



News From the Plains

Spring 2008
Vol. XXII No. 2

Oregon-California
Trails Association

Board Endorses Preservation Plan; Scotts Bluff Expansion

By Candy Moulton
NFP Editor

The OCTA Board has endorsed a proposal to include Fort Mitchell and Roubidoux Pass in the Scotts Bluff National Historic Monument, if arrangements can be made with private landowners. The board also will establish the National Trail Preservation Officer as a part-time, paid position.

These actions occurred during a two-day Mid-Year Board meeting in Sacramento, CA, in early March, held in conjunction with the CA-NV Chapter Symposium.

The board also decided to sponsor a symposium in Yuma, AZ, January 16-18, 2009, in an effort to generate interest in both the Southern Trails and in OCTA among people who live in Arizona either full-time, or as winter residents. Planning for the symposium is under the direction of National Board Members John Krizek and Patricia Etter, with assistance from Reba Grandrud and Association Manager Travis Boley.

In order to allow the Board to

meet in connection with the 2009 national symposium, it approved a policy revision that allows for Mid-Year Board meetings at least every third year in Independence, MO. Past policy called for alternating meetings in that city.

Recognizing the importance of the National Preservation Officer, the board authorized it as a contract position, set up similarly to the way editors of this publication and the *Overland Journal*, are hired. To begin, the NPO will be a part-time job, 520 hours per year at a rate of \$10,000 for the year plus up to \$3,000 in expenses. Funding will come from the Loomis Preservation Fund and should not exceed the amount earned in interest each year. The NPO will be an independent contractor, receive no OCTA employee benefits, and be a nonvoting officer of the Board.

The Board authorized up to \$1,000 for the search and approved a committee of President Glenn Harrison, Vice President Bill Martin, National Trails Preservation Officer Dave Welch and Board members Brent Reber and Lethene Parks.

Welch has said he intends to leave the position later this year.

In other action the board:

- Had a demonstration about the new COED program, Paper Trail, and approved making access to the Web site a benefit of OCTA membership with details to be finalized soon. (See related article on page 8).
- Approved a Memorandum of Understanding establishing

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News From the Plains

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Masthead photo by Candy Moulton

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Board Endorses

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an OCTA Branch Library at the American Heritage Center/University of Wyoming.

- Created an OCTA Internet Committee. Formerly this was part of the Publications Committee.
 - Agreed to have OCTA staff and officers pursue grant funding for a Web site editor.
 - Appointed committee chairs as follow: Dave Vixie, Board Committee A; Jim Budde, Audit; Bill Martin, fundraising; Duane Iles, membership; Roger Blair, awards. The Internet and Educational programs
- committees currently have no chairs. All other committee chairmanships remain in place.
 - Approved a bylaws amendment to establish a Board quorum at seven members.
 - Agreed to develop an affinity credit card with Fundraising Solutions Inc. and United Missouri Bank.
 - Expressed appreciation to the Association Manager, Headquarters Manager, and association staff on their outstanding work and noted efforts to improve efficiency.
 - Discussed a request for

\$5,000 in teacher training funding from Discovery Trails Program, Eleanor Craig. Generally the board supports the program, and it will be considered through the regular budget process for next year.

- Had a report about the OCTA "In Pursuit of a Dream" film and educational curriculum project. Funding is being sought for a related Web site with film production to occur this summer. (See related article on page 8).
- Expressed appreciation to Joyce Everett and the CA-NV chapter for organizing the meeting.

NPS Funding Increases Will Benefit OCTA Programs, Trail Work

By **Candy Moulton**
NFP Editor

The National Park Service saw a "significant budget increase" for trails this year, including \$260,000 for the four trails managed by the Long Distance Trails office, Supt. Aaron Mahr told the OCTA Board in Sacramento. This funding increase will allow the agency to expand opportunities to work with its partners, and to increase staffing.

Mahr said he will add staff to the GIS program, and add interpretive program staff that will "focus more on cultural resource management."

"We're very, very determined that with any additional staff that we take on, attached to that is an amount of money that goes to capacity building among the partners," Mahr said, "The idea is that some of the money is to go out to some of the people who are out there working on the trail." He expressed support for specific

projects that will benefit the trails including increased interpretation, updated auto tour route guides, additional signs, and the OCTA film project saying "We hope to be an important part of getting that out, particularly the education program."

The NPS is now beginning work on a long range interpretive plan for the four trails—Oregon, California, Mormon Pioneer and Pony Express—and will be gathering ideas and information throughout this year. Sharon Brown is leading this project for NPS and will be presenting a workshop at the annual convention in Nampa, ID, to listen to OCTA members about issues and concerns. "We can't do it without you, we won't do it without you," she told the board. The plan should be completed in 2009.

Challenge Cost Share funding is available for new OCTA projects, a new research library has been established at the Salt Lake NPS

office, the Wyoming auto tour guide is complete, and work is underway on a guide for Utah and Idaho. Additional highway signs have been approved for placement in northern California under a \$490,000 transportation enhancement grant from the state.

Planning is now underway for the 2010 Pony Express Trail sesquicentennial, which will involve activities in Washington, D.C. and along the trail route.

News From the Plains

Summer Issue Deadline

May 25, 2008

Send materials to
nfpocta@aol.com

Convention Raffle and Auction Items Needed

By Patti McGill

The upcoming National OCTA Convention, in Nampa, Idaho, August 5-9, 2008, will have a raffle, silent auction, and a live auction.

The committee requests that members consider what they might possibly contribute for the fund raising, which is a fun and vital part of the convention.

This raffle and auction will be a highlight of the convention with many great items to be offered.

Among the premium items are a painting by an Idaho artist of the Sinker Grade on the South Alternate Oregon Trail. This location was a rough half-mile trail section that took

many wagon trains all day to ascend. There are also other paintings.

This year's auction also will include antiques and trail items. The organizers will be offering some old trail markers with trail route decals on them, some of which have stood in protection of pristine swales across Idaho for many years. Many are only faded but in good condition, having been replaced on the trails with new markers. They exist in various aged conditions with a choice for a bidder's selections.

Bring items to the convention or send them ahead. Information that will help determine the numbers of items and space needed for display will be appreciated in advance.

If you do not have an item to donate, but would like to obtain something to represent your OCTA interest and support, we may be able to assist you in acquiring an antique or other high-interest item locally, which will be offered in your name. We do have several area stores with this kind of inventory and prices are very reasonable compared to other larger population areas. Let us know if this might be one possible way to help you become involved.

For more information, or to provide details about an auction item contact: Patti McGill, pattiking@pobox.com; Mary O'Malley, OCHSpress@owyheemuseum.org; or Ann Tomlinson, annt51@cableone.net.

Nampa Prepares for OCTA Convention Aug. 5-9, 2008

The planning committee for the OCTA Convention is finalizing details including tours along the Goodale Route, and to the Three Island Crossing Reenactment, plus workshops, speakers, the annual author's night, awards, and entertainment.

There is no official OCTA hotel for

this year's convention in Nampa, ID, however several properties are offering special rates. They include:

Super 8—624 Nampa Blvd, 208-467-2888, Kathy/Tracy, depak_kapu@yahoo.com; Open price—\$64 per night.

Sleep Inn—1315 Industrial Rd., 208-463-6300, Anita Sartorius, gm.id003@choicehotels.com; 20 Rm. Block—\$69.99.

Days Inn—130 Shannon Dr., 208-442-0800, Richard Bell, rpbdaysinn@msn.com; 40 Rm. Block—\$59.99.

Shilo Inn—Nampa Inn, 617 Nampa Blvd., 208-466-8993, Ruth Story, ruth.story@shiloinns.com; 40 Rm. Block by July 3, 2008—\$69.

Shilo Inn—Nampa Suites, 1401 Shilo Dr., Nampa, 208-465-3250 Ruth Story, ruth.story@shiloinns.com; 10 Rm. Block, July 3, 08—\$92.

Holiday Inn Express—4104 E. Flamingo Ave., 208-466-4045, Teri Plummer, Director, teriplummer@cableone.net; 25 Rm. Block by July 21—\$89.99.

A number of RV parks also stand ready to serve OCTA members.

Convention Registration Available Online

For the first time, convention attendees will be able to register online.

To sign up for the 2008 Nampa Convention, go online at OCTA's Web site and register for all events and activities. Registration forms and booklets will still be mailed, but online registration is encouraged and preferred.

www.OCTA-trails.org

The President's View

Glenn Harrison
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Ezra Meeker Was A Great Promoter - Are We?

Ezra Meeker, an 1852 Oregon Trail and Natches Pass emigrant, settled in Washington. He is well known as the author of several books and for his many trips promoting the marking and preservation of the Oregon Trail. In 1906 he traveled the route going east placing markers, giving speeches, and arranging for other markers to be placed later. Near the end of that journey he met with President Theodore Roosevelt.

In 1910 he again made the trip, this time to authenticate the route of the trail. In 1914 he carved "Oregon & Cal. Trail" on a rock between Independence Rock and Devil's Gate. In 1916 he traveled the trail by Pathfinder automobile.

In 1922, while visiting Baker City, OR, Meeker formed the Oregon Trail Memorial Association with headquarters in New York City. Several times he traveled the route of the trail by railroad and in 1924, at age 94, he made a trip over the trail in an open cockpit, Army DeHaviland airplane.

In Ezra Meeker's *Seventy Years of Progress in Washington*, published in December of 1921, the same picture appears opposite page 313 with the same caption "Landing at Spokane after a flight of 90 miles from Lewiston, Idaho". However the text on page 314 says, "One day last year I had engaged to meet the pioneers

of Asotin County of our state in the public park of Clarkston [WA] on a Sunday afternoon. While speaking a monster aeroplane appeared over us, dropping messages of greeting, departing with a roar of the machinery power that enabled the aviator to maintain his position in the air.

"My host, Mr. Miller, President

the air, they reached Dayton, Ohio, where Meeker rode in a parade seated next to Orville Wright before 40,000 spectators. The great reception convinced the War Department to let Kelly continue to fly Meeker to Washington, D.C. Meeker met with President Calvin Coolidge at the White House and presented his plan to make the Oregon Trail a national highway.

Meeker gained approval for six million memorial 50¢ coins to be minted by the government with all proceeds going to the Oregon Trail Memorial Association, Inc. Then Meeker returned to Seattle by train. Now those coins are collector's items and frequently sell for significant



Ezra Meeker with Kelly on an earlier flight. (Ezra Meeker Postcard)

of the Chamber of Commerce of Clarkston, said he believed the 'flying machine,' as he put it, would take me over in time and upon my request to ascertain, left the headquarters and to receive the response: 'Yes, we will be glad to take the old man over.' And this is the story of how I came to fly from Clarkston to Spokane, ninety miles, at a gait of more than a mile a minute, after having crossed the continent with an ox team, poking along at two miles an hour. Some progress that."

His 1924 trip, from Vancouver, WA, to Washington, D.C., made Ezra one of the first transcontinental passengers. His pilot was Lieutenant Oakley Kelly. After four days in

amounts.

Meeker had planned another trip in 1928 using a Model A Ford that Henry Ford had converted to carry a covered wagon top, but Meeker died before starting. Many postcards and coins were produced to commemorate the trail and earn money for the association. A map of the trail also was produced.

The Oregon-California Trails Association is an extension of the Oregon Trail Memorial Association founded by Ezra Meeker. We continue the OTMA efforts of trail preservation, mapping, education, and promotion of the importance of these important trails. When we get

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From the Association Manager...

Travis Boley
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Celebrate the Trails

This year marks the 40th Anniversary of the National Trails Act. The act passed Congress on October 2, 1968, and authorized both the Appalachian and Pacific Crest Trails as National Scenic Trails. This year also marks the 30th Anniversary of the Oregon National Historic Trail being added to the Act via amendment (the California National Historic Trail was added in 1992). How fitting that OCTA's annual convention will be held right in the thick of the Oregon Trail in Nampa, Idaho this August. I hope you're already making plans to attend to help us celebrate the National Trails Act in grand fashion.

The Partnership for the National Trails System is comprised of the 25 National Historic and Scenic Trails. Jere Krakow, retired Superintendent for our trails, is chairing a committee to explore celebrations for the 40th Anniversary of the Act and to launch what is being called "The Decade of the Trails" in order to prepare us for the 50th Anniversary in 2018.

As part of this endeavor, there will be a wagon train entering Nampa just before the convention. They will travel for about a month before arriving at the convention, and you are certainly invited to participate. Information is on our Web site at www.octa-trails.org, and will be in your convention registration packets. You also can contact Wagon Master Dell Magnum at target@cbyteusa.net.

There are other ways to celebrate the Oregon National Historic Trail 30th anniversary. You can:

- Join and volunteer with your local chapter

- Take a multi-generational hike along the trail
- Volunteer to speak about OCTA and the trails at your local clubs, such as Rotary, Lions, Chamber of Commerce luncheons, Boy and/or Girl Scouts, church groups and others and encourage them to join us as members
- Donate time or money to OCTA to further the goals of the association.

Ways to celebrate the National Trail Systems Act 40th Anniversary:

- Thank your congressional representatives for supporting the National Trails System (NTS).
- Explore a national trail you've never visited before.
- Visit the Partnership for the National Trails System Web site for upcoming events marking this anniversary (www.nationaltrailpartnership.org/).
- Print out a trail map of the NTS and talk to others about the links provided by the NTS for public and private lands; you will find maps at the Partnership Web site.

Recently, the Fundraising Committee for OCTA reformed, with Vice President Bill Martin agreeing to chair it on an interim basis. If you're interested in sharing your fundraising expertise, please drop Bill a line at lexiconomist@suddenlink.net. There will be some new initiatives coming

your way soon, and there are several ways in which you can assist OCTA financially right now.

The newest change is the addition of an online memorial section, where OCTA members can make an online donation in memory of a dear departed one. You can access this online memorial section at www.octa-trails.org/articles/memorials.html. If you have a memorial to add, please contact our website editor at webeditor@octa-trails.org.

Also, please remember OCTA in your will. We are preparing information regarding bequests and planned giving to assist you in transferring assets to OCTA to ensure its longevity. And finally, we recently sent out a reminder letter that it's not too late to donate to the year-end appeal. If you did not receive an invite to add to this important fund, please send a check marked "Year End Appeal" in the memo line to:

OCTA
Attn: Year End Appeal
524 S. Osage St.
Independence, MO 64050

I know I've mentioned it in this column before, but it bears repeating. If you ever shop for anything online there is a way to ensure that a part of your purchase is donated back to OCTA. Simply go to the Web site and scroll down to click on the yellow box or yellow bag next to the heading "Shop & Donate to OCTA." Follow the directions to download the icon to your desktop and be sure to set OCTA up as the designated non-profit.

Headquarters Manager's Report

Kathy Conway
Kconway@indepmo.org

Spring Reminders

Two OCTA mailings will be arriving in your mail box this spring. Look for the 26th Annual OCTA Nampa Idaho Convention Registration information this month. Be sure to register for this fun and educational event. We are expecting you. The ballot and election information for the four Directors for OCTA's National Board (term 2008-11) also will be delivered. Please take a moment to cast your vote.

Three new books are being added to our online book store that did not appear in our 2008 Book Catalog: *From Lead Mines to Gold Fields: Memories of an Incredibly Long Life* by Henry Taylor (Paperback, \$24.95); *Desperate Passage: The Donner Party's Perilous Journey West* by Ethan Rarick (\$28); and *Hard Road West: History and Geology along the*

Gold Rush Trail by Keith Heyer Meldahl (Cloth, \$25)

We are always happy when others find out what we already know. The Merrill J. Mattes Library housed in the National Frontier Trail Museum in Independence, MO, recently received some nice publicity in the *Discover Mid-America* antiques publication. The author of the article referred to the library as the crown jewel of the Westward Trails. There were several photos with the article of actual diaries, the library, and John Mark Lambertson showing a letter from one of the first women to cross the country on the trails west. The library has acquired about 2,500 trail diaries and letters.

If we can help in any way, please call us toll free at 888-811-6282.

The President's View

an opportunity, we need to promote the preservation of the various branches of the westward trails as well as membership in OCTA.

A few years ago the OCTA Board approved changing the titles for OCTA's membership categories and listed the benefits. For the Ezra Meeker Life Members, there was to be a pin. Those pins, shown on page 5, have been produced and distributed. Hopefully they will be worn proudly. Life membership for an individual or family of two is still \$1,000. It's not too late to become a life member.

While the trail preservation movement expanded to include many other Westward migration trails and have other champions, Ezra Meeker is recognized as being the first. Think about what you are doing to keep the legacy alive by encouraging membership as well as

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trail preservation in the broad sense. Help us promote OCTA.

We are making some significant progress. OCTA's website is improving. The COED online database, "Paper Trail" is now operating and soon will be a member benefit. The "In Search of a Dream" Adventure Video is well on its way with added educational opportunities on OCTA's Web site.

I urge all members to be active and to take part in the many chapter outings and activities planned this year. There are trail mapping and marking opportunities. Plan now to attend the OCTA Nampa, ID, convention plus pre- and post-convention tours in August. Be thinking about nominating someone to receive an OCTA or chapter award.

OCTA National Board Meeting and Symposium Planned for January 2009 in Arizona

Plans are in the works for a historic trails symposium in Yuma, AZ, in January, 2009, sponsored by OCTA.

A steering committee including OCTA board members John Krizek and Patricia Etter, both from Arizona, long-time Arizona trails advocate Reba Grandrud, OCTA Association Manager Travis Boley, and Dave Hollicker on behalf of the California-Nevada chapter, has begun developing plans for the event, to be held Jan. 16-18.

Many historic trails converged on Yuma as the best place to cross the Colorado River, from de Anza and the Spanish padres to the railroad, and including the Southern Emigrant Road, which has been the focus of the SWOCTA Trail Turtles' field work for many years.

In 2000, The Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area became the first federally designated heritage area west of the Mississippi. The designation has been a catalyst for change along the historic riverfront, and sparked a renewed interest in historic trails in southwest Arizona, according to city officials.

This symposium was endorsed by the OCTA Board at its Mid-Year Meeting, and will be held in conjunction with the 2009 Mid-Year Board Meeting.

Further details will be announced in future issues of *NFP*.

Educational Filming Begins This Summer

"In Pursuit of a Dream"

This summer 14-16 students from the East Coast, West Coast, and points in between, will set off on a wagon train adventure that will become "In Pursuit of a Dream," an action adventure educational film being produced for OCTA by Boston Productions.

The students will learn about hardships on the trail as they travel with teachers and experience trail conditions. They will camp, cook their meals in a dutch oven, cross

ridges, climb mountains, and see trail sites such as Independence Rock, South Pass, and the Barlow Road.

Funded with private donations, grants, and the contributions of many OCTA members, this one-hour film will air on television. Three additional short videos also will be produced that tell the stories of the Oregon and California Trails and the general emigrant experience. These videos are targeted for use in classrooms and will be supplemented by a new Web site

and online curriculum materials.

The complete project will cost around \$300,000, and donations are still being accepted.

The creative and production team for Boston Productions—a new corporate member of OCTA—includes Bob Noll, Creative Director; Candy Moulton, Writer-producer; Paul Hutton, Creative consultant-writer; Quackgrass Sally, Assistant

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Paper Trail Available for Research

**By Sharon Manhart
COED Committee**

OCTA's newest research tool, Paper Trail, is now available. This treasure of a Web site is the culmination of more than 15 years of work by dedicated OCTA members, and, like most treasure tales, there is a long, winding and often serendipitous story of its creation.

The concept of having a central listing of all types of original trail-related writings was born due to OCTA members' fascination with documents written by trail emigrants. Those most interested formed a Census of Overland Emigrant Documents committee, now much better known as COED, which is not to be confused with cute college girls. There is a long history with the program and the people who collected the information and those who actually evaluated each document.

In March the Paper Trail Web site launched. It is a huge (3,550+ documents) database that pulls out the essential material from each original document, lists every name

the emigrants mentioned, lists every place they noted as they passed by, and tells when and where they started from and when and where they ended their journey. The database also gives information on where the document can be found for further research from the original text.

Most OCTA members should be familiar with **Emigrant Names I and II**, the earliest products that came from the COED program. During the last 10 years the COED committee has placed the COED database on CD disc sets. These will continue to be available for sale from the OCTA Bookstore at a reduced rate and the sets give all document information included at the time of their release, the latest being 2004. Paper Trail, however, will be maintained and constantly updated by the COED committee as new documents come to light. Both research tools serve the same purpose, but the Web site is interactive and accessible instantly.

OCTA members will be able to access Paper Trail at no charge, as a benefit of membership. Subscription rates for non-member users of Paper Trail are:

- 24 hours – \$10.95
- 1 month - \$19.95
- 1 year, individual - \$75
- 1 year for institutions (less than 10 units) - \$100
- 1 year for institutions (10 or more units) - \$200

Logging in to Paper Trail, you will be able to do a name search for free. Once you find a name of interest in the database, access to the document surveys requires a payment by credit card or through PayPal.

Through the last few years the National Park Service, National Trails System has provided generous grant money for the continued work on COED and for the costs involved in Web site creation. OCTA funds have always been devoted to the COED committee, and without the support of both OCTA and the NPS the research work of COED through the years could not have been maintained. It is the hope of OCTA, COED, and the NPS that the general public and institutions specializing in history and genealogy will find Paper Trail a real plum of Overland Trail research, and the mechanism to raise a national awareness of OCTA.

Federal Trail Funding Increases

**By Bill and Jeanne Watson
OCTA Legislative Liaisons**

Again this year we had exciting weather and conditions in Washington, D. C., beginning with 11 degrees warming up to 34 degrees our first day on The Hill followed by days of rain and ice plus a one day taxi strike. Despite those challenges, we were very well received during our visits on Capitol Hill plus an all morning meeting with the Bureau of Land Management's National Landscape Conservation System Director Elena Daly and her staff.

Congress passed the Fiscal Year 2008 budget with strong support from OCTA and the Partnership for the National Trail System. It provides significant funding increases for the National Trails System and especially for the National Park Service's Salt Lake City Trails' office. During our meetings with House and Senate Interior Appropriations staffs we were advised that this was a special one-time benefit in appreciation of what is being achieved by Trails volunteers and their Federal partners.

These increases will carry forward in the Agency's annual budget, but remain fixed for a number of years. Also, Challenge Cost Share Program funding for our trails continues during 2008 at the same high level as last year. During visits to House and Senate offices on Capitol Hill we expressed OCTA's deep appreciation for these trails funding increases in a time of very tight budgets.

We had meetings with the legislative staffs of both the Senate and House National Parks committees. Unfortunately, Congress is strongly polarized along party lines over major issues, which precludes agreement on such things as trails bills. The Senate passed one trail bill to name a park in honor of the late Republican Senator Craig Thomas of Wyoming.

Because our trail bill to authorize the study of additional routes and cutoffs requires significant federal funding to implement, it is no longer considered to be "non-controversial" in the Senate. Both Democratic and Republican Congressional leadership will only move forward on bills when

they are assured of enough votes for passage, leaving our bill at a standstill for now.

Our Congressional friends will repackage a group of trails bills, including our additional route studies bill and the willing seller bill, and try to obtain passage later this spring.

Glenn Harrison alerted the Partnership to a Federal Highway Administration proposed rule change that would ban trail signs from freeways and expressways. We took it to the Partnership's Legislative and Federal Policy Committee which we co-chair with Derek Blount of the Ice Age Trail.

The Partnership agreed to write a letter to the Federal Highway Administration opposing the plan and also urged each trail volunteer group to do the same. We included this information in OCTA's 2008 Report to Congress, which we handed out to contacts in Washington, along with copies of the National Park Service's newest Four Trails Auto Tour Route Guide for Wyoming. With the Salt Lake City staff and funding in place, the Park Service plans to print and issue on-line the Utah-Idaho Guide this fall, the Nevada Guide in 2009, the Oregon-Washington Guide in 2010, and the California Guide in 2011.

"In Pursuit of a Dream"

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Producer; Will Bagley, Historical Researcher; Dave Vixie, Kim Merchant and Janet Wragge, Teacher/reenactors (all are past recipients of OCTA Educator Awards). Many other OCTA members will assist.

"Although our teachers will prepare for the various scenarios we film, this will be unscripted so we can capture real feelings, emotions, and impressions as we will put the youths in situations on the trail that pioneer travelers may have encountered,"

Moulton said,

"Each day on the trail we will have challenges and character meetings for the youths, and we will share trail accounts with them to provide historical context for what they are experiencing. This will be an adventure film with an underlayer of history and education," she added

Filming will begin in late June in Wyoming and conclude by mid-July in Oregon.

NOTICE

**Please send your 2008
volunteer hours, miles
and contributions to us.**

E-mail:

BillJeanneWatson@aol.com

4th Annual Black Rock Rendezvous May 24-26

By **Candy Moulton**
NFP Editor

The 4th Annual Black Rock Rendezvous takes place Memorial Day weekend, May 24 - 26, 2008 in and near Gerlach, NV.

Come celebrate the spectacular Black Rock Desert - High Rock Canyon Emigrant Trails National Conservation Area with three days of tours, workshops, demonstrations, hikes, music, camping, and more. The Black Rock Rendezvous inspires stewardship within the region, while providing insight to its rich history and modern day use. The diversity of participating user groups makes the Black Rock Rendezvous unique in Nevada.

There is no cost to participate or attend.

All weekend, Burning Man's Will

Mine for their annual dinner and live music under the stars.

All attendees should come prepared for Leave-No-Trace camping. Lodging is also available in Gerlach. Details, including locations and tour descriptions will be posted on the Web site as they become available at www.blackrockrendezvous.com.

The activities are sponsored by the Nevada Outdoor School, the Friends of Black Rock/High Rock, and the Nevada Commission on Tourism. The Friends of Black Rock/High Rock is a 501(c)(3) organization which helps manage the resources of the Black Rock Desert region and educates the public to foster stewardship and preserve its unique character. The organization has recently joined OCTA as an institutional member. For more information visit, www.blackrockdesert.org.

Roger and the Friends of Black Rock/High Rock host the Friends annual campout and membership drive at Cassidy Mine. Saturday, May 24, features a mini expo with various user groups and organizations, regional representatives, and a special keynote speaker who had not been announced at press time. There will be tours to nearby points of interest followed by a barbecue dinner and campfire talk hosted by the Nevada Outdoor School.

Sunday's expanded tours follow five distinct tracks: Historical, Hot Springs, Geology, Playa Land Use, and Soldier Meadows/High Rock Canyon. Planned demonstrations include rocket launches, cultural site stewardship, horsemanship, and land sailing. A kids camp will entertain the young ones.

On May 26, join Friends at Cassidy

Gold Strike Award Winners Announced Contest Continues Until Convention

By **Duane Iles**
OCTA Membership Chair

The first phase of Gold Rush Membership contest for this year has concluded. The names of the thirty people who recruited a new member or brought back a former member were entered in a drawing for convention prizes.

Winners are: Mildred Brewer, Riverton, WY, one free convention registration; David & Karen Vixie, Paradise, CA, and Edna Kennell, Casper, WY, one free tour per family.

However, this does not mean the contest is over!

The Gold Rush Membership contest does not officially close until the 2008 convention in Idaho. The Bonanza Awards will be determined at the

convention and awarded at the awards banquet. These awards are for the top recruiters who have recruited a minimum of five new or returned members. There will be three awards: First place, \$100; Second place, \$50; and Third place, \$25.

Jim McGill has a huge lead, but I am sure we have folks who are up to the challenge of beating him, so continue recruiting.

The Gold Dust Award is ongoing and is a \$5 gift certificate at the OCTA store for each new or returned member.

Members who already have recruiting credits are Jim McGill, Glenn Harrison, Greg Franzwa, Steve Larmore, Bill Leppert, Patty McGill, Bill and Gail Robinson, Roger Blair and Susan Doyle, Mildred Brewer,

Randy Brown, Bob Clark, Don Cooper, Jackie Ellis, Leslie Fryman, Charlotte Gliniski, Vern Gorzitze, Steve and Joan Graham, Duane Iles, Edna Kennell, Alice and Don Kennelly, Fern and Fred Linton, Tom McCutcheon, Jimmie Powell, Mary Ann Tortorich, Dave and Karen Vixie, and Harry & Lynne Woodward.

Among the staff Kathy Conway, Travis Boley, and Suzanne Vinduska have also brought members into OCTA.

If anyone has an idea or suggestion about membership, let me know. We are all members of the membership committee.

To obtain copies of the OCTA Membership brochure contact Headquarters at 888-811-6282.

Discovery Trails Receives Presidential Award



Eleanor Craig, Coordinator and Trail Boss for Discovery Trails Program, second from left, received the Coming Up Taller Award. Also shown are Bruce Cole, Chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities; Heather Rasmussen, Watertown, TN, high school student and trail participant; and First Lady Laura Bush.

By Lenore B. Carroll

Every year for the past ten years, Eleanor Craig of Accessible Arts in Kansas City has proven that blind teenagers need not be confined to a passive, inactive life. The Discovery Trails program, run in cooperation with the Kansas School for the Blind, has taken blind and partially sighted

teens on Western trails where they camp outdoors, climb mountains, follow trail ruts, and relive the lives of pioneers. They have followed the Oregon, California, Mormon-Pioneer, and Cherokee trails.

For her efforts, Eleanor received the Coming Up Taller Award on behalf of

Accessible Arts from the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities at a ceremony at the White House Jan. 28, 2008.

This program has a strong arts component and the students share their experiences by teaching other youngsters in the fall after school resumes. The National Park

Service and VSArts of Washington cooperated with Discovery Trails to bring the Western experience to the teenagers. Lions Clubs of Kansas and other regional organizations also have given funds for the program.

Each year between 12 and 15 teenagers, accompanied by experienced helpers and artist-educators, depart from Kansas City for stops along the trails of 19th century sojourners. The group travels in vans with their gear, food and other equipment in a rental truck. They make stops at various trail sites. The teenagers for the 2005, 2006, and 2007 trips prepared by studying the Donner Party. Each student was assigned a member of the original party and, led by actor Wolfgang Bucher, artist Beth Sarver, and musician Jolan Smith, when on the trail they portrayed their characters at nightly campfires. By the end of the trip they had assimilated their characters so they could dramatize the historical events.

In their travels they have visited Chimney Rock, Fort Laramie, Fort Caspar, Independence Rock, South Pass, and the Seedskafee Wildlife Refuge in southwest Wyoming. They have pulled wagons across the Little Sandy River in Wyoming and up Little Mountain near Salt Lake City. In 2006 they prepared and staffed an exhibit at the national convention of the Association for the Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (AER) at Snowbird, UT.

Through the years they have also spent time along the Cherokee Trail working with local historians and volunteers. In their travels they have learned that history wasn't just something they read about; it was something they lived.



In 2005 students in the Discovery Trails program pushed a wagon on trail ruts, and across the Little Sandy River, in western Wyoming. (Photo Courtesy of Terry Del Bene)

Preservation Officer's Report

David Welch
welchdj@comcast.net

Preservation Issues Across the Trail System

About a year ago I announced my intention to step down as national trails preservation officer at the August 2008 board meeting. We initiated a search for a replacement, but it has become clear that filling this position with a volunteer is unlikely. I have enjoyed both learning about preservation and applying that knowledge to OCTA's real world trail preservation issues, but others may not have the time and inclination to take on this substantial task.

The board has discussed this issue at each of our subsequent meetings and has begun the process of hiring a part time professional to act as our new "trail preservation manager." I have estimated that it requires at least ten hours a week to meet the minimal needs of the position. As a member providing financial support to the organization, it is appropriate for you to question the need for this additional expense.

Besides the obvious answer that it must be filled somehow if we are to fulfill our stated preservation mission, there are several other strong reasons to fund this job. First, the position requires increasingly specialized skills. These skills include knowledge of the applicable laws and regulations, environmental and cultural protection processes, and technical aspects of preservation. The person must also possess good communication and negotiation skills since rarely is a preservation issue black and white. Finally, the person must be able to organize and coordinate both within and outside OCTA. The ability to work well with others is essential.

The second point is that if OCTA is to prosper as an organization,

it must increase its capabilities to match today's political, social, and technical environment. In the early days of OCTA, an enthusiastic core of motivated volunteers got us off to a good start in many key areas like trail preservation. However, I think it is a characteristic of volunteer organizations that the second generation membership (which we are well into) does not have quite the level of enthusiasm and numbers as the first. I suspect this has to do with the fact that it is much more fun to create than to sustain.

The final point is continuity and consistency. Our trail preservation plans and programs must be part of a well-defined long-term effort and not be primarily "knee-jerk" reactions to individual events. Professional staff serving over an extended period should provide this capability.

Finally, I would like to offer a comment on the need for OCTA to develop its professional capabilities in many areas. Many volunteer-based organizations fail to sustain themselves long-term due, I think, to the failure to develop a core organization that can persist despite variations in the level of volunteer support.

It is not enough to rely upon succeeding generations of volunteers to continue what OCTA's founders started in 1983. We should plan for the future and provide the skills and resources needed to protect the trails as long as remnants exist. Building a strong, effective organization is a prerequisite.

Carsonite Markers Available

OCTA has a new challenge cost-share grant that will provide carsonite trail markers to the chapters.

To obtain markers the chapter president and the project leader will have to make a request for a specified number of markers to Dave Welch, the CCSP trail marker project leader.

In your request include a brief description of the area to be marked and the approximate schedule for the activity.

When the markers are in place, send a report to the trail marking committee chair (Randy Brown) and the CCSP leader. Once reports are filed, reimbursement can be distributed.

Forms for applying and reporting are available from Dave Welch, welchdj@comcast.net, and are posted on the OCTA Web site <www.octa-trails.org>.

Preservation Update

There are challenges and successes to report with respect to OCTA Preservation, as noted in my report to the Board.

South Pass, Central Wyoming

Our efforts to collect signatures in support of increased protection of the South Pass corridor have been very successful. We have over 2,300 signatures in hand. A preliminary submission was made to the BLM in early January to make the BLM aware of our efforts and the results.

Continued on Next Page

Preservation Officer's Report

Continued from Previous Page

Pinedale Anticline, Western Wyoming

A revision of the draft SEIS has been published, but not received. I hope to review it before the board meeting. The first draft was deemed unacceptable due to increased impacts to the trail. New alternatives have been added.

Atlantic Rim, Southern Wyoming

The key aspect of this Programmatic Agreement from OCTA's perspective is the inclusion of transportation corridors that will cross contributing sections of the Cherokee and Overland Trails at seven points. These crossings can not be avoided and will be designed to minimize impacts. Mitigation for the adverse effect is being defined by a working group. Mitigation is focusing on interpretive signs at the trail crossings and a video on the Atlantic Rim area's history.

West-wide Energy Corridors

Public meetings were held in January and February to collect comments on the draft programmatic Environmental Impact Statement for a proposal to establish broad corridors which would be used for all energy-related facilities (pipelines, transmission lines, service roads, etc.) and within which there would be expedited approval procedures. OCTA has expressed concern that the corridors are too wide. We do not want to see new corridors established in relatively pristine areas.

Preservation Training

Preservation training was conducted in Phoenix March 14 and 15 under the sponsorship of the NPS and Arizona Parks. In May OCTA will be leading a preservation workshop

being conducted for the Partnership for the National Trails System. All historic trails in the partnership have been invited to attend. The purpose is to demonstrate the preservation techniques developed by OCTA to other trail organizations with the goal of invigorating their preservation activities. These sessions in Phoenix will be sponsored by the NPS, BLM, Federal Highway Administration, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Preservation training for the Colorado-Cherokee Trail Chapter will be held in June.

High Potential Sites and Segments

The National Trails System Act provides for the identification of high potential sites and segments (HPS&S) along the National Historic Trails. Typically these are features that would probably qualify for a National Register nomination.

The management plans developed for each trail identified sites and segments and provided a procedure for evaluating each site on a biennial basis through a joint workshop involving the NPS and the appropriate trail organization (i.e., OCTA). The process also provides for additions of new sites and segments, but it was never implemented.

In Oregon, the State Historic Preservation Office has asked for OCTA's assistance in identifying and classifying the trail. The HPS&S process looks like a good way to do this. The work will be performed by volunteers from the Northwest Chapter. It is anticipated that the work will provide a template for efforts by other chapters and will re-invigorate the HPS&S process with the NPS.

Northwest Chapter Activities

Recent activities have included a project led by Paul Masee to attempt to verify the route of the emigrant trail climbing the hills west of La Grande, OR. This is part of the Blue Mountain High Potential Route Segment. Masee did most of the field preparation and Stafford Hazelett provided some mapping support and a field review before the participants arrived. Four people hiked the full Oregon Trail route from La Grande to Hilgard Junction State Park while ten other folks performed a ground survey searching for evidence of the route of the ascent. The landowner allowed us to place three white fiberglass composite markers with Oregon Trail stickers on a probable swale on his property.

The chapter has also placed interpretive panels at Alkali Springs and Tub Springs in the Malheur Desert, and at the Willow Springs Campsite near Cecil, Oregon. Efforts are underway in cooperation with the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office to review their plan for making an inventory of the Oregon Trail in Oregon and for updating their database. A review of the High Potential Historic Sites and Route Segments will be conducted as part of the 2008 Heritage Conference in May in Eugene, OR.

NPO Priorities

In addition to continuing work on most of the above items, the NPO and chapter leaders will continue development and implementation of the preservation training program, implement the trail monitor structure within the chapters, expand field work, continue to work with Oregon officials to improve trail preservation in Oregon, and support trail marking activities in Wyoming.

Arizona Trails Classes Offered in Prescott

A six-week series of classes on Arizona Historic Trails is being offered in April and May by the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) in Prescott, coordinated by OCTA board member John Krizek.

Guest lecturers will include such Arizona emigrant trails experts and OCTA stalwarts as Reba Grandrud and Patricia Etter. Joe Myers from Tucson will present his research on the Anza Trail. Other topics will include the early military roads in Arizona, and the freight wagon roads that served Prescott before the arrival of the railroad.

The series is scheduled for Thursday mornings at the Sharlott Hall Museum, starting April 10. Anyone interested in participating should contact OLLI at 928-717-7634.

This program is an outgrowth of a series of three sessions presented last fall on Exploring Emigrant Trails, which turned out to be one of OLLI's more popular offerings. One of those sessions, presented by Tracy DeVault, focused on the work of the Trail Turtles on mapping the Southern Emigrant Road.

Nebraska Chapter

A Road Rally of Historic Proportions

OCTA's Nebraska Chapter will host a Road Rally May 3, beginning at 11 a.m. with registration in the Oregon Trail Park in Oak. There will be a \$5 registration fee with proceeds to OCTA-NE for Chapter projects. Participants will be in two classes, OCTA members and general public. The objective is not a speed or timed contest but the course needs to be completed by 5 p.m.

Each registration will include map sheets from *Maps of the Oregon Trail* by Gregory Franzwa. Contestants will follow the trail, as nearly as possible, on public roadways, and complete an answer sheet of questions concerning information found on trail markers and other signage along the way. The questions will be in logical sequence so if information is found on a question down the line participants will know they missed something and can go back to find it.

Basically the rally will run from Kiowa Ranch, east of Oak, to the Susan Haile Grave, north of Kenesaw, a distance of about 100 miles.

Any vehicle with a working odometer can be used. However, most of the travel will be on gravel or non-surfaced roads so 4WD may have benefits. In good weather these roads can be traveled with a standard passenger car. Prizes in each class will be awarded to the registrants completing the most answers correctly and traveling the least distance. In case of a tie, the winner will be determined by drawing lots.

Bill Petersen OCTA-NE Preservation Officer and Trails Guide, has organized and planned the event. For more information contact him at 308-832-2211 or bilancy@hotmail.com.

Elderhostel Set for Trail Program

This year's Oregon Trail Elderhostel has two dates available, July 9-24 and September 10-25, both involving a 15-night program. Follow in the footsteps of pioneers to recapture the essence of one of America's most remarkable migrations as Elderhostel takes this trip to see the unrivaled beauty of the landscapes of nearly one-third of our country through six states, each unique in history, topography, and character.

Participants will walk or hike at trail sites, replica settlements, forts, and museums. People interested in participating who have not yet reached their 50th birthday, need to register as a roommate with someone who is at least 50.

For more information, call 1-800-454-5768, write 11 Avenue de Lafayette, Boston, MA 03111, or go on line at www.elderhostel.org. and ask about program #13713TCV.

Shop at the OCTA Store

www.octa-trails.org

Trails Head Chapter

Chapter President Pat Marshall Dies

Pat Marshall, the current president of the Trails Head Chapter and wife of Ross Marshall, passed away on Feb. 12, 2008, after a brief illness.

She had undergone surgery and treatment for lung cancer in 2006, but the cancer was in remission. She died from a sudden attack of what is called "organizing pneumonia," which is basically lung failure.

Pat was born in Independence, MO, and lived in Jackson County most of her life. She married Robert Stickler, a Baptist pastor who passed away in 1991 from a brain tumor. She had four children, seven grandchildren, and seven great-grandchildren.

Her career was as a licensed Nursing Home Administrator in the



state of Missouri, winning several awards including Missouri's "Administrator of the Year."

She married Ross Marshall in 2004 and immediately fell in love with our national trails. They traveled extensively across the

nation covering most of the National Historic Trails.

She served as vice-president and president of the Trails Head Chapter, was on the Board of Directors of the Missouri River Outfitters Chapter of the Santa Fe Trail Association and also of the River Bend Chapter of the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation. She also was the national membership chair for the Partnership for the National Trails System.

She loved OCTA and quickly made countless friends. Pat loved to laugh and found joy in most everything in life and always tried to see the best in everyone. She was a special lady and will be greatly missed.



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Members Respond to Annual Appeal

Results as of February 27, 2008

General Operating Fund, \$7,813
Education, \$683
Endowment, \$1,023
Preservation, \$3,663
Silver Anniversary, \$925
Publications, \$100

Total \$14,204

As we move toward our \$22,000 goal, we are truly thankful for all donations whether large or small. With this united effort, we will be able to continue to preserve and educate for the benefit of our emigrant trails. If you haven't yet sent your donation, there is still time to do so as our campaign concludes in May.

Those contributing so far:

Allan, Vernon & Clare
Bachhuber, Carol
Barker, Norman
Bate, William
Bennett, Richard
Bent, Cris
Berens, Todd
Best, Thomas
Birch, Thomas & Dee
Blair, Roger & Doyle, Susan
Boyes, Joseph
Briggs, Weston
Brown, Evelyn
Burke, Dorene & Marvin
Burkhart, Bob & Ellie
Burns, Timothy
Cahill, Helen
Carbiener, Gail & Muriel
Chamberlain, R. H.
Clark, Robert & Sheila
Colvin, Evelyn
Conrad, Mary
Costa, Nancy & Arthur
Coward, Robert
Craig, Eleanor
Cramer, Howard
Crowle, Clarice

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Crossroads Chapter

Utah War Program Presented

By Al Mulder

This year's activities got off to a good start with an excellent presentation by Lyndia Carter and John Eldredge at the January chapter meeting. Continuing with the theme of the Utah War Sesquicentennial, they made an excellent Power Point presentation of the Green River crossings in Wyoming and the trading posts located at the several major crossings. The next chapter meeting, April 17, will feature Bill MacKinnon who will continue the theme of the Military Expedition to Utah 1857-58. MacKinnon has a new book out on topic, *At Sword's Point: A Documentary History of the Utah War to 1858*, published by the Arthur H. Clark Company in the "Kingdom of the West Series."

The first field trip of the year will take place April 26-27—a joint venture with the Utah Lincoln Highway Association chapter. Plans include a visit to the Topaz Internment Site and historic highway sites in the Delta area. Another field trip is being planned for May led by Roy Tea who will guide the members to trail sites in eastern Nevada.

Work is progressing by the chapter and National Park Service to upgrade the interpretive panels at Donner Spring and Bidwell Pass. If you are interested in assisting in this work, give chapter President Oscar Olson a call. The fall meeting and barbecue is scheduled for Saturday, Sept. 13, at Benson Mill on the Hastings Cutoff

Trail near Grantsville. Mark your calendar now.

It has been a record-setting winter in Utah with deep snows and at times, blizzard-like conditions. Weather like this makes us mindful of the terrible conditions experienced by the troops of the U.S. Army's Expedition to Utah during their efforts in the winter of 1857-58 to move their units from their camps near the junction of Ham's Fork and Black's Fork to Camp Scott near Fort Bridger.

It took 15 days of extreme hardship and suffering by men and animals to move the troops, wagons, and animals a distance of 35 miles. The thermometer ranged from 10 degrees above zero to 16 degrees below zero. Reading the journals and letters of Captains Gove, Tracy, and Phelps, and the correspondence of Colonel Albert Sidney Johnston to U.S. Army Headquarters, makes me more appreciative of hot food and a warm bed on cold, cold nights. A good, quick read for OCTA members interested in the conditions endured by the Utah Expedition during the winter of 1857-58, is the little book, *Mormon Resistance, A Documentary Account of the Utah Expedition, 1857-1858* edited by LeRoy and Ann Hafen.

Three chapter members, Oscar Olson, Brent Reber, and Vern Gorzitze attended OCTA's Mid-Year Board Meeting. They encourage members of Crossroads and OCTA to attend the annual OCTA Convention in Nampa, Idaho in August.

New Books Arriving at the OCTA Store

www.octa-trails.org

Wyoming Chapter

The Grave of George B. Platt

By Randy Brown

The cemetery in Glenrock, WY, contains a grave located in a plot otherwise empty that must mystify everyone who sees it. On a rough, native stone is carved this inscription: "G. B. Plat (sic) of Canton Aged 52 YRS." Below that is the Masonic emblem of crossed square and compass. There is nothing else to indicate who Platt was or when he died.

The Platt grave did not originate in the cemetery, but was discovered in 1936 by two young boys playing near the bank of Deer Creek just outside Glenrock. The boys were sons of Ed Poirot who owned the nearby and now long vanished gas station located just east of where U. S. 20 crosses the creek bottom on its way into town.

The grave was eroding out of the bank, and it was clear that it had originally been covered over with rocks of various sizes, probably taken from the creek bed. Most importantly a small, but broken headstone was found at the head of the grave. The clearly legible inscription identified the grave's occupant as G. B. Plat (sic) of Canton, Ohio. A footstone was found as well with the initials "G. P." deeply engraved on it. No one knew who G. B. Plat was, but since the Oregon Trail passes directly by the site, it was assumed that Plat was one of the many emigrants

who never reached his destination. Inquiries sent to Canton, and to Canton's Masonic lodges, revealed no information about Plat.

Poirot tidied up the grave, but later

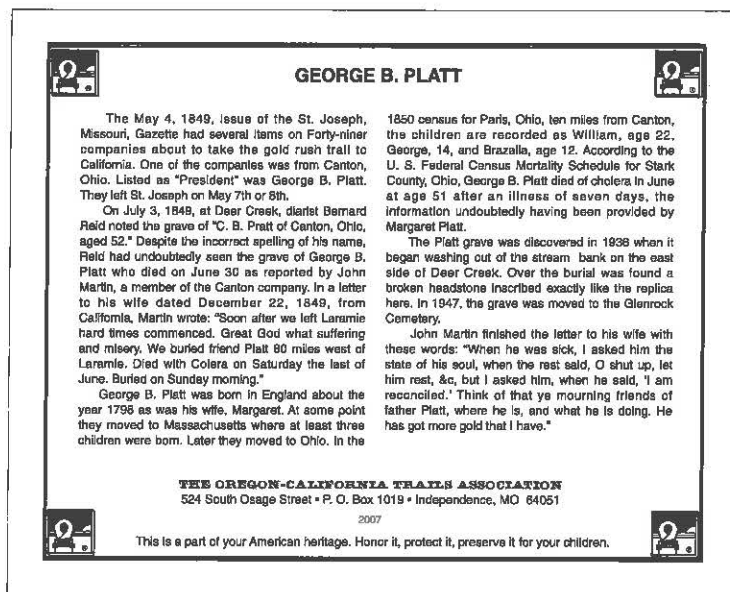
Pioneer Line, the Pioneer Line being the commercial enterprise of two partners who took paying customers over the trail to California.

The company reached Deer Creek on July 3, 1849, where Reid recorded: "Grave of C. B. Pratt of Canton, Ohio, aged 52." Despite the discrepancies in the inscription as recorded by Reid, this is obviously the grave discovered by the Poirot boys 87 years later. To be fair to Reid, however, it may be that the transcriber of the manuscript made the errors in deciphering his handwriting, and that Reid had correctly recorded the name as G. B. Platt, not C. B. Pratt. Reid, however,

did not venture a guess as to the date of Platt's burial, not even observing whether it was a recent burial or one from a previous year.

Many years ago I found some information about Platt when I was looking at microfilms of the *St. Joseph Gazette* at the Missouri State Historical Society in Columbia. Among the compilations of overland companies about to leave for California was one for a group from Canton, Ohio. At the top of the list of the company members was the name George B. Platt and added after his name was "President."

The same account later was published in Rasmussen's *California Wagon Train Lists* along



moved it to a more secure location when the bank continued to erode. The original headstone eventually crumbled to pieces, but not before Poirot was able to make the replica, which now stands over the grave in the Glenrock Cemetery. When the gas station was closed and torn down sometime in the late 1940s, the grave was excavated and moved to the cemetery, the rough, authentic looking secondary marker going with it.

The grave is mentioned just once in the many trail diaries that we now can access for research. As often happened, the inscription on the headstone was incorrectly recorded by the diarist, in this case Bernard Reid, whose journal was published as *Overland to California with the*

Continued on Page 20

CA-NV Chapter

Placer County Emigrant Road - Placer County Road to Auburn

By Tom Birch

Both the Placer County Emigrant Road (PCER), also called the "Placer County Road to Auburn," and the Henness Pass Road opened in 1852. The western end of the PCER started at the Forks House, now a site on the Foresthill Divide. At the time, Forks House had roads linking it to Yankee Jims, Iowa Hill, and Michigan Bluff. Depending on the source, this road starts in Auburn, Foresthill or Yankee Jims. The eastern end of the road is at Washoe Valley, about eight miles from Carson Valley.

The PCER was built at a cost of \$13,000 with an ending debt of \$7,000, funded by the people of Placer County. It followed the Foresthill ridge/divide, between the middle and north forks of the American River, from Forks House to Secret Spring House site passing through the site of Westville eight miles away. It was seven miles from Secret Springs to Robinson Flat and another 17 miles to the west summit of the Sierras. This "West Summit" is the actual summit of the Sierras, five miles west of Squaw Valley at the Truckee River. The road then followed the east bank of the Truckee River five miles to its mouth at Lake Bigler (present day Lake Tahoe). Next, it headed east 12 miles, across the north end of Lake Bigler and another three miles to the east summit of the Sierras. I'm guessing this is in the Mount Rose/Tahoe Meadows/Ophir Creek area. Another five miles of travel brought the road down into Washoe Valley.

The PCER was said to follow "Scott's Route," established as early as 1849 as a shortcut between Sacramento and Carson Valley via

Squaw Valley, which might have been the route taken by six riders from the Stevens-Murphy-Townsend Party.

The PCER was a free road and not properly maintained, and there were reports that some sections "soon became impassable to heavily laden wagons." A partial survey was made in August, 1856, and it found that the "road could be improved with less expense than any other route, will be shorter, and is the most central road extending from Carson Valley into the state." The survey also mentioned that the Carson Valley was "entirely occupied by Mormons that expressed interest in the road and were willing to improve that portion of the road lying within their territory."

In 1857, Congress appropriated money for the construction of two roads to cross the Sierras, and the Placer County citizens hoped that the PCER would be included in that grant. But, a meeting of the Placer County Road Committee, held at Yankee Jims on July 8, 1857, found that there was not enough support from the citizens of Placer County for the road. The Placer County Road Committee disbanded and returned the funds that had been advanced to it by friends supporting the road. Apparently, Eldorado and Nevada counties were better able to improve their routes: the Mormon Emigrant Road and the Henness Pass road.

Today, much of the road is hidden under newer roads like the Foresthill Road going to Robinson Flat and part of Soda Springs, a dirt road that connects Robinson Flat to Soda Springs. I'm guessing that present day Highway 89 covers the section from Squaw Valley to Lake Tahoe. Highway 28 covers the section

across the north end of Lake Tahoe and one of my maps shows an old trail down Ophir Creek to Washoe Valley. The Western States 100 mile endurance run and Teves Cup 100 mile equestrian ride use the portion of the PCER from Squaw Valley to Red Star Ridge.

I have walked a half-mile section of the PCER that cuts a corner close to Robinson Flat, away from the paved road, and found a few stones with rust stains from the metal wagon tires and a section with a slight swale. It also had several switchbacks climbing the grade and giving evidence to the early road improvement.

References:

The California Trail, George R. Stewart.

Roads and Trails in the Tahoe National Forest: A Contextual History, David S. Bird.

The Saga of Lake Tahoe, Edward B. Scott.

Thompson and West, Placer County.

New OCTA Product Coming Soon

Larry Fritz, writer and director of OCTA's two videos, "Saving A Legacy: The Oregon-California Trail" and "Across the Kansas Prairie: Riding On a Modern-Day Wagon Train," has provided his services to combine these two products into one DVD.

We will announce the availability of this educational tool soon.

Fund Drive

Continued from Page 16

Dale, Jo Anna	Iworsley, Art & Kathy	Mueller, Mary	Shepherd, Gerald & Sharon
Davis, Richard & Kathleen	Jefferies, Col. Chris	Mulder, Al	Shurtleff, Marley
Davis, Richard & Virginia	Johnson, Dean	Nash, Lee	Sicotte, Zeke & Nancy
Dold, Laurence	Johnson, Maurice	Nattkemper, Josephine	Six, Fred and Lilian
Eberhardt, Elmer	Jones, Robert & Hedy	Neiderheiser, Joe	Smith, Ariane
Egan, Raymond	Jones, Dr. Leon	Nelson, Dick & Ruby	Soga, Minoru
Elliott, Janet Highley	Kaszuk, Caroline	Nolan, William & Margie	Sorensen, Stanley
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Flasch, John	Kreutzer, Lee	Parks, M. Lethene	Sumberg, Fran
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Herring, James	March, Hugh & Carol	Roberts, Jeanette	Weller, Nelson
Hobson, Caroline	Marshall, Ross	Russell, Tom	Werner, Morris
Hoffman, Cheryl & Gilbert	McDannald, Vernon	Schoch, Raymond	Wiechert, Sandra K.
Holbrook, Connie	Meyer, Walter	Schoch, Raymond	Wilson, Gareth & Deann
Hovey, Robert	Miller, Jennifer	Schrems, Sue	Wolff, Dawn
Hughston, Betty	Miller, Tony	Schulte, David & Anne	Wood, Alexa
Iverson, Robert	Miller, Bonnie & Howard	Sensiba, La Verne	
	Mitts, Shirley	Serr, Gene	

New Members

Jan Alexander P.O. Box 67 Murphy, ID 83650	Janice Bowman Box 127 Veradale, WA 99037	Larry & Jean Cain 524 3rd St South PMB 161 Nampa, ID 83651	John Edmundson P.O. Box 146 215 N Gilmore St. Heppner, OR 97836
Gene & Karen Argast 1116 Fall River Rd. Idaho Falls, ID 83401	James Brandt 1135 Coach St Stockton, CA 95209	Bruce Carr 510 Castle Dr. #103 Bethel Park, PA 15102	Tracy Ferrell 357 N Elm St. Colville, WA 99114
Boston Productions (Corporate Member) Karen Lewko 100 Morse St Norwood, MA 02062	Julie Braun 2251 North Blvd Idaho Falls, ID 83415	Meg Davis 2187 Wildwood Ln. Emmett, ID 83617	Friends of Black Rock (Institutional Member) Matthew Ebert, Prg. Dir. P.O. Box 224 Gerlach, NV 89412
Richard Bostrom 3134 N Ash Pl. Spokane, WA 99205	Cheryl Burbach 10801 Mastin Overland Park, KS 66210	Dean Edens 1522 Dearborn Caldwell, ID 83605	

Continued on Page 20

The Grave of George B. Platt

Continued from Page 17

with another roster for the Canton company that had appeared in the May 1, 1849, issue of the *New York Daily Tribune*. In the *Tribune* George Platt is listed as "Mr. Platt," and several additional names are given as members of the company. The story adds that the company had left Steubenville, Ohio, about April 1, 1849, no doubt taking a steamship from there to St. Louis and then on to St. Joseph.

The company member

listed in the *New York Tribune* as "Mr. Martin" was blacksmith John L. Martin of Stark County, Ohio. Martin spent three years in California before he returned to his wife and family in Ohio. They later moved to Nebraska Territory where Martin became one of the founders of the town of Grand Island. He died in 1893.

Martin was an avid collector, and many years later his collection of

artifacts and papers was donated by his descendants to the Stuhr Museum in Grand Island. Among the papers is a letter he wrote to his brother and wife from one of the mining camps in California. It is dated December 22, 1849, from the "Gold mines, in mountains, Upper California" and gives the date and cause of Platt's death—June 30, of cholera.

This was three days before the grave was

noted by Bernard Reid. Cholera was confirmed the next year when Platt was included in the U. S. Federal Census Mortality Schedule for Paris, Stark County, Ohio. Platt is listed as having died of cholera in June at age 51 after an illness of seven days. Someone must have written Mrs. Platt with the information about his death from somewhere on the trail or from California.

New Members

Continued from Page 19

Herb Futter
494 Stanton Blvd
Ontario, OR 97914

Hollie Gilbert
2251 North Blvd.
Idaho Falls, ID 83415

Carol Guthrie
33855 Old Coyote Rd.
Huson, MT 59846

Sharon Hobart
837 Hemlock Trail
Saginaw, TX 76131

Fred & Robin Holabird
701 Gold Run Court
Reno, NV 89521

Alice & Don Kennelly
1343 El Curtola Blvd.
Lafayette, CA 94549

Christine Knox
950 Miles Rd.
Chesterfield, ID 83217

Sonia Martin
18967 Upper Pleasant Ridge
Rd.
Caldwell, ID 83607

James McGill Jr.
1881 Boise Ave.
Boise, ID 83706

Robert Michels
3 Via Los Arboles
Chico, CA 95928

Martha Morrise
4266 South 2325 W
Roy, UT 84067

William Neel
Copper Windmill Ranch
33263 Dillard Rd.
Eugene, OR 97405

Diane Norton
4068 S Federal Way #I-107
Boise, ID 83716

Monte Nystrom
132 Coast Range Ln.
Paradise, CA 95969

Clifford R. Powell
1009 Turtledove Dr.
Sparks, NV 89436

Cathleen M. Sato
2169 Smokey View Blvd.
Powell, OH 43065

Richard E. Schmidt
1716 Alpine Meadows Ln.
Condo# 705
Prescott, AZ 86303

John F. Schwede
15385 China Rapids Dr.
Red Bluff, CA 96080

David Shelton
16258 Two Wood Way
Indiantown, FL 34956

Linda Spencer
2502 Stone Hedge Dr.
Alexandria, VA 22306

Clyde L. Stephens
105 Evans
Green River, WY 82935

Nolan Sump
P.O. Box 162/708 Division
Downs, KS 67437

Michael Trueblood
2398 Glen Ellen Circle
Sacramento, CA 95822

Roger Tschanz Sr.
2129 W Platinum
W Jordan, UT 84084

Loyle V. Washam
1717 Sycamore Drive
Boise, ID 83703

Cindy Weaver & D. J. Yount
8006 SE Saxton-Easton Rd.
St. Joseph, MO 64507

Reuben A. Williams
25 S Hickory Pt.
Hull, GA 30646

Larry & Nancy Wilson
62116 Igo Ln
La Grande, OR 97850

**THE FRIENDS
OF THE
NATIONAL FRONTIER
TRAILS MUSEUM**

Invite You to a Fascinating Adventure.

OREGON TRAIL BUS TRIP



The Friends of the National Frontier Trails Museum plan to host a nine-day escorted bus tour in September, 2008 following three of the greatest emigration trails in American history. Departing from Independence, Missouri the "Queen City of the Trails", the tour will follow the Oregon, California and Mormon Trails to central Wyoming and back.

Your air-conditioned motorcoach "wagon" will take you to exciting stops where western history was made, and the characters of hundreds of thousands of Americans were forged through dangers, hardships, and perseverance. Visit historic sites, stunning landmarks, and beautiful prairies witnessed by thousands of those hardy pioneer emigrants, and recorded in their diaries.

For more detailed information contact
Lynda Black at the
National Frontier Trails Museum,
318 W. Pacific, Independence, Missouri, 64050
816-325-7575 or lblack@indepmo.org.

Spring 2008 News From the Plains

Operating expenses exceeded revenues by \$509 for the year ended 9-30-07. This was a substantial improvement compared to operating results for the two previous fiscal years. An increase in convention revenue and additional income from OCTA's silver anniversary contributed significantly to the improved operating results.

Contributions and grants that are restricted by the donor/grantor for a specific purpose/project continue to have a major impact on OCTA's efforts to fulfill its missions. Restricted revenues totaled \$286,625 for the year.

Investment income from the endowment funds for the year was \$126,818. Part of this income is restricted and part is designated by the governing board as shown in the statement of financial activities.

OCTA's financial position is stronger at 9-30-07 but an increase in cash working capital is still needed.

Turner Rivenbark, Treasurer

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION-SEPTEMBER 30, 2007

Assets

Cash and Cash Equivalents:

Operating Accounts		30,498
Restricted Accounts (Documentary Film \$185,580; Other \$22,252)		207,832

Investments (Endowment Funds):

Heritage	500,685	
Loomis	216,419	
Martin	<u>281,037</u>	998,141

Receivables 19,143

Prepaid Expenses 9,362

Inventory 44,918

Office Furniture and Equipment-Cost \$34,952 less
\$34,381 Accumulated Depreciation 571

Total Assets 1,310,465

Liabilities

Accounts Payable	28,529	
Payroll Taxes and Other Payables	5,386	
Deferred Revenue	<u>14,142</u>	
Total Liabilities		48,057

Net Assets

General Operations	70,577	
Designated by Governing Board	389,800	
Restricted-Donor/Grantor	<u>802,031</u>	
Total Net Assets		<u>1,262,408</u>

Total Liabilities and Net Assets 1,310,465

OREGON-CALIFORNIA TRAILS ASSOCIATION
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED SEPTEMBER 30, 2007

	General Operations	Restricted By Donor/ Grantor	Designated By Governing Board	Total
Revenue:				
Membership Dues	82,035	3,000		85,035
NPS Grants		108,718		108,718
Convention Revenue (net of expense)	34,731			34,731
Contributions	21,322	110,194		131,516
Silver Anniversary Income	16,217			16,217
Book and Mdse Sales (net of costs)	17,992			17,992
Investment Income-Endowment Funds		63,001	63,817	126,818
Other Income	12,817	1,712		14,529
Total Revenues	185,114	286,625	63,817	535,556
Expenses:				
Board and Officers	7,382			7,382
Committees	25,626			25,626
Assoc. Manager-Salary and Expenses	1,201	68,797		69,998
Headquarters and Administration	84,569	128		84,697
Preservation	5,676			5,676
Publications	53,990			53,990
CCSP Projects	(912)	39,921		39,009
Documentary Film		16,132		16,132
Product Promotion and Expenses	8,091			8,091
Total Expenses	185,623	124,978	-	310,601
Revenues Over (Under) Expenses	(509)	161,647	63,817	224,955

2008 Events: Just a Taste!

May 24-26 Black Rock Rendezvous

Memorial Day Weekend: Campout, live music, user group demonstrations including: rock hounding, site stewardship, Lassen/Applegate Trail, rocket launches.

July 26-27 Emigrant Experience Tour I

Rye Patch Reservoir to Soldier Meadows.
Join host Chuck Dodd and Friends along the historic emigrant trail for this one-of-a-kind 4WD camping trip. Space is limited. 775.557.2900.

August 2-3 Emigrant Experience Tour II

Soldier Meadows to Goose Lake.
Join host Chuck Dodd and Friends along the historic emigrant trail for this one-of-a-kind 4WD camping trip. Space is limited. 775.557.2900.

The Friends of Black Rock/High Rock invites you to join them in the preservation, restoration and education of the Black Rock Desert/High Rock Canyon - Emigrant Trails National Conservation Area.



Bringing Life to the Emigrant Experience

“Footsteps to the West”

“River Crossing”

“Stagecoach Ride”

*National Historic Trails Interpretive Center
Casper, Wyoming*

“In Pursuit of a Dream”

Oregon-California Trails Association



Oregon-California Trails Association

P.O. Box 1019

Independence, MO 64051-0519

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What's Happening...

August 5-9, 2008
26th Annual Convention
Nampa, Idaho

Jan 16-18, 2009
Yuma Trails Symposium