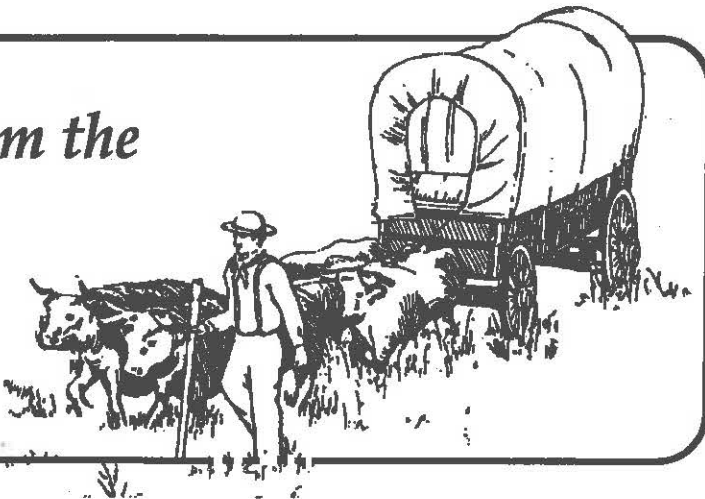


# NEWS *from the* PLAINS



Volume IX, No. 3

NEWSLETTER OF THE OREGON-CALIFORNIA TRAILS ASSOCIATION

July 1995

## NEBRASKA BECKONS ON THE ROAD TO THE GRAND ISLAND CONVENTION

by Betty Scheinost

Beautiful prairies, high plains, buttes, canyons, sandhills, Missouri River bluffs and fertile farmland—any of these words describe a section of Nebraska. The variety is endless and the people of Nebraska are just as varied, with many ethnic backgrounds. Urban areas and small towns offer something for everyone. Ranchers, farmers, business tycoons and professionals provide an interesting population mix. The arts, music, education and culture are all available in Nebraska. Museums such as Joslyn in Omaha, Sheldon Gallery in Lincoln, MONA in Kearney and the new Interpretive Center at Chimney Rock in western Nebraska display the interests and heritage of our state.

To truly enjoy and experience Nebraska, travel the byways. Choose an area that holds particular interest for you and leave the I-80 corridor. If you remain on the Interstate it is impossible to experience the true Nebraska atmosphere. Each community in Nebraska encourages you to spend time in their midst and get acquainted. As you enjoy a meal or cup of coffee in any cafe across Nebraska you will find citizens that are eager to provide information about their community.

The state university has campuses in Lincoln, Omaha and Kearney, and state colleges in Wayne, Hastings, Chadron, Blair, Crete and Peru—all excellent sources of education in our state. County and State Historical Societies offer resources pertaining to their locale. The medical community in Omaha at the campuses of Creighton and U.N.M.C. provides research and study facilities of excellent quality.

Ties to the land are very strong in Nebraska. Homesteads continue to remain in some families for over 100 years. Industry and

See GRAND ISLAND CONVENTION, page 6.



### OCTA Events



Out West, it's been a cold, soggy spring, so maybe OCTA members will enjoy a cool summer and plenty of grass on the trails. Here are some of the great events scheduled for this summer.

- July 22 Pioneer Heritage Festival, Oregon Trail Interpretive Center, Baker City, OR.
- July 20-22 The CA/NV Chapter's Carson Pass hike and trail maintenance outing. Contact Frank Tortorich, (209) 223-3315.
- July 22 The SW Chapter's annual planning meeting in Portal, AZ.
- July 29-30 The Wyoming Chapter's South Pass to Green River Field Trip. Contact Mike Brown, (307) 382-5350.
- Aug. 8-12 Annual National Convention, Grand Island, NE.
- Aug. 13 Alcove Spring dedication. See page 16 for details.
- August 26 The Wyoming Chapter's Backcountry Byway trek and a wade in Devil's Gate. Meet at the west side McDonalds in Casper at 8:30 A.M.

## THE EDITOR'S CORNER

WHILE YOUR DEDICATED newsletter editor likes to think he's brim full of good ideas, he's not above stealing a timely and brilliant innovation from others involved in OCTA publications. Utah *Crossroads'* new editor, Kristin Johnson, has definitely swept away all the cobwebs that were starting to accumulate in that venerable publication and has brought new life to the chapter's newsletter. One of Johnson's innovations is a feature called "150 Years Ago," which showcases interesting items this diligent researcher has retrieved from old newspaper files. Given the timeliness of such a feature—after all, we're midway through the sesquicentennial decade of America's overland trails—I've decided to launch a similar feature in *News from the Plains*. Our initial offering is an item reprinted in the *Sangamo Journal* in 1845 announcing the beginning of John C. Frémont's Third Expedition, which not only explored significant parts of the Great Basin, but was dramatically (some say comically) involved in the conquest of California.

A number of great articles contribute to our summer issue. Betty Scheinost describes many Nebraska attractions to be enjoyed by those going to the OCTA convention in Grand Island. Treasurer Jim Budde reports on the success of OCTA's Revenue Enhancement Program and expresses thanks to those generous members who contributed to the drive. Part two of Robby Gunstream's report on his pack-train adventure follows the Bear River from Wyoming to Idaho's City of Rocks, exploring the Hudspeth Cutoff. We'll all eagerly await the concluding chapter in this modern trail Odyssey when Robby and friends set out for Sacramento this summer and fall on the California Trail. As usual, ace reporter Lyndia Carter contributes several items about *Crossroads* chapter activities and her always-fun "Reading Corner." A report from the National Park Service outlines their plans to implement recent congressional trail legislation.

KC Publications sent me a copy of Stan and Violet Kimball's *Mormon Trail: Voyage of Discovery*. This beautifully presented book features Gary Ladd's impressive photographs. I've been digging deep into the Mormon emigration to edit Thomas Bullock's 1847 and 1848 trail journals, but even this jaded researcher was able to learn a few new facts from the Kimballs' excellent narration.

I think we've got a good issue in our summer number, but there has been a distressing fall-off in submissions to *News from the Plains*. Careful readers will note a predominance of Utah material, which reflects not so much the prejudices of the editor as the focus of the submissions. OCTA's smallest chapters regularly contribute articles and chapter reports, but the lack of response from our largest chapters makes me wonder if members on the west coast are receiving copies of the newsletter. Remember, this is your newsletter—and it relies on OCTA's members for contributions. So if your chapter is doing anything that's fun or interesting, let me know about it.

On-line computer users, note my new E-mail address. 

## WOOPS

Several editorial foul-ups managed to sneak by our careful proof reading. Last April's issue was number 2, not number 21 as indicated on our masthead. Those who worried they missed numbers 2 through 20 can now relax.

My friend Tolly Woolsey had some fun with your editor on this year's Utah Westerners field trip. Doc assured me he couldn't find the word "subtler"—used in Jay Mennenga's Fort Kearny article—in any dictionary. It took me a while to catch this subtle hint, but I finally figured out that the correct spelling of a military post's storekeeper was "sutler"—and if Tolly's hint had been any subtler I wouldn't have ever got it.

Ross Marshall noted that in transcribing his Trails Head chapter report I somehow managed to transform "John Leamon and I...were guiding Jere Krakow...plus four members of his team over the trail" into "Jere Krakow...and four members of his team guided us over the trail." How, Ross wants to know, did the sense of this sentence get completely reversed? Although the precise mechanics escape me, I want to assure Ross it was easy.

You can reduce the chance that the editor will alter your meaning *and* increase chances of publication by sending material on computer disk in Macintosh or DOS format. If possible, save the files in both text and RTF formats. Enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope to have material returned and a postcard for notification of publication decisions.

## NEWS FROM THE PLAINS

Editor	Will Bagley
Contributing Editors	Jeanne Miller Lyndia Carter

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1451 Kensington Avenue  
Salt Lake City, UT 84105-2647  
(801) 487-3727

FAX: (801) 463-1976  
E-Mail: [wlbagley@xmission.com](mailto:wlbagley@xmission.com)

Next Deadline for *News from the Plains* is September 1, 1995

## SEARCH TEAM NAMED FOR OVERLAND JOURNAL EDITOR

President Dave Bigler has named a committee to find a replacement for Lois Daniel, who has decided not to renew her contract as *Overland Journal* editor this fall. Search committee members are Don Buck, former Board member and past chairman, Publications Committee, California; Larry Jones, current Board member, Idaho; Barbara Magerl, former Board member, Kansas; and Jeanne Watson, current Board member, New Jersey.

A notice announcing the formation of the search committee and soliciting candidates for the editor position was sent to all OCTA officers, directors, chapter presidents and committee chairs. Several promising candidates have applied for the position. The panel under Publications Chairman Peter DeLafosse is evaluating the applicants and will recommend a new editor to the Board of Directors at its annual meeting on August 8 in Grand Island.

## WYOMING TEACHER WINS AWARD TO STUDY INDEPENDENCE ROCK

East Junior High science teacher Brian Aivazian of Casper, Wyoming, recently got \$10,000 to purchase computers from a Toyota and the National Science Teachers Association program that rewards innovative environmental and physical science classroom projects.

Aivazian says his earth science classes next year will use the computers and powerful image enhancement software to study close-up photos of Independence Rock. Their goal will be to discover previously unreadable graffiti left by pioneers on the Oregon Trail 150 years ago.

Independence Rock was covered with the signatures and dates of travelers, either scratched into the rock's surface or painted on with pitch. Most of the marks have worn away over time.

Photos of the entire rock's surface will be supplied by the Bureau of Land Management, Aivazian said. He is optimistic the technology will enable students to decipher many names of pioneers not known before.

The BLM will supply aerial pictures of the Oregon Trail. Students can use image-enhancing software to examine those photos and try to trace exactly where the trail was in those areas where wagon wheel ruts have faded.

## NEWS FROM HEADQUARTERS

Jeanne Miller

OCTA Executive Director

For several years OCTA has had members in foreign countries. Presently, we have nineteen—three in Japan, six in Germany, three in Switzerland, one in England, five in Canada and one in France.

Out of the blue we have had a number of letters from Australia asking about our organization and requesting maps and other travel information. We have been trying to learn where the Australians heard about OCTA. Some letters said they planned to come to the USA this year and others in another year. On May 30, we received a letter from the Department of Commerce's U.S. Travel and Tourism Administration enclosing a copy of the article written by Elisabeth King, which appeared in the *Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Age*. We were told the circulation was 751,459, distributed on April 22, 1995, and the value for OCTA was US \$130,670.

We are, of course, delighted to have this wonderful introduction to the Australian people (some of their ancestors were emigrants too) and hope they'll want to join us.

We are looking forward to being in the book room in Grand Island. Please stop and see us and look over the new titles we have added to our stock.

*An Authentic Wagon Train Journal of 1853* is again in print. It is the diary of William Richard Brown who traveled to California during the gold rush. Paperback, Spiral. Price is now \$8.75

*Captive of the Cheyenne*. By Russ Czaplewski.

Paperback. \$14.95

*Fearful Crossing*. By Harold Curran.

Paperback. \$14.95

*Great Fur Trade Road*. By Fred Gowans.

Paperback. \$49.95

*Jeffrey's Cutoff*. (Goodale). By Fred P. Dykes.

Paperback. \$6.95

*Mormon Trail, The Story Behind the Scenery*. By S. & V. Kimball. One of the KC Publishers offerings.

Paperback. \$6.95

*Oregon Trail Interpretive Center*. A part of the KC Publishers list.

Paperback. \$6.95

*Overland Stage*. By the late John Townley.

Hardback. \$29.95

*Pioneer Children on the Journey West*. By Emmy E. Werner.

Hardback \$21.95

*The Platte River, an Atlas of the Big Bend Region*. Published by University of Nebraska at Kearney.

Paperback. \$20.00

*Traveler's Guide to the Pony Express*. By Joe Benson.

Paperback. \$11.95

Add postage and handling to book prices: \$3 for the first book; \$1 each additional book. 10% off book prices for OCTA members.

All books are available from OCTA, P.O. Box 1019,  
Independence, MO 64051.

## REVENUE ENHANCEMENT PLAN—FINAL REPORT

As of May 25, 1995, OCTA has received a total of \$9,535 from the Second Annual Fund Drive (1994-95). The results follow:

Endowment Fund		\$4355
Annual Fund		2396
Designated Funds:		
Preservation	395	
Archaeology	86	
Trail Marking, G & S	727	
Trail Mapping	136	
COED	225	
Education	120	
Special Publications	<u>1095</u>	
	2784	<u>2784</u>
Total:		\$9535

A total of 160 members generously contributed to this year's Revenue Enhancement Plan (REP). The REP provides OCTA members with the opportunity to do a little something extra to preserve our nation's emigrant trail heritage. The Endowment Fund continues to grow and with its growth OCTA's future financial stability is enhanced. The Annual Fund helps us pay for those special needs that always seem to surprise us at the most unexpected times (such as membership brochures). The Designated Funds are used to further the specific purpose for which the donor intended. For example, the \$1,095 that was added to the Special Publications Fund this year will be added to last year's total (\$6,355) and a good portion of this will be used in the publication of the Howell Diary this summer.

Those who have made contributions are listed below. We are very pleased with this extra effort by those members of OCTA who chose to make a difference.—*Jim Budde, Treasurer*

Byron C. Shutz	Doug & Eloise Crary	Merrill J. Mattes
Ben F. Weir	Greg Childs	Mary Haake
John A. Kuzara	Keith Palmquist	Allen Hjelmfelt
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 Richard Hoopes  
 Willard R. Garred  
 Dr. Jay A. Aldous  
 Jeff & Sally Moore  
 Jeanette Roberts  
 Mark Carson  
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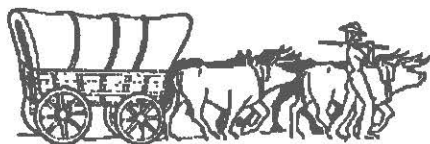
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 Harriet & Charles Lewis  
 Marjorie B. Kernick  
 Antoine Primeaux

## CROSSROADS CROSSES NEVADA'S HASTINGS CUTOFF

AT LAST THE RAIN STOPPED long enough for the dirt roads to dry so Utah Crossroads members could join with Nevada friends for a tour of the Hastings Cutoff from Big Springs to the Ruby Mountains. Everyone was excited to be on the trail again after a long winter and a soggy spring. On May 20, fifty-five people met at Oasis, Nevada, and had a breakfast snack while getting organized. We met our guides, Paul Sawyer and Bob Pearce from Elko, and Roy Tea passed out trail booklets and described the trail and those who used it. Roy again prepared an excellent text of journal excerpts and Kent Malan assembled a fine set of maps, making the booklet very useful. The group divided into two smaller parties, one led by Paul Sawyer and the other by Bob Pearce. These two men proved to be excellent guides and kept an extremely informative commentary going. Roy Tea with Paul's group and Robert and Lyndia Carter with Bob read quotes from the diaries and journals as we bounced over the back roads.

From Oasis we traveled south to Big Spring (Johnson Ranch) near which the Donner party camped after going through Silver Zone Pass. After a short stop, we continued to Flowery Lake, where we were chagrined to find very few flowers but lots of sage brush—and no water. Up over Jasper Pass in the Pequop Mountains we went easily in four-wheel drive vehicles, but it would have been very difficult for wagons. We crossed Independence Valley to Mound Springs where we had lunch, relaxed and explored the springs which were indeed mounded up. It was fun to walk on the mounds and feel the ground move under foot.

Loading up again we followed the Hastings trail through a pass in the Spruce Mountains. It was beautiful country. We descended the other side into Clover Valley. Here the desert looked dry and foreboding. We headed toward Warm Springs, but did not go to the springs but turned south around the Humboldt Mountains, following the trail closely. The tour group diverted from the trail to stay on the road while the trail went southwest to Sulphur Hot Springs. As we traveled along the base of the Ruby Mountains, we were pleasantly surprised at the verdant beauty of the valley. It was a well-watered area for a desert state and it was the perfect time of year to see it. Of course, the emigrants saw it at the end of summer and it would appear quite different to them.



### GRAND ISLAND CONVENTION (from page 1)

technology are found here, especially if it is related to agriculture or ranching.

Settlement began in Nebraska territory in the early 1850s even though the area was labeled the Great American Desert after Stephen Long's 1820 expedition. Indians occupied the land for centuries before travel and settlement changed their existence forever. The earlier European population was involved in trading and exploration. The migratory pathway along the Great Platte River Road was the highway to the west—a natural route with water and grazing available. The land east of the 98th meridian was settled first and ranching developed to the west, since its climate and geography were not as conducive to agriculture.

The Kansas-Nebraska Act in 1854 preceded settlement and on March 1, 1867 Nebraska was declared a state. During this period settlers, Indians and Army posts shared the land, often amidst great conflicts. The Union Pacific Railroad was built through Nebraska by 1869 and increased settlement by offering easier travel and opening greater markets.

The Platte River Road closely follows Interstate 80 and Highway 30. Some special points of interest to trail fans along this route include Mormon Winter Quarters in Omaha, Stuhr Museum of the Prairie Pioneer in Grand Island, Fort Kearny State Historical Park, Midway Station near Gothenburg (contact Larry Gill for information), Fort McPherson National Cemetery, Buffalo Bill's Scouts Rest Ranch in North Platte and the O'Fallon Bluff rest area just west of North Platte. Trail ruts may be seen on the Koch ranch near the O'Fallon Bluff rest area. (Contact Wayne Koch for information.)

If you arrive in western Nebraska on Highway 26 you will be on the North Platte river. Highlights in this area are Scotts Bluff National Monument and the Rebecca Winters grave in Scotts Bluff, Robidoux Pass and Mitchell Pass, Chimney Rock and its new Interpretive Center, Courthouse Rock and Jail Rock, Bridgeport (home of the late historian Paul C. Henderson), Ash Hollow, Windlass Hill and Lake McConaughy (not trail related) and California Hill.

If you travel to Nebraska from the south and plan to view trail sites, you will begin at Rock Creek Station near Fairbury and travel along the Little Blue River to near Hastings.

Northwestern Nebraska is steeped in history and scenery. This is the Pine Ridge country very near the Black Hills of South Dakota. Highlights in this area are Fort Robinson near Crawford and the Museum of the

Fur Trade in Chadron. Much of author Mari Sandoz' memorabilia is located in Chadron and Gordon, Nebraska. The Niobrara River is located here and canoeing is very popular with many outfitters located in Valentine. The Fort Niobrara National Wildlife Refuge offers interesting viewing of buffalo, long horn cattle and elk near Valentine. Further to the east along the Niobrara River as it empties into the Missouri is Niobrara State Park.

Continue down the Missouri River to get the feel of Lewis and Clark territory. Gavins Point Dam and Lewis & Clark Lake are here, as well as Ponca State Park and Fort Atkinson State Historical Park near Fort Calhoun. On to Omaha, where you can see the SAC Museum and Boys Town, Nebraska City (originally Fort Kearny) and go south to Indian Cave State Park.

Two beautiful state parks—Mahoney Park and Platte River State Park—are just off I-80 between Omaha and Lincoln. Both have lodging and food available. Take time to see our state capitol building in Lincoln—it's an architectural masterpiece.

Agate Fossil Beds National Monument is in northwest Nebraska, Carhenge is near Alliance, Toadstool Park is close to Crawford, Nebraska, a National Forest is near Halsey, Fort Hartsuff is near Burwell, Arthur Bowring Sandhills Ranch State Historical Park is near Merriman, Massacre Canyon is near Trenton, Harold Warp Pioneer Village is in Minden, Fort Sidney Post and Cabelos are at Sidney, an IMAX theater is in Hastings, Homestead National Monument is near Beatrice, while the John G. Neihardt Center is at Bancroft and the Willa Cather homeland memorial is in and near Red Cloud. There's something for everyone to enjoy. The Missouri, Republican, Dismal, Loup (with middle, south and north forks), Niobrara, Big Elkhorn and Little Blue, Big and Little Nemaha and the Platte north and south are the primary rivers.

The sandhills deserve special time and attention since this land is unique to Nebraska. Long stretches of highway with beautiful grazing lands and small lakes and nothing else provide a very different and enjoyable travel experience.

We want you to enjoy Midwestern hospitality. We also want you to be relaxed in our August environment, so be prepared for extremes in temperature and humidity. Straw hats, comfortable shoes or boots and insect repellent are required to make your Nebraska visit an adventure to remember! ■

## FOLLOWING BELLWETHERS II

*Herding Elephants with Sublette and Hudspeth during the Summer of 1994*

BY ROBBY GUNSTREAM

**R**OBBY GUNSTREAM BROUGHT READERS of *News from the Plains* over the Sublette Cutoff to Bear River in our April 1995 issue. We're pleased to continue the adventures of Pat and Chuck Thompson and Oskie and Richard Seiler on the California Trail during the summer of 1994.—*The Editor.*

### BEAR VALLEY

*July 18: Love never dwelt in a much more charming valley.<sup>1</sup>*

The Bear will do that to you. After the ordeal of deserts and mountains on the Sublette, the emigrants and their animals found rest, recuperation, food in abundance and easier travel in the Bear Valley. Today, the valley remains a beautiful and most friendly place, full of wonderful people, good food and resources for people and animals. For us, it presented a wonderful five days of relaxed travel.

For the emigrants, the major problem in Bear Valley was the Big Hill between today's Cokeville and Montpelier. Now, however, the major problem for trekkers is the traffic on Highway 30, a very busy, usually two-lane highway full of automobiles and very large trucks all with horns in full operating condition. This summer we were able to avoid highways for all but 19 miles of the

entire trip, but 15 of them were along Highway 30. Fortunately, it is possible to avoid the difficulty of the Big Hill by using a route through the tiny hamlet of Pegram (see Franzwa, *Maps of the Oregon Trail*, 175) coupled with a bit of negotiation for travel across private land, a variation walkers should consider. Other than this, by using a route through Nounan, the walk from Cokeville to Soda Springs is calm and pleasant while the terrain is agreeable and the views magnificent. The Bear is a restorative, and at its head is, to read the emigrant diaries, one of the gems of the trail.

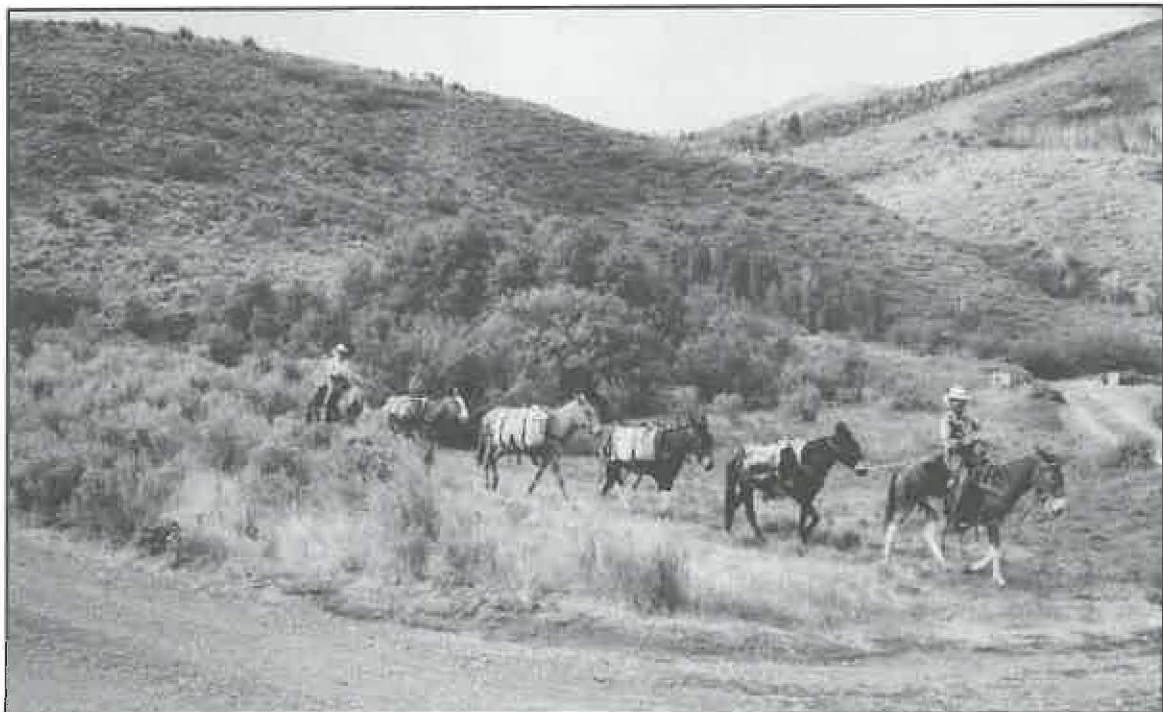
*Much of the forms and seriousness of this world is merely following bellwethers.*

*John Banks, July 8, 1849*

*July 24: As soon as I waked this morning I went to a beer spring and could scarcely realize where I was.*

*My mind was filled with the most solemn emotions; from nature my thoughts went up to the Creator of all things. View this district in every light, it is wonderful. The earth rings with a hollow sound and water is gushing out on all sides. The Steamboat Springs is sublimely grand.... This day closed with wonders.*

I regret that I was not here to enjoy the area when Banks saw it. The earth may still ring with a hollow sound, but the deafening traffic on Highway 30 and the railroad line make it impossible to hear. The area certainly retains its charm and beauty, but for walkers and ani-



Leaving Sublette Campground on the Hudspeth Cutoff.

—Robby Gunstream Photo.

mals forced onto Highway 30, it is tough to ignore the noise long enough to appreciate the surroundings. I have been told that there was once a route to the south of Alexander Reservoir but that the bridge is now under water. Some means of travel through Soda Springs off Highway 30 would certainly be welcome to help understand what Banks was writing about.

In Soda Springs we got into our only serious rain of the entire trip while camped north of the highway and west of town. About 9:00 P.M. on August 1 it began raining hard and did not let up for several hours. I learned quickly that my dear old tent, veteran of at least one-too-many trips, wasn't as waterproof as it once was. Nearby, the Seilers slept the sleep of the just, but I shivered, shook and squirmed in very damp silence hoping the day would come quickly (it didn't) and warm (it did). Morning came and I was ready to flee Soda Springs and do battle with Hudspeth and Myers. Tipping our hat to Monsieur Franzwa, we said goodbye to *Maps of...* and *Revisited* and headed west.

### THE HUDSPETH CUTOFF

The Hudspeth Cutoff leaves the main trail about four miles west of Soda Springs, heads due west across Gem Valley, climbs Fish Creek Ridge and works its way west through southeastern Idaho via an astounding maze of valleys and ridges. Looking north from the

top of Fish Creek Divide gives an excellent view of the main trail as it stretches away northwesterly up Gem Valley and toward Fort Hall. From Fish Creek Divide the emigrants must have had serious misgivings as they took in the view west to the Portneuf Range. It is a marvel that Hudspeth and Myers devised a route through this labyrinth of mountains, canyons and valleys.

Our crossing of Hudspeth's Cutoff was accomplished in seven days' travel: (1) Gem Valley to Fish Creek, (2) over the Portneuf Range to Lava Hot Springs, (3) across Marsh Valley to Hawkins Reservoir, (4) down Dairy Creek to Daniels Reservoir, (5) over Pleasant View Hills, down Arbon Valley and over the Deep Creek Mountains to Twin Springs, (6) to Sublette Campground (my favorite day of the trip) via a meandering too complex to describe here,<sup>2</sup> and (7) west to the Raft River and the main California Trail. The Hudspeth is comfortably traveled today due to these good camp sites.

Like the Sublette Cutoff, travel on the Hudspeth presents a variety of challenges. Though less formidable than Commissary or Dempsey ridges, several serious grades are present. In particular, the route from Daniels Reservoir to the Raft River Valley is perilous, alternating between hot valleys and some of the most sustained mountain travel of the entire emigrant trail. The mountain ridges remain much as they were during the emigration, while the valleys have seen extensive cultivation. What must have been a veritable sea of sagebrush is now broken by farms. Still, the area is charming. (Here are two trail secrets: first, the sunset from Daniels Reservoir looking into the mountainous cirque to the north is worth the trip from wherever you are



*Left: "Raise your eyes and view the track, see now it winds, sometimes almost rearing up, then falling until it gains the summit of yonder mountain. This is our road." The author, who seems unable any longer to stand up straight, in front of the Sublette Cutoff as it winds toward Slate Creek Ridge. Right: The brains of the outfit water at Hawkins Reservoir, Hudspeth Cutoff.*

—Robby Gunstream Photos.



right now; and second, is how good the water tastes at Twin Springs. But don't tell anyone.)

## THE RAFT RIVER RESOLUTION

*July 31: We feel puzzled to know our locality. We are here but do not know where here is.*

We caught up with the Raft River section of the California Trail in Malta, Idaho, on August 9, and understood the weariness reflected in John Banks' entry for July 31. We decided to end the trip for the summer at City of Rocks, certainly the most unique place on any western American trail and one that rewards the visitor many times over. We stopped short of our goal, but were satisfied with the success of the previous weeks. When the Elephant's call is heeded, there is little argument available to dissuade trail companions that the next destination shouldn't be home, and that instanter. The City, another of the great crossroads of the trail, served as a fine destination for this summer and will be our starting place next year.

## ONE PERSPECTIVE ON THE CUTOFFS

*July 31: It is very difficult to know how much we gained by the cutoff; some say seventy-five or eighty, others twenty or even less, our road however being better.*

Well, alas, I have news for John Banks. As with the Sublette, the trade he made of a relatively flat and easily traveled road for the perplexities of Hudspeth's Cutoff would have broken his heart had he been able to compare the two routes. I will admit that I, too, had misgivings about the main trail to Fort Hall: the Cutoff looks so promising and so logical. Surely the head of the Humboldt River is just a short southwesterly jaunt from Soda Springs! How could it not be! It is another example of the "geography of necessity," as Bernard DeVoto so aptly put it. For the emigrants, however, the dry, mountainous ordeal of the Hudspeth route was an unnecessary addition to an already long adventure.

Upon reflection, I have deep misgivings about the routes devised by our dear old friends Sublette and Greenwood, Hudspeth and Myers. Trail aficionados have debated for years the wisdom of trading the relatively flat, straight-forward main trail for the savings of miles via cutoffs. The debate continues and the jury remains out. For me, I marvel that neither Greenwood nor Sublette, Hudspeth nor Myers were not shot by their own followers. The arduous travel imposed by these cutoffs could not begin to repay the emigrant for the miles saved. After completing the Sweetwater Valley/South Pass section of trail, the emigrant could have settled into a steady march through desert terrain. By staying on the main trail northwesterly from Soda Springs, the emigrants could have traveled all the way to the City of Rocks via terrain much like the Bear Valley. Those that choose the Sublette and Hudspeth Cutoffs had wild rides, indeed.

I realize that there were many compelling reasons to use these alternate routes and that by spreading out the

emigrants made better use of the finite resources of the land. I suggest, however, that the increased difficulty of travel across more demanding terrain offset any possible advantage.

We were the beneficiaries of the kindnesses of many people this past summer. It would be unthinkable, however, not to thank Bob and Karen Rennells who generously shared their time, resources and knowledge of the Sublette and without whom a successful crossing of the cutoff would not have been possible; Ors and Ellen Bischoff of Montpelier, Idaho, whose kindness and encouragement to us while in the Bear Valley were greatly appreciated; Arthur and Helen Kress, whose permission to cross a mile of their private land made travel along the Hudspeth possible and whose vast knowledge of wheat farming provided an hour of fascinating diversion; to Glenn and Ada Parke of Malta, Idaho, the politest of people, whose concealed amusement concerning three people and six mules who had been camping for nearly a month is a testament to the enduring civility of American ranchers; and, finally, to Mike Bateman who marked and annotated our USGS quads of the Hudspeth route.

Our plans are to complete the trail next summer. We hope to leave City of Rocks the latter part of August and to be in Sacramento in early October. Though they present many challenges, these trails are a joy. Our hope is that we are simply breaking trail, "Burnin' daylight!" as Rick Seiler would say, and that many others will follow.

## NOTES

1. Quotes in italics are from the diary of John Banks in Howard L. Scamehorn, ed., *The Buckeye Rovers in the Gold Rush* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1965).
2. For more about the route, see Randy Brown, "Attack on the Hudspeth Cutoff," *Overland Journal* 12 (Spring 1994). The article contains an excellent description of the Hudspeth between Twin Springs and Sublette Reservoir.

## THE ADVENTURE CONTINUES...

*This summer marks the occasion of a California Trail trek from Malta, Idaho, to Sacramento, California, via City of Rocks, Granite Pass, Thousand Springs Valley, the Humboldt River and Carson Pass. The cast of terminally unwary travelers includes Robby Gunstream, Harlan Wadley and Pat and Chuck Thompson. The group plans to leave Malta the last weekend in August and hopes to be in Sacramento sometime around the first of October. Along to keep everything in order will be Brewster, another in a long line of great California Trail pack mules.*

*Those that wish to correspond with the group are welcome to do so. All words of encouragement will be gratefully received and acknowledged. Write to any of the party care of General Delivery, Carson City, NV 89701, in time for delivery by September 20.*

CROSSROADS ON THE CUTOFF, from page 5.

Rather than follow the Donner trail around the south end of the Ruby Mountains, we turned north after visiting the sulphur spring and followed N 229 along the Ruby Mountains to Secret Pass, used by the Talbot party of Frémont's Third Expedition, Clyman and Hastings going east and Edwin Bryant's pack mule group. The scenery was beautiful through the pass and canyon, but the terrain would have been impossible for wagons, so it was easy to see why it was used only as a pack trail.

After descending the Ruby Mountains, the groups paid a short visit to the site of Fort Halleck (1867). We then drove through green well-watered meadows and scattered ranches as we traveled through the valley northwest toward Elko. The little town of Lamoille was charming.

There were signs of modern progress as we neared the Spring Creek development and Elko on the Humboldt River. Those headed back home that night separated from the group, while those staying for the second day found their motels, the casinos, supper and bed.

Early next morning we again gathered around Bob and Paul, but this time we got to remain in one group. We drove west to where the South Fork enters the Humboldt River; this is where the Donner party met the California Trail. The Nevada OCTA folk will build a kiosk near the Interstate to honor the Donners and others who followed the California Trail. Paul Sawyer was our leader of the day and provided excellent commentary. During this stop he pointed out where Lienhard met the Indians, where the Donners came down South Fork Canyon, where the Humboldt goes through Carlin Canyon and the Greenhorn Cutoff over the hills, another cutoff mistake. We turned east, passed Elko again and took the Osino exit to see the ruts that go up the hill through the heavy sand. Down the freeway again we journeyed to the Ryndon Devil's Gate exit to see more ruts. Paul pointed out the North Fork of the Humboldt and showed us where the trail went up and down the hills. We went to the River Ranch exit and a few of the more adventurous members of the group followed Bob Pearce for a walk along the trail, while the others backtracked in their vehicles. The walking group and their drivers met up and after a drink break, the expedition broke up and headed their various ways home.

Crossroads greatly appreciates Paul and Bob and the other Nevada people for two wonderful days. Nevada is a great place to see the trail! —Lyndia Carter

## 150 YEARS AGO

From the *Western (Mo.) Expositor*

**T**HIRD EXPLORING TOUR TO THE PACIFIC. —The expedition to the Rocky Mountains under command of Capt. J. C. Fremont of the U.S. army, being the third exploring tour of that officer, left Westport on the 26th last. Capt. Fremont is assisted by two junior officers of the Topographical corps and employs eighty men. The design of this expedition is to complete the surveys of the plains, and mountains intervening between the western boundary and the Pacific, heretofore partially accomplished by the Exploring Squadron and the two former expeditions of Capt. Fremont. As far as we can learn, this party will proceed to survey the Arkansas river to its source, after completing which the party will be divided. One division will then return by way of the head of the Rio del Norte, through the country of the Comanche Indians on the sources of Red River and by the lower waters of the Arkansas. The main division under Capt. Fremont will cross the Colorado, complete the survey of the Great Salt Lake, and penetrate by the waters of Mary's river, (which flows westwardly through Upper California in the vicinity of the 42d degree parallel of latitude, and is lost in a lake at the eastern base of the California mountains.) It is believed that from a point on Mary's river, some days journey above its mouth, the head of the Sacramento may be reached in two days travel. The Sacramento penetrates the main chain of the California mountains and forms a practicable pass direct to the Bay of San Francisco. This is already known. It is also known that a practicable route exists from the head of the Sacramento, in a northerly direction, by the heads of the Klamet, Chuttet and Wallamette rivers on the Columbia. The route then by which Captain Fremont proposes to penetrate to the Pacific is the shortest and most direct from the lower Missouri—of this, the portion from the head of the Arkansas to the head of the Sacramento, about 650 miles in distance—is as yet unexplored by the white man, and generally designated as the great "California desert."—None of its waters, excepting the Colorado, reach the ocean—they are absorbed or disappear by evaporation.

After passing the winter among the American settlements of Upper California, the exploring party will, if the country be found practicable, pass round by the lower route from California, crossing the Colorado below the great "Kennion," and return to the Arkansas by the waters of .....and St. Juan, large tributaries of the lower Colorado, which have their sources west of the mountains of New Mexico. This sketch contemplates a route of five or six thousand miles. It will probably eventuate in the discovery of a new and straight route to Oregon and California, passing for the most part through our own territory, diminishing the distance some three or four hundred miles, and the time two months. The country to the right and left will be examined, and its geography, at present a blank, somewhat understood. The importance of these contemplated explorations is very great. Every confidence is reposed in the energy and ability of the commanding officer. We shall hope for their success, and look anxiously for their safe return towards the close of the year 1846.—submitted by Kristin Johnson

# NPS DEVELOPS PLANS FOR CALIFORNIA AND OREGON NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAILS

by the National Park Service

In the spring of 1994, the National Park Service (NPS) began to develop two comprehensive management and use plans (CMPs) for the newly-authorized California and Pony Express National Historic Trails and two plan revisions for the Mormon Pioneer and Oregon National Historic Trails (NHT). Both the new plans and the revisions will be developed concurrently and printed as one document. In addition, NPS will conduct a congressionally directed feasibility study to determine if the Sacramento-San Francisco route should be added to the Pony Express NHT.

The federal agencies—NPS, Bureau of Land Management and United States Forest Service—that manage much of the western lands the trails cross are working together during the project. The planning team welcomes the participation of managers of non-federal lands, local and state officials, other owners of trails resources and interested citizens. Non-federal land owners who participate in the project reserve their option to implement the plans' recommendations on their property. In accordance with the authorizing legislation (P.L. 102-328) lands or interests outside federal boundaries will not be acquired by the government for the California and Pony Express trails without the consent of the owner.

## CALIFORNIA NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAIL

According to the National Trails System Act, a CMP and its environmental impact statement must be submitted to Congress within two years after historic trail designation. The plan will guide trail management for the next 10 to 15 years. The planning process follows five general steps:

- 1) Set goals, gather information, and inform/involve the public,
- 2) Analyze existing conditions to determine resource and visitor use issues and concerns,
- 3) Develop alternative ways to resolve those issues and concerns and accomplish goals,
- 4) Prepare draft plans for public review, and
- 5) Prepare final documents for transmittal to Congress.

## OREGON NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAIL

Work on revising the current management plan will be done concurrently with the development of the CMP. At this time, no change in the management of the trail is anticipated, so alternatives will not be developed and the environmental assessment will not be revised.

## PROGRESS TO DATE AND SCHEDULE

An interdisciplinary team from the NPS began work on the trail plans and the feasibility study in April 1994. Step one will be completed this summer with the survey of the trails in Utah, Nevada, California and Idaho.

The planning team appreciates the many ways OCTA members have assisted them. The planning team has met with representatives of federal agencies and state, local and private landowners who have segments of the trails on their land, to share ideas, discuss trail management issues and planning goals and to gather resource information. The team is also collaborating with local and state agencies such as the State Historic Preservation Office, the Advisory Council for Historic Preservation and Indian tribes to provide information and insure that all aspects of the project comply with federal laws.

Data analysis for step two is under way to identify the issues and concerns related to the preservation and trails management, to identify high-potential historic sites and segments, and to develop a strategy to assist trail managers with resource protection efforts. The team has also started the long process of mapping the trails.

During step three (fall 1995) a range of concepts will be developed to accomplish the goals developed in step one, and to respond to the issues identified in step two. Each alternatives' strategy will differ in its approach to trail and resource protection and visitor use and enjoyment. Environmental impacts associated with each concept will be assessed. Necessary revisions for the Oregon NHT plan will be compiled. During step four (summer 1996) the draft documents for the CMP, the revisions, and the feasibility study will be available for 60 days of public review and comment. Lastly, (step five, winter 1996) the planning team will review the comments, incorporate appropriate revisions in the draft documents, prepare final documents and submit them to Congress.

We appreciate your interest in this planning project. If you would like more information, please contact Team Captain Jere Krakow, National Park Service, Denver Service Center, 12795 West Alameda Parkway, Denver, Colorado 80225-0287 (303) 969-2909. For a copy of the newsletter, or to be added to the mailing list, contact Mary McVeigh at (303) 969-2360. The FAX number for the study team is (303) 969-2068 and the E-mail address is [jere\\_krakow@nps.gov](mailto:jere_krakow@nps.gov).

# THE READING TRAIL

by Lyndia Carter

As summer comes, you will find yourself with more time to read. Perhaps your family is going to take a vacation along the Oregon or California trails or to some point on the trail. It would be fun to read while you travel or when you are anticipating going. Summer also means time to settle under a shade tree with a good book, either fiction or of the factual type. The three books I will share are great books for summer.

## DAILY LIFE IN A COVERED WAGON

*Daily Life in a Covered Wagon* by Paul Erickson is non-fiction, but it's colorful and beautifully illustrated. It's very informative and is probably the best book available for young people such as you who want to learn about the history of the American people on the move to the West. Each of its 43 pages is filled with photographs of real objects such as trail equipment, clothing, supplies and other museum items. There are also paintings, sketches and maps along with diary entries and a well-written text. The narrative takes the Larkin family, father, mother, four children and their hired boy and moves them west to Oregon in 1853, giving realistic details of trail life along the way. Twenty-four major topics are covered, including the wagon, landmarks, Indians, entertainment, clothing, children's activities, mishaps, hunting and more subjects of particular interest to readers aged eight to fourteen. The text is accurate and written in a style that does not speak down to you or fly over your head. You will enjoy traveling with the Larkin family and sharing in their adventures, challenges and troubles. With this book and your imagination you can feel like you are on the trail while you learn a great many things in a very enjoyable way. The facts are presented in a fascinating style, and you will find yourself studying the pictures over and over again. You can really see what everyday life was like for people on the trail. This fine book shows how interesting nonfiction can be and includes an excellent timeline, a useful glossary and a good index. I highly recommend you check this one out!

*Daily Life in a Covered Wagon* by Paul Erickson, The Preservation Press, National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1994.

## PIONEERS

Another good nonfiction book is *Pioneers* by Martin W. Sandler. It's short enough for quick reading and gives you a taste of all pioneer life. This book does not give many specific details, but it is a fun book to look at and to get some broad ideas. About two-thirds of each page is filled with illustrations such as photographs, paintings, lithographs, sketches, maps and old newspaper advertisements. There are also many good short quotations about the West. The text is concise and gives just enough

information to make you want to know more. A broad variety of topics is covered, from mountain men to the farmers who eventually tamed the West, from wagon trains to railroads, steamboats and stagecoaches, from gold rushers to cowboys and loggers. Much emphasis is on the pioneer family. You will also see pioneer schools, recreation and how machinery changed farm life on the frontier. Kids from eight to fifteen can enjoy this book.

*Pioneers* by Martin W. Sandler, a Library of Congress Book, Harper Collins Publishers, Eagle Productions Inc., 1994.

## LUCRETIA ANN ON THE OREGON TRAIL

*Lucretia Ann on the Oregon Trail* was written over sixty years ago and your grandmothers may have read it when they were young, but it is still a fun book. In places the language is a bit old-fashioned but that adds to its charm. Boys will probably choose something else but girls, especially those who love animals and have a daring spirit, can get involved with Lucretia's adventures on the trail.

When Lucretia's father decides to take his family west to Idaho, she is filled with excitement. Her only regret is leaving her grandmother behind, but Grandmother tells her a secret that makes that all right. Even though the Oregon Trail is no place for a cat, Lucretia insists that Benjamin, her pet who has a way of always getting into trouble, be taken along. The family has its share of adventures and hardships along the way, such as dangerous river crossings where Lucretia falls in the river and floats downstream, and stretches without water, and of course, Lucretia is the one who finds water at last. She makes several good friends along the trail and finds a "best friend," Dimmis Greensleave. She and Dimmis have their greatest adventure when they are accidentally left behind the wagon train while playing and looking for Benjamin who teasingly evades being caught. A small band of Indians finds the two girls and then their lives become pretty exciting. Eventually Lucretia gets back to her family and they make it to their future home. Meanwhile you will enjoy reading about how she and Dimmis do it. Their bravery and independence is fascinating.

Besides being fun to read, the book is fairly accurate in depicting life on the trail while creating a captivating character who gets into and out of all kinds of trouble. It's fun to imagine you are in her place. The old-fashioned woodcut style illustrations add to the book's appeal. Its old-fashioned style makes it a good book for adults to read to kids, so you might ask you parents or teacher to read this book aloud. Be patient until you get used to the older style of writing and then you'll be hooked on the story of this very funny girl and her naughty cat.

*Lucretia Ann on the Oregon Trail*, by Ruth Gipson Plowhead, The Caxton Printers Ltd., Caldwell, Idaho, 1931, reprinted in 1993. Ages 9-12; younger for read-aloud.

# NEBRASKA

## GETTING READY FOR 1995 CONVENTION

Nebraska Chapter President Helen Sundell reports preparations for OCTA's 1995 National Convention in Grand Island are proceeding apace. Members should have received their convention registration information. Registration chair Betty Scheinost reports that by May 1 more than 107 early birds had already registered.

On other fronts, chapter members, including trail veteran Charles Martin, Sr., planned to joined Jere Krakow and his trail survey team in the Omaha area on May 1 and farther up the Platte River from Columbus to Grand Island on May 2. Several chapter members also participated in a premier of the PBS documentary "The Way West" at the Nebraska Historical Society.

The chapter looks forward to welcoming OCTA to a great national convention this summer.

here in 1858. This and other strikes led to the Colorado gold rush. An archaeological dig, funded by the Colorado Historical Society, is being conducted on weekends throughout the summer and fall. Military artifacts and other research indicate that Russellville was a Confederate stronghold used to train recruits.

Major stop: Point of Rocks. This was a major landmark/campsite on the Cherokee Trail, as well as the site of the grave of Charles Michael Fagan; he froze to death May 2, 1858. This area provides opportunities to hike the excellent ruts of the Cherokee trail.

Questions? Call LEE WHITELEY at (303) 798-6546

—Jim Bowers



## SOUTHWEST

### PLANNING MEETING SCHEDULED

On July 22, the Southwest Chapter will hold its annual planning meeting to elect officers and plan at least three outings for the coming year. They will meet in Portal, Arizona, high in the Chiricahua Mountains, famous for its scenery, and not far from the spot Geronimo made his final surrender in Skeleton Canyon, just across the border in New Mexico. If they're lucky, they might sight the Elegant Trogon!

# COLORADO

## COLORADO CHAPTER PLANS CHEROKEE TRAIL ADVENTURE

On Saturday, May 6, Ward Crowley presided at a meeting attended by 20 OCTA members at the Wings Over the Rockies Air & Space Museum at Lowry Air Force Base in Denver. The following new officers were elected: President, Terri Tiehen; Co-Vice-Presidents, Richard Gehling and Lee Whiteley; Secretary-Treasurer, Jim Bowers. There was a lively exchange of ideas for future meetings and trips, as well as thoughts regarding the Grand Island convention and points of interest that can be visited along the route to the convention. Lee Whiteley volunteered a presentation, in the absence of Merrill Mattes who was ill and unable to attend, on trails and points of interest in Colorado, and submits herewith plans for a field trip:

Preliminary plans: Colorado Chapter field trip along the Cherokee Trail southeast of Denver. The Cherokee Trail was named for the parties of Cherokee Indians who traveled the route from Oklahoma to the gold fields of California in 1849-50. The trail connected Bent's Old Fort on the Santa Fé Trail and Fort Bridger on the Oregon Trail.

Date: A Saturday in mid or late September (details later).

Major stop: Russellville, named for the Russell brothers of Georgia, who found small amounts of gold

# TRAILS HEAD

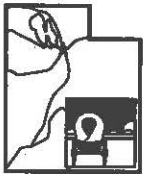
## TRAILS HEAD SEES SANTA FÉ TRAIL PROGRAM

Trails Head chapter members were delighted to see all the board and officers who were in Independence for the mid-year board meeting in March.

On April 6, our chapter hosted a joint meeting with the Friends of the National Frontier Center and the Missouri River Outfitters chapters of the Santa Fé Trail Association, at the Center. The program was a slide presentation on the Santa Fé Trail in Osage, Wabaunsee, Lyon and Morris counties in Kansas. One of the features of the slides was a review of all the stone monuments set in place nearly 90 years ago by the Daughters of the American Revolution all along the Santa Fé Trail.

On May 20, several of our members joined with the Gateway Chapter in a tour of the Missouri River ferry locations and other trail sites in the St. Joseph area.

We are looking forward to the convention in August in Grand Island, and the dedication of Alcove Springs on that Sunday.—Ross Marshall



## CROSSROADS

### TRAILS DAY A SUCCESS DESPITE RAIN

In honor of National Trails Day, Utah Crossroads had a combined work day to spruce up Donner Spring and tour the Hastings Cutoff across the Great Salt Lake Desert. Vern Gorzitze, Jerry Dunton and Oscar Olsen met early and were out to the Spring by 9:00 to attack the weeds. The grass and weeds had grown to about a foot and a half in height but that was no challenge to the intrepid trio, at least not until the rain made it too wet to cut. The crew also got about three-fourths of the log fence oiled against the weather before the sky really opened up and got them all soaking wet, logs and men!

Vern, quoting the late Governor Matheson, said of the downpour, "This is a hell of a way to run a desert!"

Meanwhile, back at the Grassy Mountain I-80 exit several vehicles met for the tour led by Roy Tea, George Ivory and Al Mulder; there were about fourteen in the tour group. All went well on the tour and they were able to get down the dirt road to the springs without much trouble. Roy, as usual, gave fine commentary and pointed out the trail over the Salt Flats, giving wonderful tidbits of journal information. Al took pictures to add to his marker documentation project. Lunch was at Donner Spring and the tour members prepared to join the work crew, but had barely begun when suddenly the sky opened up and dumped out billions of huge rain drops. Roy said in all of his years of working on the desert it was the hardest rain he had ever seen there. All scurried

## GATEWAY

### CHAPTER HELPS NATIONAL PARK SERVICE EXPLORE THE TRAIL

On March 1, 2 and 3, 1995, a National Park Service (NPS) study team was in St. Joseph to view the routes of the California and Pony Express trails. Members of the team were Jere Krakow, team leader; Tom White, interpretative planner; Danna Kinsey, historian; Susan Boyle, historian; and Sue Nordstrom, interpretative planner. The study team was guided on day-long tours of each trail by Rich Nolf, director of the St. Joseph Museum and Pony Express National Memorial; Jackie Lewin, Curator of the Pony Express National Memorial; and Marilyn Taylor, Curator of Ethnology at the St. Joseph Museum. On March 3, the NPS personnel were guests at a breakfast held at the Pony Express National Memorial and hosted by the St. Joseph Museum, Pony Express National Memorial and the Gateway Chapter of OCTA.

The Gateway Chapter met the evening of March 15 to enjoy a meal that would have been familiar to the emigrants.

Delicacies, which were provided by Gateway members, included venison roast, bacon, potatoes, sweet potato pie, pickled beets, beans and buffalo, beans and ham, beans and bacon, more beans, cornbread and biscuits, shoofly pie and dried apple pie.

Harlan Wadley of Eugene, Oregon, was a special guest. He told of his experiences while walking the trail between St. Joseph and Big Sandy in 1991. He stated that this summer he plans to walk through Idaho and meet up with his

1991 trail partner, Robbie Gunstream. Harlan and Robbie will then finish the trail together.

Suzette McCord-Rogers, curator of the former Iowa, Sac and Fox Museum at Highland, Kansas, reported on the changes being made at that facility. The building is being expanded, and the focus of the exhibits is being changed to emphasize the tribes of the area. Emigrants and area European settlers will also be featured in various exhibits. When it reopens, the facility will be known at the Native American Heritage Museum at Highland Mission.



*Rich Nolf points out Missouri River crossing sites used by emigrants of the mid-1800s. Others L. to R.: Darlene Peniston, Gateway Chapter president; Marcia Bennett, director of the Buchanan County Convention and Visitors' Bureau; and NPS personnel Danna Kinsey, Tom White, Sue Nordstrom and Jere Krakow.—Jackie Lewin Photo.*

to the porch of the cabin and watched sheets of water pour down. There was a mad dash to the vehicles to get out before the road became impassable. Fortunately, there was very little problem getting out.

The original plan had been to go through Bidwell Pass and see the Donner trail to Silver Zone Pass, but the weather didn't cooperate. However, Roy, determined to make a good tour, took the group to Danger Cave, used for centuries by American Indians. After exploring the cave, they headed over to Juke Box Cave, used by soldiers from Wendover Airbase during World War II as a dance pavilion. All felt glad they got to see those two interesting places.

Crossroads President George Ivory says the workday will be rescheduled for later in June. Then we'll probably have the chance to bake in the sun instead of getting soaked. You just never know what to expect, except you can always expect good companionship!—*Lyndia Carter*

## WYOMING

### TREK COMMITTEE KEEPS CHAPTER BUSY

Thanks to the efforts of an interested trek committee, our chapter has one trek planned each month from April through October. Now we just hope the weather cooperates. Several other chapter activities are in the planning stage, so our summer should be filled with exciting trail activities. We are working out details with Randy Brown and the state to put up an interpretive sign. We also have a number of volunteers who are willing to give up two to three days of their summer to spend the day at the rest area at Independence Rock and "Meet the People who Visit the Rock." We will be there to answer questions, to talk about the trails, to promote OCTA and to guide them to different sections of Independence Rock if they are searching for names. We should have in place our copy of our database of names found while resurveying the Rock. Since at this time there are about 1,140 names in the database (these include the 700 names found in the Ellison book) we can be of more assistance to people looking for ancestors. We also recorded all the Ellison names still visible in 1994, so this will be a big help. We'll probably have more names by summer. If you are traveling this summer through Wyoming and stop at Independence Rock, you might see some of us out there.

Levida Hileman has been doing experiments with the alkali residue found at Saleratus Lake, east of Independence Rock. Diaries record that emigrants used this saleratus as a leavening in their breads. Levida gathered some of the residue from the lake and had the chemistry students at a local high school do a chemical analysis on it. Since she intended to do some baking with it she didn't want to kill herself. Interestingly no giardia, no bacteria and no viruses were detected with the microscopes at the high school. Levida then tried an old time

fry bread recipe of flour, water and baking soda, first using the saleratus, then using commercial baking soda, and then the same proportions of just flour and water. The saleratus did make the bread rise, though not as high as modern baking soda. She took her breads to a chapter meeting, but found no one willing to try the saleratus bread. They must not have been hungry enough.

In May, Robby Gunstream and Pat Thompson spoke at our regular chapter meeting. Since Robby wrote about their trip through Wyoming in the April issue of *News from the Plains*, we felt very fortunate to have him show us his slides of the journey.—*Levida Hileman*

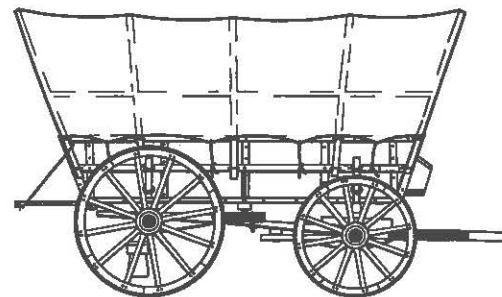
*The Northwest, California-Nevada and Idaho chapters failed to file reports. We received many reports, however, that California Chapter member Mary Lou Lyon was mistress of ceremonies at the dedication of the Elisha Stephens marker at Blackberry Farm in Cupertino. The program came off flawlessly.*

*The first volume of OCTA's long-awaited special publications series is now in the press.*

### Emigrant Trails Historical Studies Series Number 1

## THE 1849 CALIFORNIA TRAIL DIARIES OF ELIJAH PRESTON HOWELL

Edited by  
Susan Badger Doyle and Donald E. Buck



*Volume Number 1 in the series will be published in limited hardcover and paperback editions. The initial volume will be available September 1, 1995. Series subscription and pricing information will be announced at the OCTA National Convention at Grand Island.*

# Announcements

## ALCOVE SPRING DEDICATION

by Duane Iles, Alcove Spring Preservation Association

Why not end the 1995 OCTA convention with a new beginning? Join us at Alcove Spring for a post-convention dedication ceremony on August 13. It is not the dedication of a completed project, but a dedication to a beginning. Alcove Spring is not merely a drink of fresh, cool water, but a well of stories about people ranging from the earliest Americans to the people who have tried to preserve and protect this unique and historic site. Plans are beginning to take shape. The Thomas Mastin grave west of Marysville, KS will display the original marker at the site. The Alcove Spring dedication will begin at 2:00 P.M. Speakers will include Ramon Powers of the Kansas State Historical Society, Jackie Lewin of OCTA and historian/writer Greg Franzwa.

We will also have a small art show. The original painting by Dan Jacobson that appeared on the Winter 1984 cover of the *Overland Journal* will be on exhibit. We plan to have a painting of the spring be-

lieved to have been exhibited at the Columbian Exposition, plus several more recent art works.

Following the dedication of Alcove Spring, there will be a Buffalo Burger Barbeque at a very nominal cost and an open-ended discussion of the future of Alcove Spring. A number of important artifacts associated with the spring will be on display, including an intriguing possible grave marker stone recently located by Alan Feldhausen. Trail sleuths can test their favorite theories about where to find the trail, campsites, Independence Crossings, grave sites, and debate the authenticity of the recently acquired Sarah Keyes marker. All OCTA members are encouraged to join in the fun.

I hope many will take the opportunity to visit Alcove Spring and be a part of this page of its history. For more information, contact me, Duane Iles, at P.O. Box 98, Blue Rapids, KS 66411, (913) 363-7941/7183.

## CALL FOR PAPERS AND PROGRAM PRESENTATIONS 1996 OCTA NATIONAL CONVENTION ELKO, NEVADA

The 1996 national convention of the Oregon-California Trails Association will be held at the Elko Convention Center, August 6-10. We invite papers or presentations on the topics or themes below. Other appropriate topics are welcome.

- 1846: the Hastings cut-off (150th anniversary)
- 1846: the Applegate Cut-off (150th anniversary)
- 1846: the Donner Party (150th anniversary)
- Emigrant road in the Greater Elko region
- The American Indian response to emigrant roads

Please submit your proposals by September 1, 1995, to the Program Chairman:

Curtis R. Grant  
717 Scenic View Ct.  
Modesto, CA 95354  
(209) 529-2198



## NEBRASKA MUSEUM DISPLAY

The current exhibit in the General Crook House Museum links the wagon trains of the 1840s and 1850s to the telegraph and railway systems that sprang up across Nebraska in the 1860s and 1870s alongside the Oregon-California Trail routes, and tells how the communications highway tying our nation together was born. Exhibit features telegrams and telegraph equipment from the early 1860s when regional pioneer telegraph builder Edward Creighton constructed the telegraph lines across Nebraska. Early family memorabilia consists of personal letters and artifacts from Grenville Dodge—soldier, Indian fighter and pioneer railroad builder. Railroad items from the first days of regional railroad companies established in Omaha (the eastern terminus) include photographs of the building of the railroad, advertisements and a survey profile.

Arrangements can be made for a step-on-guide for Motor-Coach groups following the Oregon-California Trail through Douglas County, Nebraska. Write or call for information and cost:

General Crook House Museum  
Fort Omaha Campus Metro Community College  
30th & Fort Streets (P.O. Box 11398)  
Omaha, Nebraska 68111

Sponsor: Historical Society of Douglas County  
Dates: March 12 through October 31, 1995  
Hours: M-F 10-4, Sunday 1-4  
Admission/Donation: Adults \$3.50 Children \$1.50  
Contact: Jan Moritz, Public Relations (402) 455-9990

## THE OREGON TRAIL PAGEANT

"Oregon Fever," the outdoor musical drama that tells the story of a pioneer family on a 2,000-mile trek along the Oregon Trail, will be presented this summer at the end of the trail in Oregon City. The ninth annual Oregon Trail Pageant runs July 14 to August 5 in an amphitheater at the new End of The Oregon Trail Interpretive Center.

Three gigantic covered wagons rise from Abernethy Green in historic Oregon City, the same spot where thousands of pioneers ended a 2,000-mile trek along the Oregon Trail. These huge replicas of early pioneer travel serve as the new End of The Oregon Trail Interpretive Center, the perfect setting for the ninth production of "Oregon Fever." The outdoor musical drama tells the story of a wagon train of early settlers who make the wearisome trip in 1851 from Independence, Missouri, to Oregon City. The production features a full musical score, dancing, live animals and a cast of 45 professional and community actors.

The new interpretive center opened in June. It is the first phase of a large scale project that will lure today's pioneers to the site, only this time they will come in cars, motor homes and buses. Work on the first pageant began in 1985 when a group of citizens got together and began

to plan the production that would tell the story of the early settlement of the West. There have been a few changes in the pageant over the years, but the story of the hardships of the early settlers remains the same.

For information, contact Linda McCarthy, (503) 656-0573 or Alice Norris (503) 657-0988.

## Queries and Comments

A curious soul who prefers to remain anonymous has two mapping questions for OCTA's membership.

First, on OCTA's "Western Emigrant Trails Map," who is the Kinney of the Kinney Cutoffs in the Green River country? Did he help establish the trail, and when and why was his name associated with it?

Second, the map of Howard Stansbury's return from Great Salt Lake City in 1850 shows a trail to Fort Bridger running south of "Capt. Stansbury's Route 1850" which bears a notation referring to the "Jones Route of 1850." The note is located between Bishop Mountain and Muddy Creek (the tributary of the Yampa, not the Muddy Fork west of Bridger's Fort). The map is available in Brigham D. Madsen, ed., *Exploring the Great Salt Lake: The Stansbury Expedition of 1849-50* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1989). Does anyone know who Jones was? Was the route established on an east or west-bound journey? Is it related to the Cherokee Trail—it seems to be the 1850 southern branch of the Cherokee Trail.

If you have any information about these puzzles, reply to "Map Questions" care of *News from the Plains*.

In our last issue, Robby Gunstream asked the question raised in Jack Steed's letter in our *first* issue, "Where is Eliza Houghton buried?" Jack called and left the answer on my answering machine, but I had a very pleasant conversation with Ilene Hunter of Davis, California, who reminded me of the handout on pioneer cemeteries she compiled for the 1991 Sacramento convention. Ilene provides this information about where members of the Donner-Reed party were buried.

<i>Elitha Donner Wilder</i>	<i>Elk Grove Cemetery.</i>
<i>Francis Donner Wilder</i>	<i>Byron Cemetery</i>
<i>Lovina Graves Cyrus</i>	<i>Calistoga Pioneer Cemetery</i>
<i>Mary Murphy Couvillard</i>	<i>Marysville Catholic Cemetery</i>
<i>William Murphy</i>	<i>Yuba City Cemetery</i>
<i>Leanna Donner App</i>	<i>Jamestown Cemetery</i>
<i>Reed Family</i>	<i>Oak Hill Cemetery, San Jose</i>
<i>Mary Donner Houghton</i>	<i>Oak Hill Cemetery, San Jose</i>
<i>William Eddy</i>	<i>Oak Hill Cemetery, San Jose</i>
<i>Breen Family</i>	<i>San Juan Bautiste Cemetery</i>
<i>Georgia Donner Babcock</i>	<i>St. John Cemetery, Washington</i>
<i>Eliza Donner Houghton</i>	<i>Rosehaven Cemetery, Los Angeles</i>

# Buffalo Chips

## WORD HUNT

by Lyndia Carter

Hidden in the sentences below are words or phrases that have to do with the trails or the pioneers going to the West. Read the sentences carefully. Study your choices at the side of the page and when you find the word or phrase hidden in each sentence, underline it. Write the word or phrase in the blank. Hint: watch for syllable sounds or groups of letters together, although the words may be split apart.

Here are three examples to show you how it's done.

In the West, they ward off evil powers by a move to a new apartment. = Westward Movement.

A melancholy era followed the announcement that there would be no recess today. = Cholera.

The buff bowl on a lower shelf is large enough to hold the chips. = buffalo chips.

1. When we heard him hum, we knew Mr. Boldt had come to fix our leaking sinks.
2. Protected by the snow fort, Lara and Tammie fought the boys with snowballs.
3. I put the can in the garbage, the vase on the table and the cover on the leftovers.
4. Will, I am studying etiquette at a finishing school in the valley.
5. In judging gems, value has much dependence of how many flaws are in the rock crystals.
6. There was a sale on gold rings, so we had to rush to the jewelry shop to get one.
7. When my dog Toby is excited, he runs a circle around the tree and gives his tail a wag on some grass.
8. With community effort, bridge repairs can be made this month.
9. Mother will get cross if you are washing the colors with the plains.
10. The stamp collector made a lot of money trading foreign postage stamps.
11. We can't be affording those last reams of paper this month.
12. To make the punch sweet, add sugar to the purified water from the river.
13. Whitner told the man that he was here on a secret mission for the government.
14. Gee! And to think I didn't even know a hawthorne tree could be so pretty.
15. The snake that had slithered onto the road was crushed by the driver.
16. While camping in Oregon, Max missed the trail and became lost.
17. Quickly get the sand off your feet before going inside the house.
18. Was the Valentine box enclosed in the package from Sarah?
19. No one is wilder in business than Mr. Peabody when he invests in the stock market.
20. Our scoutmaster Mr. Graves led us along the Sunset Trail.
21. Scott's the winner in this game of blind man's bluff.
22. The vandal broke a brick on the chimney when he threw the rock.
23. The buffalo pictured on the stamped envelope attracted much attention from collectors.
24. Captain Jones took his pet prairie dog on the schooner with him to Tahiti.
25. As the driver headed south on the freeway, he accidentally passed his exit.

### CHOICES

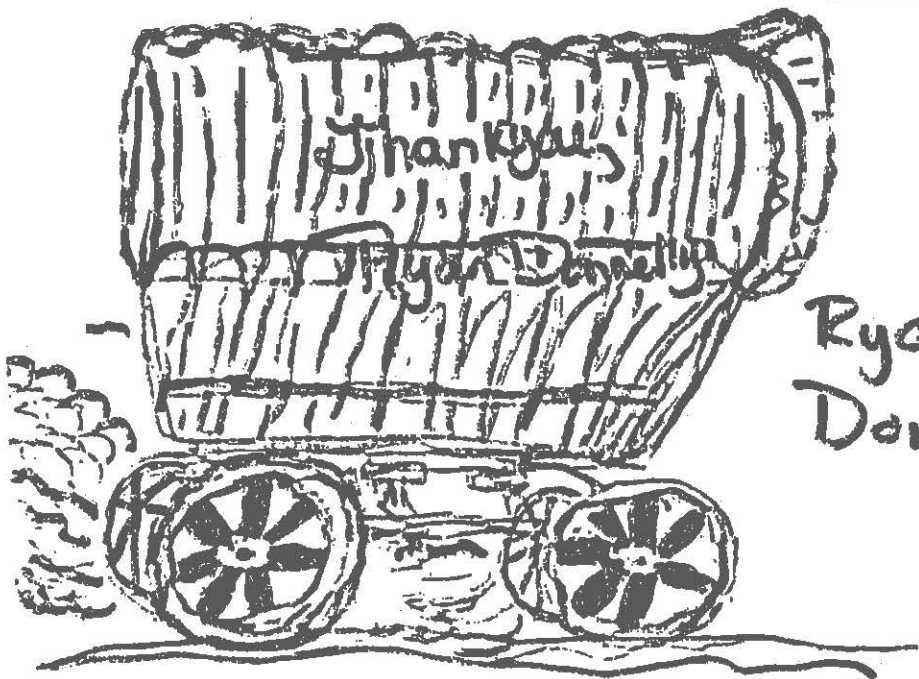
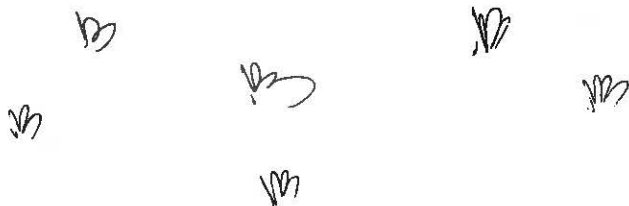
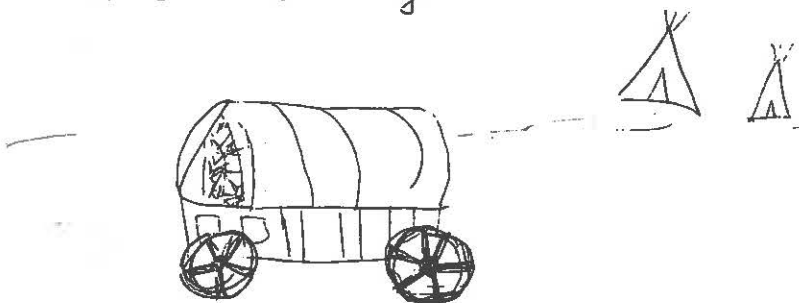
Oregon Trail  
circle the wagons  
South Pass  
Snake River  
oxen  
Chimney Rock  
fording streams  
Fort Bridger  
Gee and haw  
prairie schooner  
Fort Laramie  
Humboldt Sinks  
Willamette Valley  
Whitman Mission  
wilderness  
buffalo stampede  
cholera  
Scotts Bluff  
trading post  
buffalo chips  
Independence Rock  
gold rush  
canvas cover  
crossing the plains  
Sweetwater River  
quicksand  
Westward movement  
graves along the trail

Dear Mrs. Lyon,

Thank you so much for helping us learn more about crossing the Oregon Trail. I learned a lot from what you told us and the slides. I really liked your outfit that you wore to our class. It was funny how the pioneers wrote their name on everything like we do at school, except we have to on our school papers. I hope you enjoyed visiting us as much as I did. Once again thank you.

Sincerely,  
Erin M

P.S. Please come again!



Ryan  
Donnelly

CLASSROOM OF THE QUARTER

Mary Lou Lyon nominated our Classroom of the Quarter, assistant principal and events coordinator Arlene Bertellotti and the Sacred Heart School of Saratoga, California. Fifth graders study pioneers and Mary Lou entertained them with slides. Student Vinh Tran "enjoyed all 280 of them," while Lisa Zampella found "it was fun learning the things I learned. I learned a lot about wagons, how they managed the hills and other hardships, and how hard it was to survive going west."

For Westward Ho Day the entire school divided into families and learned about Indians by seeing a full-sized tepee and about pioneers by converting standard red wagons into covered wagons. They even learned how to pan for gold like real Forty-Niners. The school hopes to make this an annual event and involve local OCTA people, such as Mary Lou and Jeannette Roberts.

Some of Mary Lou's thank-you letters grace our Buffalo Chips pages. Congratulations and thanks to Arlene Bertellotti and the Sacred Heart School, OCTA's Classroom of the Quarter!

BUFFALO CHIPS

NEEDS YOUR HELP!










Kids and teachers, these are your pages—let's fill them up. Send articles, poems, stories and above all, lots of puzzles and pictures to Buffalo Chips, 1451 Kensington Ave., SLC, UT 84105.

# OREGON-CALIFORNIA TRAILS ASSOCIATION

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## WHAT'S NEW IN THE *News*?

-  Betty Scheinost describes Nebraska's many charms and points of interest OCTA members can enjoy on their way to Grand Island, NE, this summer. Page 1.
-  Treasurer Jim Budde's final report on the Revenue Enhancement Plan. Pages 4-5.
-  Part Two of "Following Bellwethers" traces the Hudspeth Cutoff with Robby Gunstream and friends. Page 7.
-  Introducing a new feature, "150 Years Ago." Page 10.
-  The National Park Service outlines its plans to manage National Historic Trails. Page 11.
-  Follow the "Reading Trail" with Lyndia Carter. Page 12.
-  Chapter News. Pages 13-15.
-  Alcove Springs dedication plan—plus other news. Page 16.
-  Buffalo Chips Rides Again! See pages 18-19.