

News from the Plains

Volume XIII, No. 2

Newsletter of the Oregon-California Trails Association

April 1999

OCTA Board Sets New Trails Recognition As Top Legislative Goal

The Oregon-California Trails Association's Board of Directors has agreed that its primary legislative goal remains the recognition of disallowed routes and segments on the California, Oregon, Mormon Pioneer and Pony Express Trails.

Following a presentation by Craig Crease of Kansas City, Mo., in which Crease showed various trail routes in that region which are not included in current federal management plans, the board voted to make the recognition of certain routes and segments the top priority.

Legislative Chairs Bill and Jeanne Watson will take the lead in determining how OCTA can best accomplish that goal. The Watsons and other trails proponents were in Washington, D.C. during National Trails Advocacy Week March 15-19 and said afterwards that legislative changes may take several years.

During discussion at the Mid-Year board meeting, some board members noted it is not reasonable to

(Continued on page 5)

Preservation Committee Recommendations OK'd

The OCTA Board of Directors has unanimously accepted the recommendations of the Special Committee on Trail Preservation. The committee was appointed at last year's convention in Pendleton to study the role of the Trail Preservation Officer. The full text of the committee's report begins on Page 11 of this issue of News From The Plains.



OCTA member Craig Crease points out some of the routes and segments that won't be considered an official part of the California Trail as OCTA Vice President David Welch and Secretary Mary Holden watch during the OCTA Mid-Year Board of Directors meeting.

— Photo by Candy Moulton

California Gold Rush Wagon Train Wins OCTA Approval

By Candy Moulton

Three federal agencies and the Oregon-California Trails Association have endorsed a wagon train that will be traveling this summer from St. Joseph, Mo. to Sacramento, Calif., in recognition of the 150th anniversary of the California Trail.

The California National Historic Trails Wagon Train led by Ben Kern of Evansville, WY, will leave St. Joseph on April 26. It is organized as a nonprofit enterprise and any funds generated by the trail crossing in excess of actual costs will be donated to the National Historic Trails Center, Kern said.

The National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service and U.S. Bureau of Land Management – agencies that are responsible for managing the California National Historic Trail – will have a wagon on the train to raise awareness of the trail, according to Jere Krakow, superintendent of the Long Distance Trails Office of the National Park Service.

At its Mid-Year Board meeting in Independence, Mo., the Oregon-
(continued on page 8)

From the Editor's Desk . . .

There's a strong emphasis on trails preservation in this issue of *News From The Plains* and clear signs that perhaps our most challenging and rewarding days are ahead of us.

To begin with, we hope you will take note of the report from the Special Committee appointed to study the role of the National Trails Preservation Officer. The committee is to be praised on three counts. First, it took its assignment and simply got it done, promptly and clearly. That's refreshing. Second, the committee reiterated clearly that trail preservation is the reason OCTA exists. And, third, it calls for strong preservation efforts at the chapter level. Because of the importance of this report to the OCTA membership, we have printed it in its entirety in this issue of *NFP*, beginning on page 11.

More subjectively, we would like to call your attention to an essay by OCTA member and trails activist Chuck Dodd on page 18. It's hard to disagree with his contention that the trails are more than ruts and remnants: they are a very real connection to the human character of the emigrants. His comments can serve as a reminder to all of us about why we do what we do.

Finally, the lead story in this issue concerns the OCTA Board of Directors' commitment to getting routes and segments of the emigrant trails disallowed by a Solicitor General's opinion included in the federal government's Comprehensive Management Plan. Coincidentally, OCTA legislative chairs Bill and Jeanne Watson were in Washington, D.C., the week after the Mid-Year Board meeting for discussions with congressional staff members.

According to the Watsons, our best option is to seek an update to the 1986 Feasibility Study in order to get additional routes and segments, many of which were identified, documented and mapped by OCTA members in the last 13 years, added to the CMP. But it won't be an easy or quick assignment.

"This approach will take several years and be a one-time only with no additions to the current list," the Watsons advised *News From The Plains*. "OCTA will be asked to review each deleted California route or segment and document that it meets the criteria of a 'major Gold Rush route.' Similar work will be required for the Oregon Trail Segments.

"To be successful, this plan will need the endorsement of every Representative and Senator from districts and states crossed by the California Trail. After initial negotiations with Washington are completed, members of the Trails Liaison Committee will work on securing co-sponsors for this legislation. Later, all OCTA members may be asked to contact their congressional representatives."

We all enjoy getting out on the Trails and we all want to make sure that they are protected and preserved for future generations. We fight our little fights for specific segments here and there and we relish our role. Now, it appears that the next major preservation effort may take place on Capitol Hill in Washington. Our legislative effort is in extremely capable hands with Bill and Jeanne Watson. As it moves ahead, we should all be ready to do what we can to help at the grassroots level.

-- Bill Martin

Submission Guidelines

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

Material is due 30 days prior to publication dates. Material is best sent either on a computer disk (in DOS or text format but make sure you include a hard copy) or via e-mail. Pictures are appreciated but cannot always be returned.

If you have any questions, please call Editor Bill Martin at (775) 747-2860 or e-mail at words@worldnet.att.net.

Next Deadline Is May15, 1999

NEWS FROM THE PLAINS

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From The President . . .

by Roger Blair

The Board of Directors' meeting held at headquarters in Independence recently was a productive and educational two-day session. Friday was an informal meeting devoted to Board member orientation and education. This was a recommendation proposed by the Administrative Committee and adopted by the Board in Pendleton. There was no agenda and no official actions, but there was good open discussion of some of the important issues OCTA faces in the future.

The day included a briefing by Office Manager Kathy Conway about headquarters functions, including a tour of the National Frontier Trails Center (NFTC) and the Mattes Research Library. Treasurer Jim Budde summarized OCTA's financial history over the past several years and Vice President Dave Welch continued his training on effective Board participation and makeup. Jim and Ardis Everett arranged a terrific meal at the NFTC for a Friday evening social.

Saturday's initial action was to appoint Mary Holden, from Wyoming, as Secretary, filling the vacancy left by Helen Sundell's resignation. I want to thank both Mary and Helen for their service. In another action the Board unanimously affirmed its long-standing position opposing rock climbing on the Twin Sisters formation in City of Rocks, Idaho, and supporting the ban imposed by the National Park Service (NPS). This action is prompted by a lawsuit against the NPS filed by The Access Fund, a rock climbing advocacy group opposed to the climbing ban. The Board met in executive session via telephone with its legal counsel, Steve Corey, to discuss its position in supporting the NPS and the ban.

In other preservation matters, the Board authorized a \$5,000 donation to The Nature Conservancy (TNC) to partially offset TNC's \$17,000 administrative costs related to land acquisition at Three Island Crossing. The acquisition included two of the three islands plus land south of the Snake River containing the trail descent to the river. TNC often acquires lands with significant wildlife, historic, and other natural values, holding these lands until turned over to an entity dedicated to preserving these threatened values. TNC is supported through donations. The Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation, which has an Oregon Trail state park there, will be the beneficiary of this purchase of trail resources. TNC initially requested last fall that OCTA pay up to \$12,000 for interest on a loan necessitated by a delay in Congressional release of Land and Water Conservation Funds (L&WCF) used in this purchase. At that time I polled the Board, which authorized the expenditure to help preserve this significant site which was threatened by sale to a private developer for subdivision. However, the L&WCF monies were released and the loan was not required. In turn OCTA's participation in the loan interest payments was not needed. The approval of the \$5,000 payment for TNC administrative costs reflect OCTA's strong support of TNC in preserving this site. We look forward to working with The Nature Conservancy on future projects.

Regarding the California Trail Comprehensive Management

Plan (CMP), the NPS is nearing completion of the final version. The Department of Interior Solicitor's Opinion last fall resulted in elimination of several routes and sites from this version. While reserving its options for redressing this setback through administrative, judicial, or legislative action, the Board did direct Trails Liaisons Bill and Jeanne Watson to explore legislative action through Congressional contacts made during their participation in the Partnership for National Trails Advocacy Week following shortly after the Board meeting.

The Board also authorized expenditure of \$1,000 to help sponsor a wagon in the California National Historic Trails Wagon Train led by Ben Kern. This is a unique opportunity to gain OCTA exposure as the wagons travel from St. Joseph, Missouri, and travel all the way to Sacramento, California. The wagons leave April 26, 1999, and plan to arrive in Sacramento September 2. An additional \$400 donation was approved to support the Bozeman Trail Heritage Conference to be held in Bozeman, Montana, July 28-31, 1999. Check details of this conference in an article elsewhere in this issue.

Finally, I end on a sad note. Mid-year meeting participants returned home to learn of the unexpected death of Office Manager Kathy Conway's mother on Sunday following our meeting. I join all OCTA members in extending our deepest sympathies to Kathy and her family. I would also like to thank all the headquarters staff for their assistance throughout the meeting weekend.

— Roger Blair

News From Headquarters

by Kathy Conway

On March 5 Headquarters welcomed OCTA Officers, Directors, Committee Chairs and Chapter Presidents to a two-day meeting. Friday was an informal session and Saturday, March 6 was the official Mid-Year Board of Directors Meeting.

On the first day, everyone was given a guided tour of the National Frontier Trail Center. We were shown their new Mormon Trail Exhibit and a new hands-on activity known as "Pack Your Wagon" for children.

Next, we all returned to the meeting room here in Headquarters for several presentations. Kathy Conway provided an overview of the Headquarters administration and entertained questions from the Board. Jim Budde recapped OCTA's financial growth over the last nine years during his term as OCTA's Treasurer. "Hold fast the assets," we are sure, will continue as our theme. The balance of the working day on Friday included Dave Welch's presentation on Board Development and OCTA Management followed by a free flow of topics for Board discussions.

In the evening all in attendance were invited to a buffet dinner at the National Frontier Trail Center. Cathy Bennett, Director of Tourism for the City of Independence extended an

(continued on page 7)

All Trails Lead to Chico in August!!!

Space Limited: Register Early

The Chico Convention brochure is in the mail for registration. Everyone is encouraged to return their registration form as soon as possible for an exciting visit to California, the end of the California Trails. The Chico Elks Lodge, headquarters for the convention, has a limited capacity of 700, so return your registration materials early.

This year's convention, hosted by the CA-NV Chapter, coincides with the Sesquicentennial of the California Gold Rush. It was from this rush that the term "49er's" which generally applied to all who participated in this massive migration by land and by sea to the California gold fields became widely known. Become a 49er and rush to Chico 1999!

An outstanding program of speakers has been finalized and will complement a full range of pre-convention tours leading into California. Day-long bus tours from Chico during the convention will visit the Beckwourth Trail, Nobles Trail and Grass Valley/Empire Mine. Special one-hour OCTA only tours of the Bidwell Mansion are scheduled on Thursday morning.

In addition to keynote speakers J. S. Holliday (Wednesday) and OCTA member Jo Ann Levy (Saturday) as detailed in the January NFP, informative and entertaining presentations will be made by Dick Silva, a tremendous slide show on the Applegate & Yreka Trail; Mike Gillis, history lecturer at Cal State-Chico and author of "The 1841 Trans-Sierra Route of the Bidwell-Barleson Party" in the Winter 1999 issue of *Overland Journal*, will offer graphic insights on the Bidwell journey west and details of his life after arriving in Chico; Frank Tortorich, expert on the Carson River Route, will talk about that Gold Rush trail; Jim McClain will speak about the highly effective but environmentally devastating hydraulic mining; Jacqueline Williams, author of "Wagon Wheel Kitchens" and "The Way We Ate" will discuss the problem of finding safe drinking water along the trail; Greg MacGregor will compare the trails "Then and Now" with a slide presentation; and, Curtis Grant will neatly tie up the whole of the Gold Rush, speaking about the "Future of the Republic."

There will be three vignettes, offering a change of pace to the listeners: Mary Ann and Frank Tortorich in a skit: "Getting Ready to Go"; Larry Shiflet will share "Cowboy Poetry"; and Don Weston will give his exuberant "The Making of a Wagon Wheel." The always popular convention stamp cancellation program will be offered by Ward Crowley.

OCTA members with access to the Internet will be able to find current and last minute information at the CA/NV

(See "Overview" on Page 9)

Convention Tours Scheduled

Three tours have been scheduled as part of the 1999 OCTA Convention in Chico, featuring area Gold Rush sites and trails: **Tour A, Nobles Trail Tour, Thursday, August 12 & Friday, August 13.**



This is an approximately 10-hour tour whose culmination is a visit to the famous junction of the Nobles and Lassen trails, that unique section of overland trail over which emigrants traveled for a few miles in opposite directions on their ways to California. The outbound trip will be via Mineral (Highway 44). There will be stops at Bridge Creek (the Nancy Allen grave), Feather Lake, the junction of the Nobles and Lassen trails, the Pine Valley ruts, Duck Lake, and Deer Creek Meadows. The return trip will be via Highway 32 from which we will view the rugged Deer Creek/Mill Creek Divide down which the Lassen Trail traveled. Lunch is included with the tour.

Tour B, Beckwourth Trail Tour, Thursday, August 12 & Friday, August 13

This bus tour departs from Chico, the 1844 Mexican land grant "Rancho del Arroyo Chico," and proceeds east through the scenic Feather River Canyon, past Rich Bar, to Quincy in the beautiful American Valley. The latter is the site of several ranches often mentioned in emigrant diaries. From Quincy the route will follow the trail to Lake Oroville which now covers Bidwell's Bar where a rich gold strike was made in 1848. Stops will be made at Rich Bar (described in the Shirley Letters of 1851), the excellent Plumas County Museum, Bucks Summit, 1850 hotel sites, as well as at trail traces and trail markers along the way. The route west of Quincy has some of the best ruts and swales to be found anywhere. Short hikes will be available for those who wish to stretch their legs. After Lake Oroville, buses will pass through Oroville and return to Chico. The entire 230-mile route is rich in history and the scenery is superb. The tour will take at least 8 hours and will wind through canyons and mountains with elevations ranging from 1,750 to 5,700 feet. Those prone to motion sickness should not be without their preventative medication. Lunch is included with the tour.

Tour C, Grass Valley and Nevada City Tour, Thursday, August 12 & Friday, August 13

Grass Valley, the heart of this tour, was not your typical ephemeral mining camp. Its deep gold mines were in production for a hundred years and the work force was dominated by the world's premier hardrock miners, the "Cousin Jacks" of Cornwall, England. Enroute the bus will cross the once gold-rich Feather and Yuba Rivers, pass the site of Timbuctoo and

(See "Tours" on Page 9)

Fund Drive Tops \$15,000

As of March 1, OCTA has received a total of \$15,255 during the Sixth Annual Fund Drive. Thanks to those who chose to make a difference. We have received contributions from 168 members. Additional contributors were listed in the January issue of *News From The Plains*.

- | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Jonne Markham | Harry K. Peterson |
| G. N. Thompson | Barbara A. Kelly |
| Louise Hammer Rossi | Gene & Phyllis Lambert |
| Fram Taplin | Dr. Ronald & Sarah Lund |
| Clifford H. Fiscus | Pat & Al Everton |
| Jim & Margie Sheik | Carol M. Koroghlanian |
| Mr. D. W. McKenzie | Harriet & Charlie Lewis |
| Bill Daggett | Dr. Robert H. Jones |
| Robert & Helen Gravette | J. Bruce & Elaine Laughlin |
| Walter Huebner | Nancy & Arthur Costa |
| Muriel & Gail Carbiener | Mrs. Clark Nattkemper |
| Robert Rank | Ross & Jana Marshall |
| Charles & Nola Little | Mary Jo Todd |
| Clara R. Mattes | Judith B. & Leon L. Jones |
| Judy Brown | Cathy Thompson |
| Roy & Hazel Acker | Rosalie Coffey |
| Michael Luther | Mr. & Mrs. Theodore E. Rischard |
| Mrs. Jolyn Lawson | William H. Saunders |
| Mr. Kim L. Naden | Arlean Towne |
| Myra L. McDowell | Georgette Goslovich |
| Daniel A. Netzel | Joann and Leroy P. Jackson |
| John C. Carpenter | Richard Herman |
| Barbara Bane | Tom McCutcheon |
| John A. Kuzara | Jeanne & Jim Murray |
| Beverly Cannon | Andrew & Elizabeth Thompson |
| James & Judy Budde | Mr. & Mrs. Robert E. Lang |
| Fred Hart | Ford Osborn |
| Richard Lachmann | George & Bev Hesse |
| Phyllis M. Pearce | Robert D. Hovey |
| Jo Anna Dale | Charles & Barbara Tidwell |
| Zeke & Nancy Sicotte | Mr. Todd Berens |
| Bob & Gayle Bruner | Curtis & Nancy Grant |
| Virginia L. Stanton | Robert C. Coolidge |
| David Clark | Gerald Hilferty & Associates, Inc. |
| Mary Conrad | Donald S. Galbreath |
| Marilyn Rohbacker | Mrs. Harriet Dove Landon |

Trails Legislation *(continued from page 1)*

include "all possible trails" that someone used in emigrating to California or Oregon. But they do want primary routes and segments included in the national trail system.

Kay Threlkeld of the National Park Service Long Distance Trails Office said 39 affiliated California Trail routes either have already been mapped or are in the process of being mapped, though -- because of a federal attorney's opinion -- they won't be included in the Comprehensive Management Plan now being developed for the California and Pony Express Trails. Instead some of those routes will be identified in the appendix to the CMP.

The CMP is now being prepared in final form and likely will be available for public review in early June. There will then be a 30-day comment period with a record of decision expected in July. The plan will include the high potential sites and segments as well as the letters received from governmental entities, NPS Long Distance Trails Superintendent Jere Krakow told the board. The plan will summarize comments of individuals by topics.

A ruling by the Office of the United States Solicitor General removed the Cherokee Trail route and other California Trail routes and cutoffs from the planning document.

In deciding to make the inclusion of "disallowed sites and segments" a legislative priority, the OCTA board noted that it may be necessary to conduct a feasibility study to assess historical validity of the routes. Krakow recommended that OCTA support such a feasibility study and after completing the analysis to take steps to either amend or change the National Trails Act.

The feasibility study is necessary, Krakow said, because "there are a lot of routes that we don't know a hell of a lot about." In any event efforts to recognize various routes and trail segments should also involve widespread public involvement, he told the board.

Crease told the board if OCTA's mission is preservation and if the National Park Service for legal reasons cannot reflect the record then, "I cannot imagine a stronger mission for this board to pursue."

In asking Bill and Jeanne Watson to take the lead in making the trail route recognition the highest legislative priority, the board noted that if dozens of routes are ultimately included, OCTA will need to make the commitment to map, provide signing and administer routes.

During Trails Advocacy Week, the Watsons held meetings with a number of Senators, Representatives and staff members on Capitol Hill.

"We were advised that OCTA's best option is to ask Congress to authorize an update of the [original 1986] Oregon and California Trails Feasibility Studies to cover most of the excluded routes and segments," the Watsons said. "This approach may take several years" and will eventually need the endorsement of every member of Congress whose district crosses the trail.

— Candy Moulton

Fund Drive Results

| | |
|----------------------|-----------------|
| Endowment Fund | \$9,578 |
| Annual Fund | 1,219 |
| Designated Funds: | |
| Preservation | 884 |
| Archaeology | 797 |
| Trail Marking | 1,400 |
| Trail Mapping | 405 |
| COED | 175 |
| Education | 75 |
| Special Publications | 722 |
| GRAND TOTAL | <u>\$15,255</u> |

FINANCIAL REPORT, FISCAL YEAR 1997-8

Oregon-California Trails Association

This report summarizes OCTA's financial activities for the year starting October 1, 1997, and ending September 30, 1998. For purposes of comparison, you may wish to refer to the April, 1998, *News From The Plains*. This past year has been another year of growth and progress for OCTA. Thank you for your support and dedication to the emigrant trails.

— James E. Budde, Treasurer

Balance Sheet

| | <u>Sep. 30, 1998</u> | <u>Sep. 30, 1997</u> |
|--|----------------------|----------------------|
| <u>Assets</u> | | |
| Cash: | | |
| Operating Account | \$ 33,966.52 | \$ 50,859.73 |
| Convention Account | 45,677.72 | 55,968.18 |
| OCTA Store Account | <u>16,115.75</u> | <u>31,058.17</u> |
| Total Cash | 95,759.99 | 137,886.08 |
| <u>Investments (Endowment Funds):</u> | | |
| U.S. Treasury Bill | 100,000.00 | 20,000.00 |
| Certificates of Deposit | 19,258.49 | 18,081.79 |
| Mutual Fund-Scudder | 49,878.87 | 51,175.09 |
| Mutual Fd-Amer Cen Equity Fnd | 48,074.19 | 47,285.79 |
| Mutual Fd-Amer Century Value | 44,239.62 | 47,052.30 |
| Mutual Fd-Amer Century Eq Gr | <u>17,790.05</u> | <u>17,034.69</u> |
| Total Investments | 279,241.22 | 200,629.66 |
| <u>Other Assets:</u> | | |
| Accts. Receivable-Merchandise | 426.20 | 0.00 |
| Prepaid Expenses | 400.00 | 4,567.03 |
| NPS Grant Receivable | 3,381.40 | 1,904.54 |
| Advance-Convention Expense | 408.83 | <u>2,370.30</u> |
| Total Other Assets | 4,616.43 | 8,841.87 |
| <u>Inventory-Merchandise:</u> | | |
| Total Inventory-Merchandise | 22,644.67 | 28,522.28 |
| <u>Fixed Assets:</u> | | |
| Furniture & Fixtures | 8,246.54 | 8,246.54 |
| Office Equipment | 14,030.12 | 14,030.12 |
| Less: Accum. Depreciation | <u>(22,276.66)</u> | <u>(22,276.66)</u> |
| Total Fixed Assets | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Land-California Hill | 6,260.00 | 6,260.00 |
| Mattes Collection-On Loan to NFTC | 45,928.35 | 45,928.35 |
| Total Assets | <u>\$454,450.66</u> | <u>\$428,068.24</u> |
| <u>Liabilities</u> | | |
| Accounts Payable | \$ 0.00 | \$ 4,786.55 |
| Payroll Taxes Payable | 1,139.72 | 2,679.54 |
| Sante Fe Trail Store Account | 404.85 | <u>1,021.26</u> |
| Total Liabilities | <u>\$1,544.57</u> | <u>\$ 8,487.35</u> |
| <u>Net Assets</u> | | |
| Retained Revenue Over Expense | \$419,580.89 | \$341,875.08 |
| Current Revenue Over Expenses | 33,325.20 | 77,705.81 |
| Total Net Assets | \$452,906.09 | \$419,580.89 |
| Total Liabilities & Net Assets | <u>\$454,450.66</u> | <u>\$428,068.24</u> |

**Oregon-California Trails Association
Statement of Support, Revenues and Expenses**

| | ANNUAL BUDGET | 1997 - 1998 ACTUAL | OVER/(UNDER) BUDGET | 1996 - 1997 ACTUAL |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| Support And Revenue: | | | | |
| <u>Support:</u> | | | | |
| Annual Dues Income | \$ 96,000.00 | \$ 94,728.75 | \$(1,271.25) | \$ 94,244.00 |
| Life Memberships | 0.00 | 750.00 | 750.00 | 1,500.00 |
| Donations | <u>5,000.00</u> | <u>22,186.68</u> | <u>17,186.68</u> | <u>22,447.83</u> |
| Total Support | \$101,000.00 | \$117,665.43 | \$16,665.43 | \$118,191.83 |
| <u>Revenues:</u> | | | | |
| Overland Journal & NFP Revenue | \$0.00 | \$4,717.45 | \$4,717.45 | \$4,754.42 |
| COED Fees | 0.00 | 1,435.50 | 1,435.50 | 1,939.00 |
| OCTA Sates Revenue (Net of Costs) | 15,000.00 | 17,322.05 | 2,322.05 | 21,857.07 |
| Convention Revenue (Net of Expenses) | 10,000.00 | 19,398.87 | 9,398.87 | 40,233.82 |
| Investment Income | 5,000.00 | 10,215.76 | 5,215.76 | 16,813.85 |
| Miscellaneous income | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Carryover From Prior Year | 20,320.00 | 0.00 | (20,320.00) | 0.00 |
| Unrealized Gains (Losses) on Securities | 0.00 | (2,565.14) | (2,565.14) | 28,279.15 |
| Total Revenues | \$50,320.00 | \$50,524.49 | \$204.49 | \$113,877.31 |
| Total Support & Revenues | \$151,320.00 | \$168,189.92 | \$16,869.92 | \$232,069.14 |
| Expenses: | | | | |
| Officers | 9,600.00 | 8,398.36 | (1,201.64) | 7,979.34 |
| Committees | 21,300.00 | 14,295.23 | (7,004.77) | 14,711.22 |
| Headquarters | 77,343.00 | 59,286.68 | (18,056.32) | 76,408.80 |
| Preservation | 9,400.00 | 6,593.45 | (2,806.55) | 3,811.98 |
| Publications | 47,000.00 | 46,291.00 | (709.00) | 50,040.47 |
| Capital Equipment | 2,000.00 | 0.00 | (2,000.00) | 1,411.52 |
| Total Expenses | \$ 166,643.00 | \$ 134,864.72 | \$(31,778.28) | \$ 154,363.33 |
| Excess of Revenues Over Expenses | <u>\$ (15,323.00)</u> | <u>\$ 33,325.20</u> | <u>\$ 48,648.20</u> | <u>\$ 77,705.81</u> |
| Net Revenue From Various Activities: | | | | |
| | | 1998 | 1997 | |
| Convention | \$ | 19,889.71 | \$40,233.82 | |
| OCTA Store | | 17,322.05 | 21,857.07 | |
| Publications | | (41,493.60) | (45,029.12) | |

Headquarters Report

(Continued From Page Three)

exuberant welcome to all. Ms. Bennett applauded OCTA's plans for including Independence's historic attractions, especially the Trail Center, as a part of the "happenings" for the 2000 Convention. She went on to explain the City has plans for more funding for the Trail Center. We extended our thanks to the City through Cathy for the continuing beneficial arrangement OCTA has with the City. (See board meeting reports elsewhere in *NFP*.)

Bear with us:

As we move toward the year 2000 and are implementing a new computer membership program. We are making some adjustments until we are converted to the new program. Your mailing label might still show your old renewal date. If you have already sent your dues and the old date remains, if a (#)

appears behind the date, your membership has been renewed. Your correct renewal date will appear when we are no longer "under construction".

Bookstore

We are happy to add some great books:

Gold Rush Signs in California's Mother Lode Country (More than 200 signs, plaques, markers and monuments) - Gilbert W. Davies and Florice M. Frank - \$21.95

Volume 1 in the *Kingdom of the West Series, The Pioneer Camp of the Saints - The 1846 and 1847 Mormon Trail Journals of Thomas Bullock* - (Editor, Will Bagley) As "clerk of the Camp of Israel" Bullock provides insight into the impressions of a devout European immigrant of the great American West. An appendix containing biographical data on Mormon pioneers is included. \$39.50

Orders for these or any other books in our catalog may be placed by phone, fax or e-mail. Phone 1-816-252-2276, Fax 1-816-836-0989, e-mail octahqts@gvi.net

Wagon Train *(continued from Page 1)*

California Trails Association also agreed to provide \$1,000 in financial support to the wagon train.

On January 24, 1848 workers at a lumber mill at Sutter's Mill found gold in California, leading to the Gold Rush of 1849 when thousands of gold seekers made their way to California and potential riches. Before the Gold Rush ended some 400,000 people traveled via overland routes to California.

This year's wagon train will follow the trail across Kansas and Nebraska and will be involved in the groundbreaking for the National Historic Trails Center in Casper on June 21. It will follow the Sublette Cutoff in western Wyoming, participate in the official dedication of a new trail visitor center in Montpelier, Idaho, and will follow the Hudspeth Cutoff in Idaho before crossing into Nevada where the route will involve both the California National Historic Trail and the Pony Express Trail.

The Park Service, Forest Service and BLM decided to jointly sponsor a wagon as a "chance to interpret the trails to the public," Krakow said. "We can be advocates for protecting historic trails resources with people we come into contact with on the wagon train."

Kay Threlkeld, interpretive planner in the NPS Long Distance Trails Office will be traveling with the agency wagon to provide interpretation. She has been involved with the comprehensive management plan now being completed that will set future management objectives for the California and Pony Express Trails.

Although other wagon trains are organizing to commemorate this year's trail anniversary, Krakow said the agencies decided to put their wagon on Kern's train "because of his experience and he was the first one to ask us." Kern traveled the Oregon Trail by wagon in 1993 and the Mormon Pioneer Trail in both 1996 and 1997. The agency participation also comes because of "(Kern's) track record and his good relations with people. . . (and) his reliability," Krakow said. The wagon train, while small, "does call attention to (the trail) at a very grassroots level," Krakow said.

Kern said he decided to organize the train "for the historical value of it. I just like to be out on the trail." Assisting him as Trail Boss is Donny Marincic of Sidney, Nebraska, who traveled the Oregon Trail in 1993 and the Mormon Pioneer Trail in 1997. Participants this year will be in historic dress and the train will have only a limited number of support vehicles, Kern said.

Individuals who want to travel with the wagon train may do so. People with wagons can sign on for the entire trip, including meals, for \$3,500 or pay \$85 per day. Wagon riders, horseback riders and walkers also can participate for costs ranging from \$50 to \$70 per day or fees of \$3,000 to \$3,250 for the entire trip. More information can be obtained from Kern at 307/234-9437, Marincic at 308/254-1017 or their website at www.californiawagontrail.com.

Candy Moulton, of Encampment, Wyoming, is a writer and reporter and is chair of the OCTA Publications Committee.

Wagon Train Schedule

Here is the tentative schedule for the California National Historic Trails Wagon Train. The schedule is subject to change.

| | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| April 26 Leave St. Joseph, Missouri | 30-Silver Creek |
| 27-Troy, Kansas | July 1-Rock Creek |
| 28-Highland | 2-Pacific Springs (South Pass) |
| 29-Hiawatha | 3-Parting of the Ways |
| 30-Sabetha | 4-layover (Dry Sandy) |
| May 1-North of Seneca | 5-Sublette Flats |
| 2-layover | 6-Names Hill |
| 3-Clear Creek | 7-Opal Junction |
| 4-Guittard | 8-Kemmerer |
| 5-Marysville | 9-Emigrant Springs |
| 6-Hollenberg Station | 10-Cokeville |
| 7-Lanham | 11-layover |
| 8-Rock Creek, Nebraska | 12-Montpelier, Idaho |
| 9-Alexandria | 13-layover |
| 10-Deshler | 14-Soda Springs |
| 11-Oak | 15-Lava Hot Springs |
| 12-Deweese | 16-Hawkins Reservoir |
| 13-Dyer Park | 17-Daniels Reservoir |
| 14-Hastings | 18-layover |
| 15-Kenesaw | 19-Twin Springs |
| 16-layover | 20-Sublette Reservoir |
| 17-Minden | 21-Gardner Ranch |
| 18-Ft. Kearney | 22-Almo |
| 19-Elm Creek | 23-Goose Creek |
| 20-Lexington | 24-Little Goose Creek, Nevada |
| 21-Cozad | 25-Layover |
| 22-Gothenberg | 26-Corral Canyon Creek |
| 23-layover | 27-Winecup Ranch |
| 24-Brady | 28-Wells |
| 25-North Platte | 29-Halleck |
| 26-Sutherland | 30-Lamoille |
| 27-Paxton | 31-Jiggs |
| 28-Ogallala | Aug. 1--Layover |
| 29-layover | 2-Private Ranch |
| 30-layover | 3-Private Ranch |
| 31-California Hill | 4-Eureka |
| June 1-Ash Hollow | 5-Layover |
| 2-Oshkosh | 6-Private Ranch |
| 3-Lisco | 7-Hickison Summit |
| 4-Broadwater | 8-Austin |
| 5-Bridgeport | 9-layover |
| 6-layover | 10-New Pass |
| 7-Chimney Rock | 11-Middlegate |
| 8-layover | 12-Sand Springs |
| 9-Gering | 13-Fallon |
| 10-Mitchell | 14-layover |
| 11-Henry | 15-layover |
| 12-Torrington, Wyoming | 16-Silver Springs |
| 13-layover | 17-Fort Churchill |
| 14-Fort Laramie | 18-Dayton |
| 15-Guernsey | 19-Carson City |
| 16-Glendo | 20-layover |
| 17-Douglas | 21-layover |
| 18-Orpha Road | 22-layover |
| 19-Glenrock | 23-Zepher Cove |
| 20-layover | 24-Meyers, California |
| 21-Evansville | 25-Strawberry Lodge |
| 22-layover | 26-Kyburz |
| 23-Willow Springs | 27-Polleck Pines |
| 24-Independence Rock | 28-Placerville |
| 25-Martin's Cove | 29-layover |
| 26-Split Rock | 30-Eldorado Hills |
| 27-layover | 31-Folsom |
| 28-Jeffrey City | Sept. 1--Coloma |
| 29-Sweetwater Station | 2-Sacramento |

OCTA Board Actions

In addition to actions reported elsewhere in *News From The Plains*, the OCTA Board dealt with a number of issues at the mid-year meeting and made these decisions:

*Pending a formal presentation, tentatively selected Carson City, Nev., as the site for the 2002 convention.

*Approved a resolution supporting the National Park Service ban on rock climbing in the Twin Sisters Rocks in the City of Rocks National Reserve, Idaho.

*Appointed Randy Wagner of Cheyenne, Wyo., to handle public relations duties for OCTA. Wagner will be working cooperatively with OCTA Board member Leslie Wischman, who will continue to manage the OCTA website.

*Endorsed efforts by the California/Nevada chapter of OCTA to restore the John Marsh house.

*Allocated \$5,000 to help pay administrative costs associated with the purchase of the Three Island Crossing area near Glenns Ferry, Idaho. That site was recently obtained by the Nature Conservancy.

*Decided to prepare a job description and salary analysis for future consideration of the hiring of an executive director for the organization.

*Authorized \$400 for support for the Bozeman Trail conference being planned by Susan Badger Doyle, Charles Rankin and others.

*Agreed to budget funds for two color covers each year on the *Overland Journal*.

*Discussed administrative and other duties of board members and agreed to wait for a proposal from OCTA Vice President David Welch before taking action.

*Named Suzette McCord-Rogers as the official contact person for OCTA on all challenge cost share projects.

New OCTA Award Created

The Board of Directors of the Oregon-California Trails Association has approved creation of a "Distinguished Service Award" targeted toward "people working within a non-OCTA institutional setting."

The new award, established at OCTA's Mid-Year Board meeting at the recommendation of the Awards Committee chaired by Ross Marshall, will be presented to individuals or organizations who have made important on-going contributions to emigrant trail preservation, including research and education.

"Although this award is open also to services performed by OCTA volunteers, the primary intent of this award is to recognize individuals and/or organizations outside of OCTA," according to a memorandum from the Awards Committee in support of the new award.

"In a very real sense, OCTA has been so successful in encouraging and recognizing trail preservation activities outside of its own volunteer structure that our existing awards are now inadequate to reward certain types of individuals and/or organizations who have made significant contributions."

Nominations for the Distinguished Service Award will be accepted until June 1 and can be sent to Awards Chair Ross Marshall, 6624 Craig Street, Merriam KS 66202-3747.

The new award will be in addition to current awards, including the Meritorious Achievement Award, National Certificate of Appreciation, Volunteer of the Year Award, Media Award, Outstanding Educator Award (administered by the Education Committee) and the Friend of the Trail Award (administered by the Friend of the Trail Committee).

Convention Overview

(continued from Page 4)

Chapter website at <http://www.sonnet.com/usr/ca-nv/index.html>.

Because space is limited for pre-convention tours (for details, consult your convention brochure), non-CA/NV chapter members will be given signup priority and interested CA/NV chapter members will be offered remaining opening spaces.

Hotel and motel space is available in Chico and the surrounding area but reservations should be made as early as possible since there are a number of other activities going on at the same time. There are no sleeping or eating facilities within easy walking distance of the Elks Club, site of the Chico Convention. In order to facilitate emergency contact with attendees during the convention, please fill out the registration sheet section as completely as possible.

Major north/south highways (Interstate 5; U.S. 99) connect Chico with Oregon and Sacramento. Greyhound, Amtrak and United Express (Airline, via San Francisco) provide regularly scheduled service into and out of Chico. Rental cars are

Convention Tours

(continued from Page 4)

the village of Rough and Ready which once, briefly, seceded from the Union. There will even be a peep at the nation's smallest mountain range known as Sutter Buttes. Grass Valley's North Star Mining Museum will demonstrate a gold stamp mill, super-efficient Pelton waterwheels and a Cornish pump. The Empire Mine, now a State Historic Park, will provide a glimpse down the shaft leading to 400 miles of underground workings. There will be time to walk about nearby Victorian Nevada City which owned the name before our adjoining state adopted the name of Nevada. You might even learn something of E Clampus Vitus, a Gold Rush era spoof of the more conventional, respectable lodges of the time.

-- Shann Rupp

available at the airport. There will be city bus service available to the Elks Club for 35 cents each way. The schedule is shown in the Convention brochure.

-- Shann Rupp and Leslie A. Kelly

Special Committee Report

OCTA Trails Preservation Officer Program

The following is the text of the report from the Special Committee on Trail Preservation which was unanimously adopted by the OCTA Board of Directors at its Mid-Year meeting in Independent, Missouri, on March 6.

To: Board of Directors, Oregon California Trails Association
Re: Report from The Special Committee on Trail Preservation

The Special Committee on Trail Preservation was established by the Board at its August 1998 meeting. Membership is Dick Ackerman (chair), Frank Tortorich, Al Mulder, Ken Martin and Chuck Martin, with Dave Welch *ex officio*.

The charge to the committee was to examine issues related to the National Trail Preservation Officer (NTPO) position and OCTA's trail preservation activities in general.

Specifically, the committee was asked to address the following issues:

1. Job description for the NTPO
2. Term of office for the NTPO
3. Organizational relationship of the NTPO to the Board, other national officers and chapters
4. Organizational structure of trail preservation activity from the national to the local level
5. Definitive statement on OCTA's approach to trail preservation including resource requirements
6. Recommend candidates to the Nominating and Leadership Committee for the position of NTPO beginning in August 1999
7. Other considerations that might arise

The entire committee met in Pendleton August 14, 1998; and all except Dave Welch met in Salt Lake City on October 28 and 29, 1998. Because of current widespread concern about OCTA's preservation program, we considered seeking the views of the general membership but decided that it would be best if the committee first wrestled with the issues and submitted its report and recommendations to the Board and Officers. The attached Preservation Program Position Description and the Preservation Program Report incorporate the Committee's recommendations as the result of those deliberations and subsequent correspondence among members. We anticipate that after consideration by the Board, the description and report will be shared with the membership.

(s) Dick Ackerman, Chairman

I. Introduction

The purpose of the position of the National Trails Preservation Officer (NTPO) is described in the OCTA Bylaws, the Statement of Purpose for the National Trails Preservation Officer, and the Statement of Purpose of the Oregon California Trails Association. Three primary activities were completed by Special Committee on Trail Preservation:

- Developing a more complete definition of the role the NTPO plays in the total organization, and of the relationship that individual holds with respect to elected national officers

and the Board of Directors

- Defining the functional role of the Chapter Preservation Officer

- Developing a definitive statement on OCTA's approach to trail preservation, including resource requirements

The following reports provide the recommendations of the Special Committee on Trail Preservation.

II. References

In the course of work, the following documents were reviewed:

1. OCTA Bylaws
2. Committee Statement of Purpose for National Trails Preservation Officer in OCTA's Policy Book and Manual
3. Statement of Purpose of the Oregon-California Trails Association
4. OCTA Long Range Plans of 1991 and 1998
5. A Trail Preservation Proposal for the CA/NV Chapter
6. Written and oral comments to committee members from several OCTA members
7. Statements regarding preservation prepared by several committee members

Preservation Program Position Description

The Special Committee on Trail Preservation proposes that the following elements shall characterize the OCTA preservation program.

1. Preservation activities shall apply to all trail heritage, including ruts and traces; pristine viewsapes when feasible; and sites and documents.

2. Preservation activities shall be proactive, identifying threats to trail heritage. The goal is to resolve issues before they becomes a major crisis to which OCTA can only react.

3. Preservation activities shall be coherent and consistent throughout OCTA. Preservation planning shall consider all of the trail heritage, from the national to the chapter and local level.

4. Preservation policies shall be developed by the NTPO, approved by OCTA's board of directors, and implemented by the president and the management team.

5. Since chapters have different kinds of trail remains, sites, problems and resources, the national organization shall not dictate individual chapter preservation organizations. Each chapter shall develop its own preservation organization, so long as it is consistent, and coordinates with OCTA national policies, procedures and programs.

6. The National Trails Preservation Officer shall have the authority to appoint OCTA members as assistants, when appropriate, to spread and even out the workload of the preservation office. Appointments may be for either a specific project or a geographical area, at the discretion of the NTPO. When selecting appointees, the NTPO should consider both OCTA's organizational structure and an individual's ability to work successfully with chapter officers and others with whom they

will come in contact. Appointees shall serve until the assignment runs out, they resign, or the NTPO closes or changes the assignment.

III. Recommendations

National Trails Preservation Officer Position, Roles, and Responsibilities

The duties of the NTPO are described in the OCTA Bylaws. The principles guiding NTPO activities are described in the Policy Book and Manual as follows:

The National Trails Preservation Officer shall undertake, promote, coordinate, and oversee the historic preservation programs of the Association (By-laws, Article IV, Section 9).

The National Trails Preservation Officer's duties are to undertake, promote, coordinate and oversee the general historic trails preservation programs of OCTA in cooperation with OCTA chapter preservation officers. These preservation programs include the establishment of a list of priority trail preservation projects; the surveying and mapping of historic trails and related sites; the marking, fencing and protection of historic trail sites; the nomination of historic trails and sites to the National Register of Historic Places; the coordination of preservation efforts with OCTA's archaeological and legislative programs

We accept the principles set out as the particular trust of the NTPO, and recommend that they be retained unchanged; but we believe that a definition of NTPO roles and responsibilities within OCTA must be developed, as well.

According to OCTA by-laws and the governance statement, and in accordance with good management practices, policy-making decisions are the exclusive domain of the board of directors. The president is the chief executive officer responsible to the board. The NTPO is responsible to the president as a part of the organizational management team.

We believe that it is the role of the NTPO to facilitate OCTA preservation efforts and to educate the organization about them. Furthermore, it is important for the NTPO to ensure that each chapter is following OCTA policies, practices and procedures regarding preservation activities. These goals can be achieved through careful attention to four things: the OCTA national and chapter organizational relationships; pro-active planning; coordination with other agencies and trail organizations; and preservation activities within the chapters.

We believe the NTPO should be reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses such as postage, copies and telephone calls, as well as travel expenses and room accommodations. Meal expenses while traveling normally would not be reimbursed. The same expenses should be covered for NTPO-appointed assistants. Reimbursement requests, with receipts, should be mailed to the National Treasurer on a regular basis.

Our recommendations incorporate these ideas.

National Trails Preservation Officer Roles and Responsibilities Defined

1. Organizational Relationship to the President of OCTA, the Board of Directors, and the local chapters:

a) Function as a member of the president's management team. Consult with the president on important preservation

issues to determine what should be taken to the board for approval. Recommend to the Board of Directors any action to be taken on important issues. At the recommendation of the president, serve as OCTA's spokesperson on preservation issues.

b) Letters elaborating on OCTA's position regarding trail and heritage preservation issues between organizations and major companies (e.g., comprehensive management plans or memoranda of understanding) are usually more appropriate when they come from the President of OCTA, unless the president designates otherwise.

c) Keep, organize and maintain OCTA preservation office records and files, submit duplicate copies to OCTA headquarters when appropriate, and pass on all records and ideas to the next National Trail Preservation Officer.

d) Oversee, coordinate, and give general guidance and assistance to the following OCTA standing committees: Archeology, Graves and Sites, COED, Mapping, and Trail Marking. These committees all represent a part of OCTA's preservation activity, and need to work together as a team.

e) Serve as a preservation liaison with the local chapters:

1) Encourage appointment of Chapter Preservation Officers (CPOs) and development of effective chapter trail and heritage preservation organizations.

2) Encourage and assist the Chapter Presidents and CPOs to establish relationships with local, state and federal agencies, landowners and trail groups or organizations, so that mutual trail and heritage preservation issues can be addressed.

3) Encourage Chapter Presidents, CPOs and Chapter heritage preservation organizations to develop pro-active trail preservation and heritage activities of their own design.

4) Maintain contact with chapter preservation activities by holding an annual meeting with Chapter Presidents and CPOs during the OCTA convention.

f) Planning: So that OCTA can establish and maintain a proactive, rather than reactive, preservation program, the NTPO shall:

With the President develop and make recommendations to the Board of Directors, on programs, policies or procedures that may require updating or changes.

g) Coordination: The NTPO shall:

1) Serve as a lead person for the president in initiating discussions with other agencies and trail organizations; and make recommendations for OCTA commitments to the president and the Board of Directors.

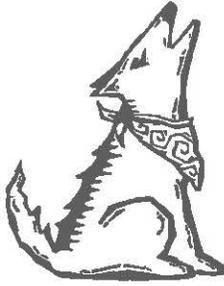
2) Assist the president in preparing correspondence relating to trail preservation issues such as comprehensive management plans or memoranda of understanding by providing in-depth information, terminology, and other resources as necessary.

3) Serve as the President's representative on trail related issues in discussions with the National Park Service Long Distance Trails Office and other agencies.

The National Trails Preservation Officer Term of Office

OCTA By-laws specify that the term of office for the NTPO is one year (Article IV, Section 2). We recommend the following

(continued on page 17)



NEWS FROM THE CHAPTERS

Crossroads

Just because we've been quiet, doesn't mean we haven't been busy. Just ask any mother: if the kids are too quiet, it can mean only two things: they are either sleeping or they are up to something big. And we haven't been sleeping,

So just what have we been up to? Trail business, of course. In many ways, the Utah Crossroads Chapter has been preparing for the sesquicentennial of the California Gold Rush, focusing much of our attention on the variants of the California Trail that passed through Utah. Crossroads members began commemorating the Gold Rush last year. A little update is in order.

In April of 1998, Dr. Brigham D. Madsen addressed the Crossroads membership. His topic was the gold rush sojourners in Salt Lake Valley. Madsen, a master teacher, lecturer, and author, shared many stories from the hundreds of journals he read while preparing his book, *Gold Rush Sojourners in Great Salt Lake City, 1849-1850* (University of Utah Press, 1983). He kept his audience entertained and enlightened as he quoted from both gold seeker and Mormon journals regarding the trading and social interaction between the two diverse groups. For the most part, the interaction was mutually beneficial, although both sides occasionally complained of the other. The Mormons who were living in rather poor economic conditions gained financially; and the gold seekers were able to rest, and rid themselves of extra weight, procure fresh animals, wagon repairs, and food stuffs. Some received health care. Others satisfied their curiosity. Many left Mormon country over the Salt Lake Cutoff to City of the Rocks, where they rejoined the California Trail. A few took the Hastings Cutoff across the Great Salt Lake Desert. Some, being late in the season, took the southern route southward through Utah to southern California. Others spent the winter; a few even converted to Mormonism and decided to stay permanently. Madsen's delivery of the story was delightful, and all went away from his presentation much better informed about the impact of the Gold Rush on the people of Utah.

In May of 1998, Crossroaders hit the trail along Hensley's Salt Lake Cutoff from Salt Lake City to City of the Rocks on the main California Trail. The two-day excursion traced the route originally discovered by Captain Samuel Hensley and opened for wagon travel by members of the Mormon Battalion enroute to Salt Valley from California. Roy Tea served as wagon master.

During July several Crossroads members joined Frank and



Al Mulder, left, and Vern Gorzitze of the Crossroads Chapter at the Bidwell Pass Kiosk.

Mary Ann Tortorich on a three-day trip over the route pioneered by former members of the Mormon Battalion across the Sierra Nevada. This route became a major thoroughfare during the Gold Rush. Frank and Mary Ann were fantastic tour-guides, and those who took this trip will long remember their journey through that beautiful and rugged country and the trail sites they personally visited.

A lovely, Indian summer evening found us gathered around picnic tables under a pavilion at Washington Terrace park at the mouth of East Canyon near Salt Lake City in September for our fall social activity. Following a delicious dinner, Mal Bashore told stories about everyday life and wildlife for Mormons on the trail to Utah, including wonderful tidbits and journal entries regarding mosquitoes, snakes, skunks, and other such critters. Taking a light-hearted approach to history, Mel entertained the group with the humorous aspects of going west, in contrast to the "gloom and doom" and hardships so often emphasized about trail life.

Roy Tea lead an October field-trip over the Bartleson-Bidwell Trail, the 1841 overland trail through Utah to California. The first day was spent touring the many trail sites in the Soda Springs area under the apt direction of Charlene Olorenshaw. From there Roy Tea took over. No one knows the Bartleson-Bidwell Trail through southern Idaho, along the Bear River through Utah, and around the northern end of the

Great Salt Lake as does Roy Tea. It was a great trip, ending at Corinne. For some, however, the excursion was not yet over. Bob Pearce and a group from Elko and a few people from the Utah contingent continued on under Roy's direction. They spent an extra day visiting the National Historic Monument at Promontory Summit, Monument Point, Locomotive Springs, the Kelton cemetery, Park Valley, 10-Mile, Rosebud, and Owl Springs, Lucin, Donner Spring, Hall Spring and to the top of Bidwell Pass.

Speaking of Bidwell Pass, several Utah Crossroads members busied themselves last autumn completing an interpretive site near there. Vern Gorzitze managed the project to build a kiosk and install an interpretive panel, a wayside exhibit to mark the Bartleson-Bidwell trail through Bidwell Pass in Nevada, not far from Pilot Peak and near the junction of the Hastings Cutoff and the Bartleson-Bidwell trails. Vern designed the exhibit and Vern, Jerry Dunton, Dave Westley, and a few others erected the framework. Later, Vern, Roy Tea, and Al Mulder shingled the roof. Work was finished in early December, just before a big winter storm. It is a beautiful panel, a grand tribute to those early emigrants, and a wonderful way to mark the trail in that vast wilderness. We hope every trail buff gets a chance to see it someday. The marker is described in Randy Brown's new book, *Graves and Sites on the Oregon and California Trails*.

1999 got off to a great beginning with our general membership meeting in January. A highlight of the meeting was the presentation of the Covered Wagon Award to Roy Tea for meritorious service to Utah Crossroads. Since the formation of the chapter, Roy has given countless hours and extraordinary effort to making our field trips memorable events. By preparing excellent field guides and by serving as guide or assistant guide for the trips, he has insured historical accuracy and made the trail come to life for our chapter. Roy well deserves the honor and our deepest gratitude,

At this meeting, elections for officers for 1999 were conducted. Vern Gorzitze was reelected as chapter president and Steve Berlin will serve as vice-president, John Eldredge and Gar Elison will continue as secretary and treasurer. We are also delighted that Al Mulder will persevere as preservation officer and Roy Tea will lead forward as field trip leader.

After chapter business was conducted, Robert Carter took the members on a figurative fishing trip on the trail to Utah. Using Mormon trail diaries, journals, and reminiscences, Carter shared a little known aspect of procuring travel food and fun. It seems everyone knows about buffalo hunts on the trail, but few understand the significance, of catching the "finny tribe" while crossing the plains. But the emigrants knew! Many emigrants wrote of their fishing adventures or the good taste of fish after a long day on the trail. Carter entertained his audience with fishing stories galore, explaining the how, when, where, and why of dangling a hook or dragging a make-shift net through the streams along the way. Some of the emigrants' stories could easily match the whoppers we hear from modern knights of the rod and reel. The program was a fun way of looking at trail life, besides being highly informative.

Utah Crossroads has some outstanding events planned for the

next couple of months. On April 22, at 7 p.m. in the Salt Lake County Commission Chambers, Bill Smart will present a lecture about the southern route through Utah to California, the Utah portion of which was chronicled by a group of Mormon men led by Parley P. Pratt. The title of his presentation is "Over the Rim: The Journals of the Parley P. Pratt Expedition of 1849." This lecture will be great preparation for the field trip on May 22 and 23 along the Southern Route to California from Salt Lake. We plan to go all the way to southern Utah and see many sites the gold seekers of 1849 and Mormon travelers saw as they took that alternate to California and the gold fields.

In addition to these big events, the Crossroads Chapter plans to commemorate the Gold Rush by pursuing the marking of the Salt Lake Cutoff to the California Trail. We are also keeping a close watch on two projects that may impact the trails through Utah. Of concern is a pipeline that is planned through East Canyon that could disturb the Mormon and Donner Trail and a possible rail spur in Skull Valley that would bisect the Hastings Trail in western Utah. Many members have voiced their concerns on these two projects and the destruction of the trails they could cause.

So as you can see, Utah Crossroads is alive and well. Though we have been quiet, we have been up to a great deal. And we plan on continuing to be up to something. Watch out, Mom!

-- Lyndia Carter

KANZA

New KANZA Chapter officers were installed on January 10 by past President Verne Osborne at a meeting in Westmoreland, KS. The new officers are Michael Philbrick, President; Charles Weickert, Vice President; James Bradley, Treasurer; Rosemary Forst, Secretary. Directors are Ken Martin, Duane Isles and Earnest White.

The KANZA chapter was planning to have a Tri-State Argonaut Dinner and trail displays in mid-March at the Marysville Armory for the 150th anniversary of the California Gold Rush.

The 1998 Tri-state meeting was less than hoped for when a typical Kansas snow storm started the day before and blew all night and most of the next day, forcing cancellation.

The Echos of Times Past Wagon Train will leave St. Joseph, Mo., on April 26 and travel the St. Joe Road part of the California Trail through Kansas. KANZA chapter past President Ken Martin is organizing the wagon train with the assistance of Allen Press of Oketo.

The first weekend in May, KANZA chapter members plan to meet the train for photo opportunities and join in the living history around the camp fire that night. The trip through Kansas will take 11 days. At least one wagon plans to continue on to Sutters Fort in Sacramento. Another three wagons will travel south on the Santa Fe Trail.

-- Charles Weickert

MORE NEWS FROM THE CHAPTERS

Gateway

New officers have been elected for the Gateway Chapter, including Suzette McCord-Rogers, president; Bob Hamilton, vice president; Merry Virginia Wright, treasurer; and Mary Jo Sprague, Secretary.

Gateway Chapter members can be proud of their activities and accomplishments during the past year and look forward to a continuation of their efforts during 1999, a keynote year for the California Trail.

The California Trail Sesquicentennial has been the focus of the Chapter's education outreach projects. In 1998 Gateway and the Native American Heritage Museum hosted an extensive Oregon-California Trail Field Day for 5th and 6th graders in Doniphan County, Kansas. This year, during the month of April, the Museum and OCTA will teach 7th and 8th graders in Highland, Wathena and Midway about the California Trail.

During 1998 chapter members focused on trail marking in order to provide a finished product for the cost-share project with the National Park Service. In July, Gateway members worked with the Albany Museum to place trail markers in Sabetha, Bern and other sites in Nemaha County. In October, 7th and 8th graders from Highland went on an all-day trail trek and placed 28 posts in Doniphan County. Gateway hosted another outing to mark ferry crossings north of St. Joseph in November. Earlier in the year, Gateway members recruited members of the Albany Museum to place trail markers in Sabetha and Nemaha County. The only remaining posts to be placed this year are at sites in Iowa Point, Fort Leavenworth and the Wolf River Cemetery.

There are several activities planned this year to help celebrate the California Trail Sesquicentennial. These include the placement, dedication and reception for the OCTA/E Clampus Vitus plaque in St. Joseph and the send-off for the wagon train reenactment scheduled to leave St. Joseph in April. The wagon train will be traveling through our territory in Doniphan, Brown and Nemaha counties.

-- Suzette McCord-Rogers

Southwest

On Saturday, January 23, 1999, SWOCTA toured Columbus, NM (site of the Pancho Villa raid of 1916) and had a great day thanks to our trip leader, Peter Bennett. The next day some of us drove fifteen miles north of Deming to visit the site of old Fort Cummings.

The group included Peter Bennett from Tucson, Brock and Levida Hileman from Truth or Consequences, NM, and Judy and Tracy DeVault of Prescott.

The first stop on the road in from the highway is the fort cemetery. It is located a half mile or so east of the fort on a low hill. The cemetery was originally surrounded by a rock wall. Most of the bodies were removed after the post was abandoned. A very impressive marker stands near the cemetery entrance memorializing four soldiers killed by Indians in 1866.

Fort Cummings was established in 1863 at the entrance of Cooke's Canyon near Cooke's Spring. It served to protect mail carriers, emigrant wagon trains and freighters from Indian attacks. The post was abandoned in 1891.

This is an important spot from the standpoint of SWOCTA's trail mapping activities. Cooke's Spring is right at the junction of the southern emigrant trail and Butterfield Stage Road. Fort Cummings is about a half-mile north of the spring and is right on the emigrant road.

SWOCTA has also received permission to place a marker to recognize the passage of emigrants through Fort Bowie-Apache Pass. The sign is expected to be placed during 1999.

A reconnaissance and mapping trip of the Fort Smith Trail is planned beginning April 21, possibly for use in future publication of the William Goulding diary as part of the Emigrant Trails Historical Study Series. For details, contact Rose Ann Tompkins at (602) 936-3565 (tompkin@primenet.com)

A May 15-16 outing is also planned along the Prescott-Ehrenberg Road, including visits to Bell's Canyon, Willow Springs and Camp Date Creek. For details, contact Tracy DeVault (520) 778-6228 (tracy@lankaster.com)

-- From Desert Tracks, the SWOCTA newsletter

Trails Head

Along with the ongoing preparations for the 2000 Convention, a very energetic schedule is planned for the upcoming months for Trails Head Chapter.

On March 30th, we had scheduled as our guest speaker, Ms. Jenny Chin, who is history curriculum chairman for the state of Kansas' education department. Ms. Chin was to speak on the new state mandate to include more Kansas history in the school curriculum.

On April 20, Kelly Kindscher, professor of environmental

studies at Kansas University, will speak on the flora and fauna of the Kansas prairie.

And on May 11 we will have a combination convention planning meeting and a slide presentation of previous conventions. We hope to entice more of the Trails Head members to attend the Chico convention by showing them what they will miss by not attending.

--Judy Budde, President

Northwest

Fifty-six NWOCTA members met for their annual membership meeting at the Washington State History Museum in Tacoma, Washington on March 13. The first order of business was the transfer of presidency from Dave Welch to Jim Renner. The ceremony included handing over the NWOCTA gavel and the official bullhorn.

A meeting highlight was the presentation of a nameplate bearing the inscription 'Northwest OCTA'. Jim Tompkins salvaged the wood for the nameplate from a branch of the historic Abernethy elm. The elm was planted by Mrs. George Abernethy in 1850. The Abernethys emigrated in 1840 and George was elected governor of Oregon Territory in 1845.

The meeting progressed through the approval of the minutes and a report from Joyce Bolerjack on the condition of the treasury (healthy) and the number of members (260). Other business included re-election of Lethene Parks as Chapter Director, approval of by-law revisions to comply with National OCTA's, and naming of a nominating committee to solicit Chapter officers.

Dave Welch reported on the National Board meeting and a substantial donation to National OCTA, the 2002 convention site, a revision in the award structure, and decisions made on the publications. Dick Ackerman, National Preservation Officer, reported on concerns at City of Rocks, Chimney Rock, and Three Island Crossing.

Chuck Hornbuckle reported on chapter preservation efforts and Trail Marking. A planned gravel mining operation along the Barlow Road appears permanently shelved. And a planned large-scale farming operation near Boardman lies north of the trail marking and documentation of the Trail has been completed to Meacham, and will continue in May. Outings Chair, Glenn Harrison presented a full and exciting slate of activities to the members. He also reported on the continuing effort to photograph markers on the Oregon and related Trails. Dave Welch reported the Challenge Cost Share Program is going well, with NWOCTA being the chapter closest to completion.

Following lunch at the Museum, the group enjoyed Ray Egan as 'Ezra Meeker'. Except for the introduction, all dialogue used is from Ezra's writings. Mr. Egan, a resident of Steilacoom, is retired from the Air Force and as a Pierce College professor. He has portrayed a number of historic personalities for the Washington Commission for the Humanities.

President Renner reconvened the meeting with a report on the COED program by Dave Welch, an update on the NWOCTA newsletter by publisher Jim Tompkins, and a report from Webmaster, Tom Laidlaw. Gail Carbiener discussed a new process developed by medical photographer, Jim Henderson, to "lift" faded emigrant signatures from rocks. A report will be presented at the Chico convention.

-- Suzanne Hornbuckle

CA-NV

The Winter Symposium in Redding attracted 143 members of the CA-NV Chapter in February.

Highlights of the meeting included discussions of the lives of two important pioneers, Major Pierson B. Reading and William B. Ide, presentations by Tom Hunt and Dick Silver on the Nobles Trail and the Oregon-to-California Road, and a presentation of an archeological dig conducted in Old Shasta. There also was a tour of the old town of Shasta and the site of Fort Reading.

The 1999 Santa Clara County Fair will feature an exhibit on the Gold Rush and the beginning of statehood as part of California's sesquicentennial celebration.

Two CA-NV chapter members, Virginia Hammerness and Patricia Loomis, are working on a display for the July 30-August 8 fair that will feature gold rush pioneers who later settled in the Santa Clara Valley and helped create the area's great agricultural empire.

The exhibit will be in the 50-year-old replica of California's first statehouse in San Jose.

OCTA's board of directors meeting in Independence, MO March 5 and 6 took two actions of interest to CA-NV chapter members.

The members endorsed the restoration project for the John Marsh house in Contra Costa County without granting any funds for the effort.

The board also approved an offer by membership chair Mary Mueller of San Jose for the CA-NV chapter to host the 2002 national convention in Carson City.

This will make the fourth time the local chapter has hosted conventions and it will mark the second time in Carson City.

CA-NV Chapter President Bill Rupp, along with Shann Rupp, Bill and Jeanne Watson, Mary Mueller and Pat Loomis all attended the Board meeting in Independence.

-- Pat Loomis

Rice-Tremonti Certification

The National Park Service Long Distance Trails Office in Salt Lake City has certified the Rice-Tremonti Farm Home in Raytown, MO, as an historic site on both the California and Santa Fe National Historic Trails. It is the first site so designated.

Located eight miles southwest of Independence, Mo. on pioneer Archibald Rice's campsite, the house was listed on the National Register of Historic Sites in 1978. It is owned and operated by a not-for-profit group.

Judy Budde, president of the Trails Head Chapter of OCTA, which covers the Kansas City-Independence metro area, said the designation "marks the end of a long struggle to achieve justly deserved recognition of this important trail site."

National Trail Center Breaks Ground June 21

Supporters of the National Historic Trail Center in Casper, Wyoming will mark a milestone June 21 with the official ground breaking for the center. The event will coincide with the arrival of Ben Kern's California National Historical Trail Wagon Train in the Casper area.

On June 19 a fund raising dinner is planned to benefit the Trail Center. Guest speakers will include Rep. Barbara Cubin, R-Wyo., who carried legislation to Congress that resulted in federal funding for the center, and Sen. Craig Thomas, R-Wyo., Trail Center Executive Director Edna Kennell said.

The dinner at the Parkway Plaza in Casper is the kickoff to the center's "Write Your Name In History" campaign. Tickets are \$100 and they will entitle the purchaser to place his or her name on a glass panel at the trail center, showing support for the center, Kennell said. Tickets may be purchased by contacting the National Historic Trails Center at P.O. Box 399, Casper, WY 82602, or by calling 307/265-8030.

OCTA Board Member Jeanne Watson of California will be one of the keynote speakers as well. Her book *"From the Land of Golden Wickedness"* is used as a source for one of the Trail Center exhibits about the California Trail, Kennell said.

The ground breaking will include officials from the U.S. Bureau of Land Management, the Trail Center, and Wyoming congressional representatives. The wagon train is expected to camp near the Casper Events Center in the area where the trail center will be constructed.

Design work is now underway for the center by Gerard Hilferty and Associates of Columbus, Ohio. Several companies were submitting bids in March for development of interior exhibits and video programming. Although bids were reported to be higher than anticipated, Kennell said she is certain funding will be obtained for the work.

Construction is expected to begin soon after the ground breaking and the center is slated for completion in the summer of 2001, when OCTA will be meeting in Casper.

— Candy Moulton

Bozeman Conference July 28-31

The Bozeman Trail Heritage Conference will be held July 28-31 in Bozeman, Montana, billed as a special one-time gathering of the best thinking, research, and exploration about the West's last great emigrant gold rush trail.

The conference will include speakers, a tour of local Bozeman Trail sites, and an all-day tour to historic Virginia City. A special highlight of the conference will be Joyce Badgley Hunsaker's presentation of "Fanny on the Bozeman Trail."

The Bozeman Trail Heritage Conference organizers are pleased to welcome OCTA as a donor to the conference. A registration brochure will be mailed to all OCTA members, and further information may be found on the Montana Historical Society's website: <http://www.his.mt.gov>.

— Susan Badger-Doyle

OCTA Receives Land Donation

OCTA recently received a significant gift from a devoted member. Charter member and active CA-NV Chapter member Pat Loomis donated a 40-acre parcel of land near Arroyo Grande, California, to OCTA.

While the property does not contain any trail remnants, it can be sold and the assets used for organizational programs with no strings attached.

At the mid-year Board of Directors meeting in March, the Board accepted a \$135,000 cash offer from one bidder and expressed its appreciation to Pat for this generous gift.

Hopefully, Pat's generosity and confidence in OCTA will prompt other donations, both large and small. Thanks, Pat, for this unselfish act.

— Roger Blair



Pat Loomis

Holden Named OCTA Secretary

Mary Holden of Casper, Wyoming, has been named interim Secretary of the Oregon-California Trails Association, filling the unexpired term of Helen Sundell, who retired.

Holden, who is also President of the Wyoming Chapter, has been a member of OCTA since 1991.

A retired state government employee, she said she became interested in trails history through her uncle and aunt, Bill and Edna Barber, whose ranch near Douglas, Wyoming, includes a portion of the emigrant trail.

Holden will be a candidate for a full term as Secretary in this year's OCTA elections.

Wagon Train On The Internet

You can track progress of the California National Historical Trail Wagon Train leaving St. Joseph, Mo., on April 26 via the internet.

OCTA member Leslie Kelly's California Gold Rush Country website will provide regular updates and information at <http://goldrush1849.com/thewaywest.html>.

The historic recreation will provide students and teachers, librarians, museum curators and history buffs with first hand information about life on the trail.

Additionally, there is an opportunity to sign up as a "Virtual Gold Rush 49er" and exchange e-mails with wagon train members on the trail, receive diary updates and obtain trail resource material.

For details, consult the webpage or contact Les Kelly at leskelly@deltanet.com. Phone (714) 846-0437.

Trails Preservation *(continued from Page 11)*

change, noting that it may take longer than one year to establish the kind of rapport with other agencies that we believe is desirable.

The term of office for NTPO should be for two years, with a limit of three consecutive terms.

Chapter Preservation Officer Roles and Responsibilities

We believe each chapter should be allowed to create the preservation structure that best meets its needs while remaining consistent with OCTA national preservation policies, practices and procedures. Accordingly, we recommend the following roles and responsibilities for each Chapter President or his designated Chapter Preservation Officer.

- 1) To follow the guidance of the President of the National Organization, the NTPO, and the Board of Directors on preservation issues.
- 2) To implement the preservation objectives of the National Oregon-California Trails Association.
- 3) To look after and coordinate all of the preservation efforts of the western migration routes within the chapter's jurisdiction.
- 4) To report anything of unusual nature to both the chapter president and the NTPO.
- 5) To suggest, design and encourage member participation in proactive trail preservation activities suitable for the specific chapter.

IV. Proposed OCTA Approach to Trail Preservation, including Resource Requirements

The OCTA approach to trail preservation is stated in the organization's Statement of Purpose and further defined in long range plans adopted by the Board in 1991 and 1998: trail preservation is the reason OCTA exists, as indicated by the Statement of Purpose:

1. *The purposes for which the Association is organized are as follows:*

a) *To initiate and coordinate activities relating to the identification, preservation interpretation, and improved accessibility of extant rut segments, trail remains, graves and associated historic trail sites, landmarks, artifacts, and objects along the overland western historic trails, roads, routes, branches, and cutoffs of the Trans-Mississippi western region.*

b) *To prevent further deterioration of the foregoing and to take or pursue whatever measures necessary or advisable to cause more of the same to become accessible or more so to the general public.*

c) *To implement these purposes by acquiring either alone, or through, or jointly with others (federal, state, local or private), title to the land or lands on which any of the same is located or a preservation or other easements with regard to the same -- by purchase, gift, or otherwise -- and by cooperating with or initiating, coordinating, and assisting the efforts of such others to do so.*

d) *To publicize and seek public exposure of the goals and activities of the Association so as to create popular awareness of and concern for the necessity of preserving the foregoing.*

e) *To facilitate research projects about the aforesaid and to publish a journal as a forum for scholarly articles adding to the sum of knowledge about the same.*

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Opinion: Why We Need To Preserve Our Trails Heritage

by Charles H. Dodd

Why do we work so hard to save the trails? After all, the intrinsic value of a couple of ruts has to be very little. Obviously we are not trying to save the ruts for the ruts themselves.

The westward overland emigration is one of the great and amazing adventures in the growth of our nation. When the emigration started in 1841, 221 years after the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock, the frontier hadn't really reached the Mississippi although there were a few settlements in Missouri. Less than 50 years later, according to the director of the 1890 census, the whole of our land was settled.

How did that happen? The land was not settled by the government pushing the frontier westward by building roads, canals, and railroads into the unsettled regions, so people could travel to new homes in comfort and safety. The land was settled by ordinary people moving family and possessions out into and across that unsettled land, dragging the frontier behind them.

Today we can view that monumental achievement by considering statistics (as hinted above) or by viewing shaded and colored maps keyed to show the growth of our country. But we can also view that achievement on a more intimate scale, by looking at the people who did it. And that is why we need the trails.

We can read of the trials and challenges the emigrants faced, and of the courage and strength with which they met them, by reading the diaries and journals the emigrants left us. We can read of that in the composite in works such as John Unruh's *The Plains Across*.

That still leaves us with only the shell. To comprehend the magnitude of what the emigrants achieved, and to comprehend fully the courage and strength they took to that achievement, we must feel the emigration.

We must stand on the banks of the rivers and creeks they forded; we must slide down over the ridges where they locked the wheels of their wagons or dug trees to slow their descent; we must sweat with dry throats and mouths as we hike laboriously through the wearying sands of the deserts that took that frightful toll on equipment, animals, and men; and we must claw our way up over the mountain passes where they doubled and tripled their teams so those teams could haul the possessions that were still left into California and Oregon.

It is the trail that puts the human stamp on the emigration.

Our ability to recreate the real feel of the emigration, of course, is lessened by the progress man has made since the days of covered wagons, mules, and oxen. That feel escapes us in our four-wheel drive vehicles equipped with CB radios and air conditioning, and as we use propane stoves to heat water for our complete, nutritional freeze-dried meals.

Our ability to recreate that feel is also lessened by the civilizing destruction of the trail and of the environs of the trail. We look hard, often without success, to find campsites on the trail that are not disturbed by the lights of cities. The howl of coyotes, when we are able to hear them in those camps, is

usually set against a background of the constant growl of eighteen-wheelers on nearby interstate highways.

So we must preserve what we have left of those emigrant trails. We must preserve them, not for the value of ruts in the earth, but because those ruts are our link with the souls of the emigrants who laid them. What we are really preserving, then, is that link from present to past — that human link from man and woman of today's world to man and woman of a fading reality of a former world.

When seen in this context, we must value most highly those segments of the trail that can still give us the feeling of the emigration's challenges and of the emigrant's character. We must also preserve the hundred yards of ruts in Kansas City because they can bring an immediacy of the emigration to thousands of urban dwellers. We must also preserve park-protected Scott's Bluffs and other monuments of the emigration because they loomed so importantly in the wonder the emigrants felt.

Most importantly, though, we must preserve those long, continuous miles of the trail that allow us to touch the souls. Those long stretches through the high, windy plains of Wyoming; over the Bear River Divide out of Fort Bridger and on Sublette's Cutoff that bypassed it; along Lander's road and Goodale's Cutoff; across Nevada's deadly 40-Mile Deserts to the granite barrier of the Sierra Nevada; across the Black Rock Desert and through the High Rock Canyon on Applegate's route; over the Carson River Route's 9300 foot high West Pass of the Sierra Nevada and over the Sonora Pass into the gold fields — these long stretches of the trail are what still allow us to capture the feel of the emigrants.

Note that what must be preserved is the extent of these sections, not just a mile or two of ruts. We must be able to travel along the trail, not just to see a section of its remains. We can, for example, travel the full length of the Carson River Route's 40-Mile Desert, from the Humboldt Sink to Ragtown, with very little of the trail interrupted by modern improvements. And most of that trail, within reason, lies within surrounding environs that block out intrusion of the Twentieth Century and allow a welcome reversion to the days of the covered wagon.

The experience of crossing that 40-Mile Desert will be lost if we allow even small sections of the trail to be destroyed. With the destruction of sections of that trail, we would truly destroy our ability to once more touch the souls of the emigrants, and to emboss the human stamp on our comprehension of the great migration across our land and the settlement of our country.

We preserve the trails to preserve our comprehension of the human character of our history.

This essay was first published in Idaho Yesterdays, Fall, 1993

OCTA National Convention
Chico — August 10-15

The Reading Trail



by Lyndia Carter

The excitement caused by the news of gold in California is almost incomprehensible now, a hundred and fifty years later – two thousand miles of trail literally crowded with covered wagons, many thousands of men who left home, family and jobs to seek the yellow metal, the virulent fever to get rich quick, the wild rowdiness of a culture consisting almost entirely of adult males. From our modern perspective, it seems a fantastic story, made up by some extremely creative fiction writer. But it was real. The Gold Rush that began with the emigration of 1849 and lasted for several years catches the imagination of young history buffs, as well as us old-timers.

Surprisingly, there is not an abundance of reading materials with which youngsters can learn about the Gold Rush era. In this issue I would like to focus on non-fiction books that explain the California Gold Rush on a level which various ages of children can comprehend. To tell the truth, adults, especially those of us who want a speed course on the Gold Rush before the OCTA Convention in Chico this summer, could also benefit from reading these books.

My personal favorite gold rush book for teen-aged readers is *The Great American Gold Rush* by Rhoda Blumberg (New York: Bradbury Press, 1989). Blumberg's writing style is a delight to read; kids aged 12 through 16+ should strike it rich with this one. Her text is well-organized and well-researched, her expression of facts and incidents is clear and precise, and she creates a high level of interest. Without condescension, Blumberg structures sentences and gears vocabulary for young readers; kids are neither overly challenged nor insulted by her writing. The words and ideas flow gracefully through the pages. Interesting historical tidbits, humor, and just the right amount of factual text will likely keep young eyes glued to the words and eager fingers turning to the next page. The book abounds with great period illustrations, the print is relatively large, there is a good balance of white space and text, and the length is suitable (total 135 pages). This is one non-fiction book that kids may actually read from cover to cover! Available only in hardback, it may be hard to find in bookstores and have to be ordered for you. Check with a quality bookstore. I found the copy I read in our small city's public library.

The California Gold Rush by May McNeer (New York: Random House, 1950, 1977, 1994) has been around for a long time and for good reason. It is an excellent little book for teens. McNeer's style is narrative and she uses many anecdotes and incidents from the lives of specific gold seekers and blends them in with generalized facts to make the book interesting and relatively light reading. The lightness, however, does not diminish its educational value for young readers. McNeer uses some excellent sources and her research is basically good and her text reliable, but a few minor errors do exist. The book is part of the Landmark Books series, which has proven very useful in making good history available to kids. The book contains no illustrations, which for some young readers is a

major limitation, but for others the "stories" will compensate and keep the reader involved. The Random House Bullseye Books edition of 1994 is a paperback, making this book affordable (\$5.99) for home libraries or as a gift for a child. Try your local bookstores or order from Random House.

A book particularly useful for high school students is *The California Gold Rush*, one of the books in the American Heritage Junior Library series (Mahwah, New Jersey: Troll Associates, 1961). Written by Ralph K. Andrist and the editors of American Heritage, this book offers a wealth of information. The text is well-written, but it is definitely on a more advanced academic level. Yet it is an excellent resource for older teens and adults. It provides a good foundation for reports, is useful for research projects, and supplies general background for a trip to Gold Country. It is lavishly illustrated with period paintings, lithographs and other prints (some colorized), drawings, maps and photographs. Public and school libraries will likely have this golden nugget.

Striking It Rich: The Story of the California Gold Rush (New York: Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing Division, 1996) is a marvelously fun non-fiction book for curious youngsters grades 1 through 6. Author Stephen Krensky writes very well for children and makes learning both fun and exciting. Illustrator Anna DiVito creates colorful and entertaining pictures, packed with clever details; illustrations cover about a third of the book's space. Krensky loads the 48 pages with good, solid historical information, but in such an interesting and entertaining way that the kids are probably not even aware, of how many facts they are learning. He uses the simple vocabulary and uncomplicated sentence structures appropriate for children reading on their own. This simplicity enhances the educational value because kids can understand the concepts. They will learn about the gold discovery, the many ways the gold seekers got to the gold fields, how to mine for gold, the realities of a miner's life, the mistreatment of various ethnic groups, the wildness of the mining camps and towns, the businessmen who made it rich, and the process of settling down. This little book is a gold mine! It is part of the *Ready to Read* series (Level 3-Reading Alone) and a child could read it unassisted, but a wise teacher, parent, or grandparent will want to be handy to discuss the ideas and answer questions. This Aladdin paperback is available for \$3.99 in good bookstores that carry children's books.

Each of these four books offers a broad overview of the many facets of the California Gold Rush, not just getting there. So what if they only have small sections on the overland migration and give equal attention (for shame!) to the ocean routes and the crossing of the Isthmus of Panama. The California Trail gives us and our children a connecting link to this very American and very exciting piece of history. So I hope you find some gold on the Reading Trail.

— Lyndia Carter

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