour C - Hensley's Salt Lake Cutoff
Tour D - Hastings Cutoff (Salt Desert Trail)
8:00-12:00 Tour E — Salt Lake Valley Historical
7:00-8:30 Author's Night, Meet the Editors
8:15-9:30 Mormon Tabernacle Choir Rehearsal

Friday, August 12

8:30-9:30 Plenary Paper "Mormon Migrations of 1846-68 in Perspective"
9:45-12:00 Concurrent Papers
12:00 Lunch on your own
1:30-5:00 Concurrent Papers
6:00-7:00 No-Host Social Hour
7:00-10:00 Awards Banquet

Saturday, August 13

Field Trips & Adventures

7:00-5:00 Tour A — Mormon (Donner) Trail
Tour B — Mormon (Donner) Trail Hike
Tour C - Hensley's Salt Lake Cutoff
Tour D - Hastings Cutoff (Salt Desert Trail)
8:00-12:00 Tour E — Salt Lake Valley Historical
7:00-10:00 Dutch Oven Dinner Pioneer Trail State Park

Sunday, August 14

7:00 Post Tour Floating Island to Donner Spring
8:00 Post Tour Pony Express Trail (BLM)
9:15-10:00 Tabernacle Choir Broadcast
2:00 Donner Spring Monument Dedication

Authors To Make Personal Appearances

One of the highlights of past OCTA conventions has been the Book Room where dealers in western history books have opened shop for the convenience of OCTA conventioners. A large area has been set aside at convention headquarters, Hilton Hotel, for this year's event. Thursday, March 11th, has been designated Authors Night, when authors appear to discuss their books and sign autographs. A large number of leading authors are expected to be present, along with the large contingent of prominent Utah authors such as Will Bagley, David Bigler, Fred Gowans, Brig. Madsen, Bud Rusho, Harold Schindler, and Jack Tykal. We will attempt to have a confirmed list for the August issue.

Donner Spring Monument To the Past - To the Future

At 2 PM on Sunday, August 14th, members of the Utah Crossroads Chapter of the Oregon California Trails Association will dedicate a monument at the famous spring at the foot of Pilot Peak. The life restoring waters were the western terminus for numerous crossers of the heinous Salt Desert, including John C. Fremont in 1845, and subsequently Lansford W. Hastings, and the ill-fated Donner Party. Since the mid-19th century, the precious fluid has sustained humans and livestock.

In 1991, Dean Stevens, the present owner of the TL Bar Ranch, site of the spring, received OCTA's "Friend of the Trail Award" for his courtesy and cooperation in allowing trail buffs on the ranch. During the presentation by the Crossroads Chapter, a member asked Dean if a monument might one day be erected at the spring. Dean replied, "Yes." In 1993 work began under the leadership of Crossroads member Vern Gorzitze. All labor, from design to construction, has been volunteer by members of Crossroads with occasional assistance from Mr. Stevens.

The project has special significance as an outstanding example of landowner awareness and cooperation. It holds promise for the future identification and preservation of historic sites as more Americans become aware of how precious these vestiges of our pioneer spirit have become. We sincerely hope that a large number of the '94 conventioners will stay over and join in the ceremony. (see photo on page 11)

Important Trail Books to Mark '94 Convention

Three important trail books are scheduled for presentation to coincide with the '94 Convention in Salt Lake City. Dr. Fred R. Gowans', *The Great Fur Trade Road, 1739-1843*, will be published in an edition limited to the number ordered by OCTA members attending the convention. This original work includes journal entries and the earliest archival maps.

Trailing the Pioneers: A Guide to Utah's Emigrant Trails 1829-69, being published by Utah State University Press, was commissioned by the Utah Crossroads Chapter to coincide with the 1994 OCTA convention in Salt Lake City. A distinguished group of authors, OCTA members all, have portrayed some of the most exciting trails in the history of western migration. Edited by Peter DeLafosse, contributing authors are: Will Bagley, "Hensley's Salt Lake Cutoff;" Steven Madsen, "The Spanish Trail;" Rush Spedden, "The Hastings Cutoff;" Roy

Tea, "The Bartelson/Bidwell Trail;" Jack Tykal, "The Mormon 'Donner' Trail;" Harold Schindler, "Selected Bibliography."

Utah State University Press says, *Trailing The Pioneers* follows in the tradition of the American Guide Series published in the 1930s and 1940s by the Federal Writers project of the WPA. An up-to-date and conveniently accessible Guide, *Trailing the Pioneers* will help the reader to see and understand the landscape through the eyes of the Pioneers who passed the same way years ago. It will be offered in a quality softbound and a special collectors hardback edition.

Also being published by Utah State University Press is the rare and long out of print, *West From Fort Bridger* by J. Roderick Kornas. The landmark work has been a highly prized and eagerly sought reference since its issue by the Utah State Historical Society in 1951. It is considered by many to be one of

the best trail histories ever published. Also known as Volume XIX of The Utah Historical Quarterly Series, only a few scholars are aware that much of the work should be credited to Dale Morgan who completed the book following the death of his friend and colleague, Kornas.

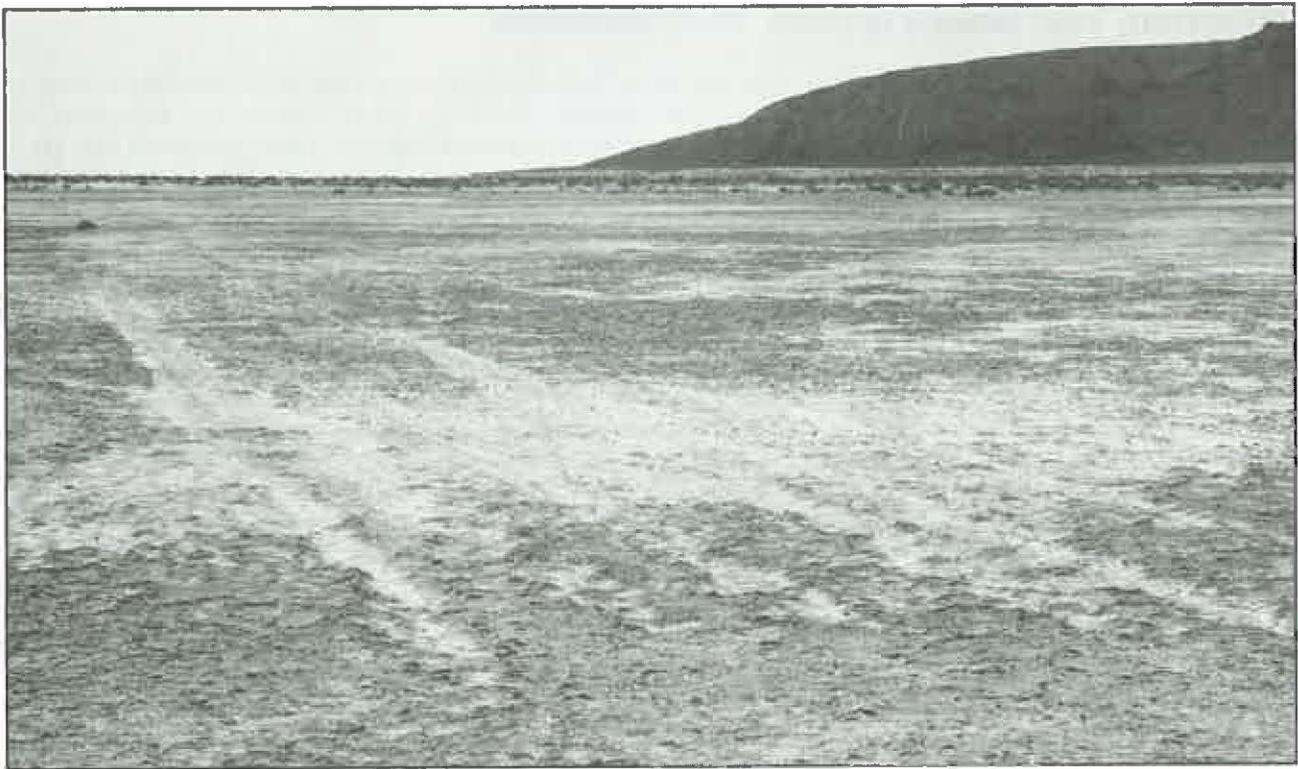
The new edition is revised and expanded by OCTA board member Will Bagley, and noted author/historian Harold Schindler with many corrections and additions from primary sources, scholarship which has appeared since 1951, and Morgan's own subsequent research notes now in the possession of Mr. Schindler. *West from Fort Bridger* will be reissued in a quality paperback and a deluxe, limited, boxed and casebound edition. The deluxe edition will be offered by subscription to OCTA members within the next few weeks. For additional information members may contact Utah State University Press, Logan, Utah 84322-7800,

phone (801) 750-1362.



Above: Echo City at the mouth of Echo Canyon, Circa 1870. (Hastings Cutoff and Mormon Trail)

Photo courtesy of Utah State Historical Society.



*Above: Hastings Cutoff wagon tracks cross the Salt Desert, still visible about 1930
Photo by Charles Kelly*



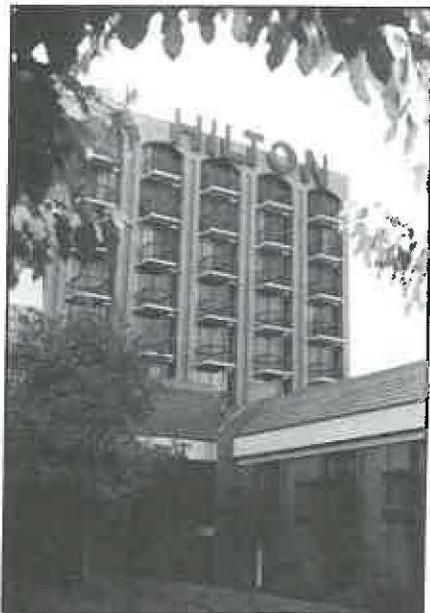
*Left: Rest stop on the Trail.
Photo courtesy of the Utah State Historical Society*

Brigham Young University Credits

In recognition of the distinguished speakers scheduled for the '94 Convention, Brigham Young University will issue fully transferable workshop credits for attending specified lectures. One credit will be awarded for attendance and an additional credit may be earned for submission of a summary paper. Registration is open to all who wish to participate and special convention discount fees will be granted to undergraduates and registered candidates in Masters and Doctoral programs. Full details may be obtained from Brigham Young University, Salt Lake Center, 1521 East 3900 South, Salt Lake City, UT 84124

Convention Headquarters Center of Town

Convention headquarters for the 1994 OCTA Convention is the beautiful, 353 room Hilton Hotel. It is the focal point for numerous conventions and social events and the inn-of-choice for many of the nation's rich and famous. In



'94 Convention ... More To See and Do

Salt Lake City has long been recognized as a major vacation destination. It is famous for, among other things, its beautiful and clean wide streets, the sky probing spires of the Mormon Temple, the distinctive domed home of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir and great Salt Lake. There are scores of general interest activities and scenic sights for the less than trail-ecstatic members of the family.

Scheduled Non-Trail Events:

- Tour of Temple Square
- Rehearsal and Sunday Broadcast of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir
- Pioneer Trail Park Rib and Chicken Barbecue and Raffle Gala Awards Banquet

A Few Suggestions:

- Utah Historical Society
- Genealogical Research at the Family History Library Research Facilities of
- University of Utah
- Brigham Young University
- LDS Church Library-Archives
- Mormon Handicrafts Store
- Native American Handicrafts Stores
- Golfing
- Shopping
- Nightlife

August, it is just a short, shirt sleeve, walk to historic Pioneer Park where the lead wagons of the Mormon pioneers gathered for their first night in the valley, and an equally comfortable stroll to the newly restored, Gothic structured, City Hall. In the summer, horse drawn carriages offer open-top rides to the center of the city and Temple Square block. The Room at the Top lounge offers a breathtaking view of the city, excellent meals, and choice of beverages. While it is a private club, guests of the hotel are admitted without charge and temporary-membership is available at a low fee.

Below: Brigham Young Home and Eagle Gate in the 1800s.

Photo courtesy of the Utah State Historical Society



CHAPTER NEWS

COLORADO

Although we have around 100 OCTA members in Colorado, John Dailey has become inactive as Chapter President and we haven't found anyone else yet willing to "take charge" and call a chapter meeting or field trip. (Jim Bowers and I have our own heavy agendas.) All the trails we have in this state are the Santa Fe Trail, the South Platte Trail, the Smoky Hill Trail, and a wee bit of the California and Pony Express Trails in the northeast corner. Mem-

bers are scattered all over this state, seven times the size of Switzerland.

The Colorado Historical Society, up till recently seemed indifferent to marking trails, are now getting some federal money for historical signs and markers. I talked to them about the dire need of such, especially along the South Platte Trail of 1858-1866 which was the main gold rush route to this state. I will keep you informed about this project.

Merrill Mattes

TRAILS HEAD

New officers elected at the annual meeting in November were:

President - Ross Marshall
V-Pres. - Jim Budde
Secretary - Ruth Ayres
Treasurer - Judy Budde

In addition, Mary Conrad continues to serve as our *Tidings* newsletter editor and John Leamon continues as Chapter Preservation Officer. We finished the 1993 year with a total of 70 paid memberships.

The officers have planned our schedule of events for 1994 as follows:

March 19 - Day long bus trek from Kansas City to Fort Scott, Kansas following the Ft. Leavenworth-Fort Scott Military Road and including a tour of the restored Fort Scott and related 1850s border war sites. John Leamon, Jim Budde and Ross Marshall, coordinators

May 14 - Trek on the Westport to Lecompton Road led by Craig Crease.

June 4 - Trail Marking Ceremony - details later

August - See convention

September 17 - Trek on Oregon Trail in Kansas

November - Symposium

Ross Marshall

UTAH

QUEST FOR THE RIGHT PLACE

The featured speaker at the January 20 meeting was LaMar C. Berrett. To relate the story of his pursuit of the Mormon Trail from Fort Bridger to Salt Lake City. After thirty-nine years of teaching Mormon history at Brigham Young University and years of studying and being on Mormon trails to the West, Berrett is considered *the* expert on the Mormon trail from Fort Bridger into Salt Lake Valley. Although he had long been considered an expert, he feels his *really serious* research of the last section of the Mormon Trail got underway in September of 1988. Leading tours and giving lectures, particularly to Utah Crossroads and the Utah Valley Historical Society, got LaMar inspired to find the exact details, the minute specifics of the trail, campsites, and parties who used the trail. Since retiring, Berrett has devoted full time to trail pursuits. He is currently editing a book on Mormon historic sites and is responsible for writing the Fort Bridger to Salt Lake Valley chapter. In his research, he is leaving no stone unturned.

To Berrett, place is important. "I want to know where!" exclaimed Berrett. He is a stickler for finding the exact place, even if it means revising one's own cherished prior notions. Looking at the research of others and at his own research and finding a tremendous lack of information, he decided he was going to be the one to fill in the gaps. After five years, eighty-two full (and many more part) days on the trail, thousands of hours of research, inquiry and analysis, and 16,000 miles in his Blazer later, Berrett feels that he is really getting to know the trail. He has pinpointed all Mormon sites relating to the 1847 companies, the handcart companies, and other companies of the Mormon emigration. In addition, he has located sites from the Hastings,

NEBRASKA

The Nebraska Chapter is pleased to announce that a segment of the Old Military Road in northwest Omaha has been listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Quoting from the Omaha World-Herald, Monday, January 17, 1994, "The segment northwest of 82nd and Fort Streets is significant because of its association with the military and with westward expansion along the Oregon and Mormon Trails. Bob Puschendorf, deputy state historic preservation officer said, 'Wagon ruts in the road remain and are an incredibly rare resource, given their location in a now highly developed urban area.'

In the 1800s, the road was the primary route used by the military to transport supplies from Omaha to Fort Kearny. Civilian supplies also were transported along the route.

Beginning in the 1840s, thousands of immigrants moved west on the road to follow the Mormon, Oregon and California Trails. As more direct routes developed between Omaha and Fort Kearny, use of the road declined and it was abandoned in 1885, a county map indicates.

Omaha historian Charles Martin and Colleen Mayo led efforts that resulted in the state nominating the road for the National Register."

Helen Sundell

•••• continued

Lienhard, and Donner Parties, Pony Express stations, transcontinental railroad construction camps and sites, and places associated with the Utah Expedition during 1857 and 1858. He has produced complete and accurate maps and has been thrilled to find pristine segments of trail. The big challenge now he feels is getting the trail properly marked.

For his lecture, Berrett used slides to start the audience at Fort Bridger and took it into the Salt Lake Valley, giving interesting commentary on all sections of the trail and each site of historic significance along the way. As he lectured and the audience got a good look at the trail, he spoke also of his quest searching for evidence in journals and diaries to match up with the terrain, water courses, springs, and rock formations in the area. Berrett praised Wyoming as "the state of pristine trails" since much of the trail is undisturbed. As he walked and drove over the trail, he looked for clues, such as artifacts, rust on rocks from iron tire rims, sagebrush growth, rocky stretches, copper, sulfur, and tar springs, swales, and ruts. He found special pleasure and a wealth of information by talking to "old timers" who grew up near the trails. One Pony Express site was shown to him by a ninety year old man.

Finding an old forty-foot long Union Pacific Railroad map, using emigrant maps and guides, and using Captain Albert Tracy's sketches for the U.S. Military's passage through Echo Canyon, aided Berrett in locating precisely many sites. Not content to keep his feet and nose to the ground, he took to the air for aerial photos as well.

The audience literally bounced over the trail as he hurried through the evening. The slides and narrative were excellent preparation for the May field trip over the same trail.

Berrett summed up his lecture by saying the results of his quest have been tremendously satisfying. He has met good people, felt the joy of solitude on the trail, has grown to appreciate his heritage, and has felt pride in the achievements of his remote ancestors.

He went looking for the trail but found a whole lot more.

Lyndia Carter

UTAH CROSSROADS ELECTIONS HELD

January elections unanimously re-electing Al Mulder as President, George Ivory as Vice-President, Morris Goates as Secretary, and Gar Elison as Treasurer. The nominating committee suggested in light of the forth-coming Convention that Crossroads would benefit from the continuity of keeping the same officers. The membership obviously felt the same way when the vote was tallied. Al Mulder will be retaining the same committee chairmen who have also done superior work. Crossroads now looks forward to another great year under tested and proven leadership.

SPRING ACTIVITIES

March 11, evening: National OCTA Board Reception at the Daughters of Utah Pioneers Museum, Salt Lake City.

April 10, 3:00 p.m.: Friends of the Marriott Library Lecture. Peter DeLafosse and his recently completed book, *Trailing the Pioneers*, will speak at the Museum of Fine Arts building, University of Utah. Prepared especially in time for the OCTA Salt Lake City Convention, this book is a significant contribution to the history of western trails.

April 21, evening: Spring General Membership Meeting held in the County Commission Chambers of the Salt Lake County Complex. Lyndia Carter will speak on the tragic trek of the Martin Handcart Company, sharing their experiences and feelings that she has gleaned from their reminiscences and diaries.

May 21-22: Field trip over the Mormon Trail from Fort Bridger to Salt Lake. LaMar Berrett will be trail guide. Participants may go both days, or just one. Vehicles participating will be limited since private ranch land will be crossed.

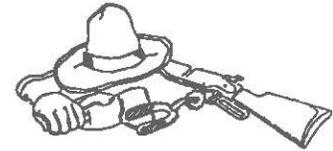
June 11: Donner Spring Tour: An opportunity to show off "our baby" and get the public interested in Crossroads activities and in preservation of historic sites and trails in Utah.

NEWS FROM THE PLAINS

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Rose Ann Tompkins, Editor



TRAIN ON GOODALE'S CUTOFF

A "grass-roots" wagon train will cross Goodale's Cutoff in Idaho this summer. The train is being organized by local ranchers and stockmen, some of whom participated in the sesquicentennial wagon train last summer. Thanks to excellent cooperation from land owners, the Bureau of Land Management, and the National Park Service, the original route will be followed much of the way. This year is the 160th anniversary of Nathaniel Wyeth's use of the route, as well as the 140th anniversary of the Ebey and Yantis trains and the 139th anniversary of the Merrill train.

The train will leave the Springfield, Idaho, area June 15. There will be a two day layover at the Broadie ranch just east of the Craters of the Moon National Monument about June 19 & 20, where the monument staff is planning a program.

For more information, contact Les Broadie, Box 565, Arco, ID 83213.

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OCTA'S MARKING CONTINUES ALONG THE TRAILS

The Graves and Sites Committee of OCTA recently placed two signs at gravesites in Oregon and Idaho. One marks the grave of David R. Koontz, an emigrant of 1852; the other marks three graves located at Raft River, Idaho.

The Koontz grave is located near Echo, Oregon. The Northwest Chapter and the town of Echo worked together to mark and restore the gravesite. Northwest Chapter president, Lowell Tiller, and OCTA past president, Dick Ackerman, installed the OCTA marker and constructed a new fence around the grave. The town, for its part, donated the equipment and manpower to improve access and parking at the site.

Information on David R. Koontz was obtained from Mildred Koontz of Albany, Oregon. The town of Echo

was interested in this grave not only because of its proximity, but also because J.H. Koontz, apparently a near-relative of David's, by coincidence was a cofounder of the town of Echo in 1881. He named it after his daughter, Echo Koontz. It is not known if J.H. was aware of his kinsman's nearby grave when he platted the new town.

Several members of David Koontz's wagon train, including David, carved their names at Names Hill in Wyoming, where they can still be seen. They were William Gates, Moses Hale, R.C. Rist, Charles Sylvester, J.W. Watkins, E.M. Koontz, and M. Koontz. E.M. Koontz may be Elizabeth (Wood) Koontz, wife of David's brother John, or one of the many Koontz children in the wagon Train. Moses Hale was married to Elizabeth's sister. M. Koontz is

probably Martin Koontz, another of David's brothers.

Other members of the party were of the Wood family. Three of David Koontz's siblings, John, Riley, and Elizabeth were married to Elizabeth, Matilda, and James Wood, sisters and brother. James Wood was guardian of Elizabeth Koontz's five children, as her husband John Koontz had died before commencement of the journey to Oregon. Upon the death of Moses Hale, James and Elizabeth Wood probably saw their responsibilities increase even more. James Wood was the brother of the Hale widow and no doubt took this family under his wing as well, but in frontier days these were common occurrences both at home and on the trails west.

continued on next page •••••

DAVID R. KOONTZ

David R. Koontz was born in Gallia County, Ohio, in 1830, and was buried here in 1852. He was the fourth child and youngest son of Martin V. Koontz, bridge builder and carpenter, and Lydia Richabough. The Koontz family was originally from Virginia. From there they moved to Ohio and in 1841 to Wapello County, Iowa. The urge to move farther west came in 1852, and the Koontz clan took the trail to Oregon. F. M. Koontz later wrote, "When we came to Oregon it was like a tribal migration. There were 24 wagons in our train, all members of the train being related."

Family reminiscences indicate the train was raided by Indians while along the Platte River, resulting in the loss of seven horses. This meant a long walk to Oregon for some who had originally planned to ride.

While passing Names Hill on the Sublette Cutoff near present-day La Barge, Wyoming, D. R. Koontz carved his name and the date July 7, 1852, on the north face of the bluff along with five other members of the party, all from Wapello County.

There is no record of how David died. The only other family death recorded was that of David's brother-in-law, Moses Hale, who died from cholera. Hale also left his name inscribed on Names Hill.

Oregon-bound emigrant James S. McClung passed this grave on September 27, 1862. Like Koontz, McClung was from Wapello County:

traveled several miles & passed the grave of Mr. David Coontz from Dahlonga Wappelo county Iowa he was buried about 4 rods on the right hand side on the side of a small hill the grave was covered with poles which were quite rotten the head bord was rotted off at the ground but still lying by the grave the letters were cut with a knife & were plane & distinct near here the road crossed the river where we camped after traveling 15 ms

Boy Scouts found the grave in 1915, built a fence around it, and erected a headstone. The city of Echo has been instrumental in the restoration of the site and in placing this marker.

Researched and signed by

OREGON-CALIFORNIA TRAILS ASSOCIATION

1993

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RAFT RIVER

On or about September 20, 1843, a California-bound emigrant party consisting of twenty-five people and six wagons approached the Oregon Trail crossing of the Raft River. Before they reached the river, however, they turned south and established what became the main route of the California Trail to the Humboldt River, via the Raft River Valley and Goose Creek. They were led by mountain man Joseph Reddeford Walker, who had taken the route in reverse when he returned from California in 1834.

In 1844 the route was used by the Stephens party, which apparently was guided through this area by Isaac Hitchcock, a former fur trapper. On September 13, 1844, James Clyman, who was enroute to Oregon, wrote:

Last night contrary to our expectations we came to a brook with a broad valley of fine grass this brook is called cassia [Raft River] & is the place where Mr. Hitchcock left our rout & went South with 13 wagons in company for California.

Eventually this place, west of the Oregon Trail crossing of the Raft River, became the established point of departure from that trail for California emigrants, as well as for a few parties who took the southern route into Oregon. The use of this junction was partially superseded in 1849 and in later years by the establishment of the Hudspeth and Salt Lake cutoffs. This "parting-of-the-ways," however, was never entirely abandoned and in fact enjoyed a rebirth of popularity when the Lander Trail was opened in 1859.

On August 1, 1850, Byron McKinstry wrote:

The Oregon Road takes up the bluff and follows the

course of the [Snake] River while we keep to the left and follow the creek [Raft River] nearly to its source. I notice some fishing this morning and with some success. Crossing the creek we followed up the bottom, the creek on our left for 5 or 6 m., the bottoms narrow, the bluffs low but rocky and almost perpendicular.

Graves were noted at this place by several passing emigrants. In 1849 J. Goldsborough Bruff wrote, "... we reach'd Raft River, forded it, and just over, on our right, a grave. (Just where the Oregon trail turns off right, over basaltic cliffs.)— 'To the Memory of Lydia Edmonson who died Aug. 15. 1847, Aged 25 years.' "

On August 11, 1862, J. S. McClung noted the death of Elizabeth Adams, age twenty-six, of Marion County, Iowa. She had been mortally wounded during the incident at Massacre Rocks. On August 12 he wrote: "she was buried near Raft river—by the side of G W Sanders from Kekuk Iowa who died near July 27th 1862 aged 33 year near here I noticed the grave of Mifs(?) Hays who died 1852. [Possibly Henry Hays of Indiana, who died in August 1852 near the Raft River] at this place the road forked the left hand leading to calafornia"

While the identity of these graves may never be known with certainty, they may indeed be those of Edmonson, Sanders, Hays, or Elizabeth Adams. Whoever they are, the American pioneers buried here deserve to be remembered, and their final resting place commemorated and preserved for all time.

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•••• continued

At Raft River, Idaho, landowner Lyle Woodbury allowed the committee chairman to reconstruct the appearance of three emigrant graves at the trail junction west of the river. A photograph taken of them in 1930 by trail historian Emil Kopak of Oshkosh, Nebraska, was used as a guide and the original stones were replaced over the gravesite. They had been removed some years ago to improve a hayfield. Mr. Woodbury then built a fence around the graves in time for a dedication ceremony that was held while the Oregon Trail Sesquicentennial wagon train camped on his ranch last July.

In addition to the graves, the marker also commemorates the important site where the Oregon and California trails divided. This point is the true "Parting-of-the-Ways" as opposed to the better known location in Wyoming where the Sublette Cutoff begins. Interested OCTA members are encouraged to visit the Woodbury ranch where they will be welcomed. Lyle and Carol Woodbury received the OCTA award, "Friend of the Trail" for 1993 in appreciation of their effort at this key location.

Randy Brown

1994
OCTA Convention
Salt Lake City, Utah

1995
Grand Island,
Nebraska

1996
Elko, Nevada

1997
Pocatello, Idaho

Next NFP deadline June 1, 1994

OREGON-CALIFORNIA TRAILS ASSOCIATION

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