



News from the Plains



Volume XIV, No. 3

Newsletter of the Oregon-California Trails Association

July 2000



Mary and Charles Martin, Sr.
— Photo Courtesy of Charles Martin, Jr.

Martin Family Endowment Will Help Preserve Trails

By Bill Martin

An endowment valued at approximately \$200,000 has been established with the Oregon-California Trails Association by Charles W. Martin Sr., a charter member and past officer of OCTA.

Interest and dividend income from the new Charles W. and Mary C. Martin Endowed Restricted Fund is to be used for legal costs incurred in preserving and protecting significant trail sites.

The fund has been established through the gift of appreciated stock which will be deposited with the Greater Kansas City Community Foundation, which manages other OCTA investment accounts.

The endowment was announced by the couple's children, Charles Martin, Jr., an OCTA board member, and daughter, Julie Videon, also an OCTA member. They said the fund would help preserve trail sites, a fundamental goal of OCTA.

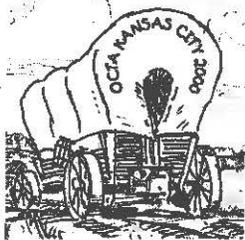
"Because of encroaching civilization and multiple and competing land uses, threats to trail sites will become more common in the future," Martin Jr. said. "If OCTA is to fulfill its fundamental goal of protection and preservation of these sites, it is increasingly likely that legal action will be required.

"This gift is to make that possible. The intent is to enable OCTA to engage in appropriate legal action to protect significant trail sites from serious threats, not to promote or encourage frivolous, insignificant or nuisance legal activities," he added.

Under terms of the agreement with OCTA, use of the funds can be authorized by a majority vote of the Board of Directors after the Board has determined that a site is significant and the threat is serious.

In order to avoid the accumulation of excess income, there is a provision that allows the Board to transfer a portion of the income to be used for other trail preservation activities if no litigation is undertaken for some time.

"We are particularly pleased about this gift because the
(continued on Page 5)



Inside:
Special Report:
Kansas City Area
Trails, A Historical
Perspective

Pictorial Preview:
A Few of the Sites You'll Be
Seeing At The 2000 Convention

Last Minute News From
Kansas City
August 7-12

From the Editor's Desk . . .

"I was never good at history," a friend told me recently. "All those dates and places and names to remember." Might be a logical complaint for those whose closest encounters with history were "multiple guess" tests in high school. (Of course, as my kids tell me, and yours probably tell you, there wasn't as much history to study when I was in school.)

It's true that the way history sometimes is taught, one might think it's mostly about memorizing dates and places and names. But, to put it in modern marketing terms, history becomes considerably more fascinating when you take a look at the "psychographics" of the people involved.

Names like Donner or Whitman, places like Independence Rock, and various dates between 1849 and 1859 are important to those of us who appreciate the overland trails. But the stories we are *really* interested in are those told by the people who made the trip.

And the big question, of course, is always going to be "why?" What made a family in Illinois, for instance, decide they *needed* to go to Oregon, knowing that such a move was permanent, that the family and friends they left behind most likely would never be seen again? Can we even begin to empathize with the agony of such parting, both for those who left and those left behind? Having recently relocated halfway across the country myself (trading the California Trail for the Chisholm Trail in the process), I know the angst of separating from friends and family. I have the luxury of flying back to Reno in two hours, or picking up the phone to talk to my kids, or staying in touch with friends via the internet. If you had told

me that if I moved I wouldn't have any contact except for letters a couple of times a year, I would probably still be parked on the Truckee. And it makes me wonder all the more about what dreams the emigrants were chasing.

It's hard for us, nearly a century and a half later, to imagine what could possibly have been so attractive about land they had never seen? What really drove them? With the exception of the California Gold Rush, most probably didn't move west in search of riches. Even the prospect of more room hardly makes sense to us today. We look back at a mostly rural America of 150 years ago and know we would *love* to have that kind of room today.

How luxurious would it be to be able to sit down that emigrant family just before they left Illinois and ask them why they were going. That would make one great interview. The closest we can come today is in reading the surviving trail diaries. But, fascinating as they are, they don't give us very much room to wander around inside the heads of the pioneers.

History, I told my friend, isn't about dates and places and names. It's about people. It's about their stories, most of which we can never know. We *can* know exactly how much flour a family carried when they left St. Joe or what kinds of clothes they wore or what kind of food they ate or how they celebrated the Fourth of July on the trail. We can extrapolate a lot from the written record. But what would we give to be able to hear them talk about their reasons for going? That would be one fascinating conversation, don't you think?

See you in Kansas City.

-- Bill Martin

Submission Guidelines

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

Material is due 30 days prior to publication dates.

Material is best sent either on a computer disk (in DOS or text format but make sure you include a hard copy) or via e-mail.

Pictures are appreciated but cannot always be returned.

If you have any questions, please call

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or e-mail OCTANFP@aol.com

Next Deadline Is September 1, 2000

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From The President . . .

by David Welch

At this time of the year most of us are able to return to the trails to pursue our personal discoveries and enjoy the experience of being outdoors and in the spiritual company of the trail emigrants. However, while I would prefer to report my personal trail experiences, I must take this opportunity to discuss our financial status.

As you read this edition of *News from the Plains*, you may get two apparently conflicting impressions concerning our finances. First, we have received two generous gifts in the past two years that go a long way toward insuring OCTA's future. These gifts include about \$130,000 in appreciated land from Pat Loomis and \$200,000 in appreciated stock from Chuck and Mary Martin, through their children Chuck Martin Jr. and Julie Videon. Combined with past savings, OCTA's total resources approach \$700,000. How is it then that we face a challenge to balance the books at yearend?

The problem lies in the distinction between operating funds and endowment funds. Operating funds come largely from membership dues, the annual convention, the annual fund-raising drive and book sales. Our operating budget is about \$190,000 per year with the largest expenses being headquarters operations and publications.

Accumulated income from prior years and the recent gifts were placed in an endowment last year. The endowment (about \$700,000 as noted above) is divided into "restricted" and "unrestricted" sub-funds. Income is available from both the restricted and unrestricted funds, at the board's discretion. At a 5 percent earnings rate this amounts to \$35,000 per year. However, the income from the Martin endowment (about \$10,000 per year) is further restricted for use on legal activities

unless it is unspent for three years. Therefore, the endowment as currently structured provides only marginal help for operating expenses.

Principal may only be withdrawn from the unrestricted sub-fund (about \$250,000) with a two-thirds vote of the board. Obviously, this is not something to be done on a regular basis. It is meant to meet special situations such as this year's Wyoming trail marking effort.

In summary, while we have substantial resources, our "useable" income and access is limited. Thus we see a squeeze in the operational accounts. In the spring, income lags while expenses continue. Later, with good convention and book sales, revenues will pick up. Retaining and increasing membership remains a key aspect of a successful year. Every member should actively recruit new members.

It is possible that we will end the year with an operational loss. However, it should be small (about \$5,000). In the meantime, we have taken on many new challenges to include the Three Island Crossing overlook purchase, trail marking in Wyoming and support for the National Park Service in the City of Rocks case.

I hope this provides insight into how OCTA's resources are managed. In the big picture, we are in good shape and should be for many years to come with your continued support. Additional gifts to the endowment will provide expanded resources for all of our preservation activities. Please contact me if you have any questions or wish to participate in building our endowment.

See you in Kansas City!

— Dave Welch

News From Headquarters

By Kathy Conway,
Headquarters Manager

Don't miss OCTA's 18th Annual Convention in Kansas City, August 7-12, 2000. Not only is the jazz great and the barbecue superb, 'ole Kansas City is celebrating its 150th birthday this year.....so our convention is part of that celebration too! Without our trails opening the west, America's history would truly be another story.

The town of Independence is also getting ready for you. All convention-goers should plan to visit the old historic square and surrounding sites.

The hub of the convention has always been the Book Room. Not coming to the Book Room this year would certainly be a big mistake. Most of our book dealer friends from prior conventions will be there...Mundie Books, Broken Arrow Books, and Patrice Press, just to mention a few.... Author's Night will be Thursday, August 10, 6:30 to 9 p.m. You won't want to miss getting your newly purchased books autographed by our many wonderful authors. The raffle table will also be in the book room and we understand the prizes are without peer.

The gift from the Charles Martin Sr.'s family was certainly a wonderful surprise. We are blessed with so many generous members. Last year Pat Loomis gifted OCTA by transferring ownership of land to us. Who knows the limits of our member's generosity?

In this column, I would like to mention several members who give in their own way with their time, money and talents to OCTA's national office. Please join with me in thanking Tom Laidlaw for buying headquarters a scanner and for devoting countless hours in creating our on-line bookstore; and for the indispensable volunteer crew of Jeanne Miller, Elaine McNabney, Ardis Everett and Jim and Judy Budde. This group never lets Headquarters down.

Lastly, our Colorado member and friend, Ward Crowley alerted John Mark Lambertson, Director of the National Frontier Trails Center here in Independence of an opportunity to bid on three original trail letters in an out of town auction. As the highest bidder, the Trails Center will acquire the letters. (Look for more information in the fall edition of the NFP). Thanks Ward!

Nominations Report

The Nominating and Leadership Committee has submitted the names of six highly qualified individuals to the OCTA membership to fill the four Board of Directors positions that will become vacant following the Kansas City convention.

Nominated to fill the positions are:

Marilyn K. Bryan of St. Joseph, Missouri, endorsed by Robert Hamilton, Jacqueline Lewin and M. Lethene Parks.

Tom Laidlaw of Vancouver, Washington, endorsed by Don Popejoy, Lesley Wischmann and Gail and Muriel Carbiener.

Frank Tortorich of Pine Grove, California, endorsed by Gregory Franzwa, William Hill and David Bigler.

Fran Taplin of Eureka, California, endorsed by Richard M. Davis, William Hill and James and Judith Budde.

Vern Gorzitze of Salt Lake City, Utah, endorsed by Al Mulder, Jere Krakow, W. L. Rusho and D. Robert and Lyndia Carter.

Stan McKee of Rock Springs, Wyoming, endorsed by Jude Carino, Mike Brown and Donald Hartley.

The candidates come from a variety of backgrounds and trail-related experiences. All are fully qualified to take active positions on the OCTA Board. Some are old-timers and some are relatively new to the organization's leadership ranks. The Committee is pleased that the slate of nominees represents several geographic regions of the Trail. OCTA will come out a winner whatever the outcome of the election. The Committee sincerely thanks all the candidates for stepping forward and making the commitment to serve OCTA at the national level.

As the deadline approached for *News From The Plains*, the Committee was still looking for candidates to fill the positions of Treasurer and National Preservation Officer. Anyone interested in volunteering to fill either of these key positions should contact President Dave Welch or any member of the Nominating and Leadership Committee.

-- Randall A. Wagner, Chair;
Susan Badger Doyle, Ken Martin

Treasurer's Report

By the time you read this issue of the *News From the Plains*, the OCTA fiscal year will be about over. Our fiscal year ends September 30, 2000. So from a financial standpoint where are we? How are we doing?

In my last Treasurer's Report in the *NFP*, I said the year is shaping up to be a financial challenge - it has been that. Following is a quick look at income and expense.

Our income comes from five major areas: Membership dues, Bookstore sales, Annual fund drive, Endowment earnings and Convention proceeds. The fund drive exceeded budget and the endowment earnings are on target. Membership continues to decrease. From a financial perspective, if this is not reversed it will have a significant impact on next year's operations. To compound the issue, our bookstore sales are significantly behind last year and behind our budget projections. The Kansas City convention is still an unknown.

Our expenses remain nicely under control and in fact should be less than budgeted. We have delayed considering an upgraded computer system and increased staff until next fiscal year. Some preservation and legal expenses may be paid from endowment funds set up for those purposes. So cash flow is tight, but it is manageable.

Over the years your contributions and a positive cash flow have created funds for our endowment. Our balance as of May 8, 2000 was \$483,528.39. The professional management of the Kansas City Community Foundation has been conservative and rewarding in these times of high stock market volatility. The new endowment created by the Martin family will add to this total.

As this "transition year," as I have called it, comes to an end, I want to sincerely thank all the members for their strong support. It is appreciated.

Thank you.

— Gail Carbiener, OCTA Treasurer

Membership Report

Membership. What does that word mean? What does it mean to you? Mr. Webster defines membership as "the state of being a member, as of a society." Also "a constituent part of any structural or composite whole." Or "an element of a set."

We are all a member of an extraordinary group of people, who loves to get dirty marking the trails, dusty from driving or walking the old ruts and swales, and awe struck when we realize that we are the privileged few that has the responsibility of preserving what is left and educating those about us about our past.

Right now there are about 2450 of us "rutnuts." And you know what? That's not enough! We need hundreds of more people that have our intensity, our passion and our love for the Oregon/California trail system. The 2450 of us can do a

lot, but we can't do it all. We need help!

We all know someone who would be interested in joining OCTA. OCTA as an organization is charging ahead as never before; we have lots to do and to fight for and to preserve. Please make the effort before the KS convention in August to tell SOMEONE about the organization that you love so much AND make an honest effort to sign that person up as a member both of national and a local chapter.

You'll be hearing more, a lot more, from your new membership committee in the coming months and years. If you want to know more now or want to offer your help as a volunteer, let me know: dpocalc1@aol.com or PO Box 9021, Spokane, WA. 99209. Thanks for helping OCTA.

Don Popejoy, Membership Chair

Endowment (continued from Page 1)

emigrant trails provided much enjoyment to both Mother and Dad for many years," Videon and Martin Jr. said. "So, too, has OCTA and its membership. Establishing a fund to help preserve trail sites in the future, a fundamental goal of OCTA, is a fitting way to remember and honor Mother and Dad and their commitment to both Western history and OCTA."

"This gift will go a long way toward insuring OCTA's future and the preservation of our emigrant trails," OCTA President David Welch said. "I know I speak for all members in extending the Association's thanks to the Martin family."

In the agreement establishing the endowment, the Martin family said there were several premises which underlie the gift:

1. Charles and Mary Martin loved Western history in general and the emigrant trails in particular. Both thoroughly enjoyed visiting and showing others trails and trail sites, even when that took them far off the beaten path. To help protect these sites would please them both greatly.

2. Preservation of trails and trail sites is a fundamental goal of OCTA and a major reason the organization was founded. Along with written accounts, they are the record of the emigrant migration, and thus are of great historical value. OCTA should be very serious about preserving them.

3. Threats to trail sites will become more common in future years because of the pressures of encroaching civilization, multiple and competing land uses, etc. Thus, if OCTA is to fulfill its fundamental goal of protection and preservation of trail sites, it is increasingly likely that some form of legal action will be required.

4. Historically, the OCTA Board has been reluctant to take legal action to protect the trail. A major reason is the inherent uncertainty about the cost of any legal action and its impact on OCTA's budget.

5. Establishment of an endowed fund with the income to be used for legal expenses could allow OCTA to protect and/or preserve trail sites which otherwise would be damaged or destroyed."

The agreement specifies that the funds are to be used to support legal activities, including attorney fees and expenses, settlements and reimbursement to OCTA staff and members whose participation in legal activities is required.

It also calls for legal action to be "a last resort" after all other avenues for resolving disputes or preserving trail sites have been fully investigated.

Visit the OCTA Bookstore
online at
www.octabookstore.com

OCTA members get a 10 percent
discount on all purchases.

Charles & Mary Martin Remembered

Charles and Mary Martin were familiar figures at OCTA conventions and other activities, attending every convention except one through Pocatello in 1997.

"Dad was the history buff and mother was the faithful companion on all the trips and adventures they had, including nearly every place on every imaginable trail," says their son, Charles Martin, Jr.

Charles Martin Sr. was born in Omaha, Nebraska, and Mary was born in Lincoln. They were married in 1931 and lived in Omaha for virtually all of their married lives. Mary Martin died June 12, 1999. Charles, now 91, is living in an extended care facility in Omaha.

A retired insurance broker, Charles Martin Sr. was elected to OCTA's first Board of Directors at the Denver organizational meeting and served from 1982-85. He also served as Counsel to the President in 1986 and as OCTA Vice President in 1987.

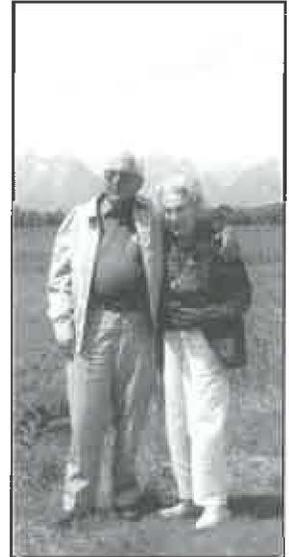
He is Past President of the Douglas (NE) County Historical Society, and a past member of the Executive Board and Past President of the Nebraska State Historical Society, as well as the Board of Directors of the Western Heritage Society. He was also a director of Conservative Savings & Loan, a trustee of Forest Lawn Cemetery Association, and a member of the Advisory Committee of the Mid-America Council, Boy Scouts of America.

"While technically not a 'founding father' of OCTA, Dad was a friend of many of those who met in Denver and founded the organization," says his son.

A charter member and a life member, Charles Martin received OCTA's Meritorious Achievement Award at the Omaha convention in 1990. He was one of the founders of the Nebraska Chapter and authored a number of articles published in *Nebraska History*, a publication of the Nebraska State Historical Society, and the *Overland Journal* (some co-written with his son).

In addition, he was instrumental in setting up tour routes and writing tour guides for the Omaha (1990) and Grand Island (1995) OCTA conventions and was well-known in Omaha for his slide programs on a variety of topics related to western history.

-- Bill Martin



Charles & Mary
—Courtesy Charles Martin Jr.

Senate Hearing Held On Applegate Trail Legislation

A public hearing was held before a U.S. Senate subcommittee on April 26 on federal legislation designed to protect the emigrant trails and surrounding areas of the Black Rock Desert and High Rock Canyon in northern Nevada.

Senate Bill 2273 was introduced earlier this year by U.S. Sen. Richard Bryan, D-NV. In a statement before the subcommittee, Bryan called the Applegate and Lassen Trail area a "unique part of our nation's heritage and truly one of its finest natural wonders that need to be protected."

Bryan noted that the trail and the lands surrounding the trail are still essentially the same as they were when the emigrants traveled the trail in covered wagons in the 1840's and 1850's.

Others testifying at the hearing included Chuck Dodd of the Oregon-California Trails Association. The OCTA Board of Directors has endorsed the legislation. (Dodd also testified in support of the legislation at meetings of the Nevada Legislature's Committee on Public Lands and the Nevada Governor's Advisory Board on Natural Resources.)

The Black Rock Desert-High Rock Canyon Emigrant Trails National Conservation Area Act of 2000 would provide additional protection to nearly 690,000 acres of federal land administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in the Black Rock Desert and High Rock Canyon regions of northwestern Nevada.



New Trail Markers Going Up In Kansas City Area

If you have driven in Johnson County, Kansas, in the last three or four years, you may have noticed some of the more than 100 brown rectangular markers displaying an ox-drawn covered wagon that mark the route of the 1839 Ft. Leavenworth-Ft. Scott Military Road.

The markers were placed by the Kansas City Area Historic Trails Association, a member of the Heritage League. Now, more than 200 similar markers are being placed by KCAHTA to mark both the Westport and Independence Routes of the Santa Fe, Oregon, and California National Historic Trails.

These marking projects have been made possible by grants from the \$1 million KC150 Legacy Fund administered by the Greater Kansas City Community Foundation as part of the 150th Anniversary Celebration of Kansas City's official incorporation in 1850. The Westport Route project is a joint effort between KCAHTA and the Westwood Neighborhood Association of Westwood, KS. The Independence Route project is a similar grant made directly to KCAHTA.

The markers will be placed at the exact locations as surveyed by the U. S. General Land Office in 1854-56 after Kansas Territory was established and opened for settlement. This rectangular survey, which was researched by KCAHTA members, especially Lee Kroh, from maps and field notes still available through the Kansas State Historical Society, established the ranges, townships, and the one-mile-square sections that we are familiar with in the Midwest. The survey recorded within less than one foot where the above historic wagon roads, which were still fresh in those days, crossed these section lines. These crossings will be the marker locations.

-- Ross Marshall

City of Rocks Update

On March 29 the United States District Court for the District of Idaho found in favor of the National Park Service with respect to the denial of climbing on the Twin Sisters at the City of Rocks.

On May 12 the Access Fund filed an objection focused on the NPS's failure to adequately consider partial closure of the Sisters, rather than full closure. The NPS has until June 30 to provide a response to this objection.

It has been OCTA's position that full closure is warranted based upon the historic nature of the Sisters formation and the fact that we agreed to climbing on almost all other rocks in the historic preserve. OCTA will continue to support the NPS.

-- David Welch

Trails Legislation Pending

Legislation will soon be introduced which would authorize updated feasibility studies of four major western trail routes, the Oregon Trail, California Trail, Mormon Trail and Pony Express Trail.

According to OCTA Trails Liaison co-chairs Bill and Jeanne Watson, the legislation will be introduced by Rep. Doug Bereuter of Iowa, who is co-chair of the House Trails Caucus.

The legislation, which has the support of the National Park Service, would allow for a one-time-only update to the original Oregon and California Trails Feasibility Studies (see story in *April News From The Plains*).

The updates would be based on the recommendations for further study included in the California and Pony Express Comprehensive Management Plan which was completed in 1999.

Visit the OCTA website at www.OCTA-trails.org

Special Postage Cancellation Scheduled At Convention



CONVENTION STATION
OREGON-CALIFORNIA TRAILS ASSN.
KANSAS CITY, MO 64133
AUGUST 9, 2000

A special pictorial postal cancellation for the 2000 OCTA convention has been prepared by Colorado Chapter

member Ward Crowley. The U.S. Postal Service authorizes such special cancellations for uses such as this.

This year's cancellation will feature the convention logo "Kansas City 2000 - Beyond The Wide Missouri." It will not be in general use on outgoing mail from Kansas City, but will be applied to envelopes submitted by stamp collectors, convention attendees and others desiring a souvenir of the OCTA convention.

The Kansas City post office will have a table in the convention hall on Wednesday, August 9, to cancel envelopes with the special convention marketing. They will also have postage stamps for sale. Details will be announced during the general membership meeting on Wednesday.

Members not attending the convention can obtain examples of the cancellation by submitting a stamped, self-addressed envelope (preferably size 636) to: Convention Station: c/o Postmaster, 315 W. Pershing Road, Kansas City, MO 64108-9998. A self-addressed and stamped #10 envelope should also be included for safe return of the specially canceled envelope. Requests should be sent no more than one week prior to August 9 nor more than 30 days after that date.

-- Ward Crowley

July 15 Deadline For OCTA Editorial Applications

The deadline for applying for three publications positions with the Oregon-California Trails Association is July 15. Letters of interest, resumes and work samples should be sent to OCTA at P.O. Box 1019, Independence, MO 64051.

The positions are editor of *News From The Plains*, Editor of the *Overland Journal*, and the newly created position of Graphic Design Supervisor for the *Overland Journal*. Job descriptions are available from OCTA headquarters.

Publications Committee Chair Candy Moulton noted the call for applications is part of the OCTA Board's decision to review editorial contracts every three years and does not reflect vacancies in current editorial positions.

Convention Registration Questions?
OCTA Headquarters (816) 252-2276
Judy Budde, Registration Chair
(816) 941-0728

Wyoming Trails Center Construction Starts

Ground was broken on April 12 for the National Historic Trails Interpretive Center in Casper, Wyoming.

The facility is due to be completed next July, in time for the OCTA 2001 convention in Casper. The Bureau of Land Management has awarded a construction contract for the building and the non-profit Trails Foundation has signed a contract to begin fabrication of exhibits.

Progress on the facility can be tracked at a web site created by Ron Lund at <<http://w3.trib.com/~rlund/NHTIC.html>>

Colorado Trail Selected For Millennium Designation

The Overland Trail in Colorado has been selected as an "Official Millennium Trail" by the White House Millennium Council.

The official event, a "history walk" for the Overland Trail, will be held on August 5th. The history walk will take place in northern Larimer County, Colorado, following the wagon ruts of the trail, hiking to Signature Rock, where emigrants wrote their names into the sandstone rock, and seeing teepee rings along the trail.

More information can be found at >www.overland.com/millennium.html<

Trail Guide Update Planned

OCTA member Julie Fanselow is working on a new edition of her 1993 guidebook *Traveling the Oregon Trail* (Falcon Press), which will be published in spring 2001.

Traveling the Oregon Trail is a comprehensive modern-day guide to the route, including information on attractions, activities and visitor amenities along the way.

Fanselow welcomes news of any changes at interpretive sites and other attractions along the trail. She will be traveling along the route in late July (Missouri to Wyoming) and early October (Idaho and Oregon), and requests that news tips be sent to her by July 15 at 1511 9th Ave E., Twin Falls, ID 83301-6611; via fax to (208) 735-1598; or email to fanselow@lightcom.net. She asks that a contact name and phone number and/or email address be included.

OCTA E-Mail Directory

Want to send an e-mail to an OCTA member but not sure of their address. OCTA's Lesley Wischmann keeps a list of OCTA e-mail addresses at ><http://w3.trib.com/~lwisch/email.htm><. If you want to be included in the e-mail directory or need to change your address, send it to Lesley at >lwisch@trib.com<



Kansas City Crossroads: Unraveling the Trails

By Ross Marshall

Although extremely important in the story of America's overland wagon trails, the Kansas City trails network has never been well understood, even by locals.

In fact, until preparations for Convention 2000 were underway, only a small handful of people had any notion of the routes all these trails followed.

By the end of Convention 2000, not only will a large number of Trails Head members know the routes in detail, but so will OCTA members from all over the nation.

Several hundred copies of detailed maps and supporting documentation will have been printed for convention attendees, providing a readily usable guide to all the local routes. Several books have been published over the years which have covered portions of our story, the best being Greg Franzwa's

recently published *Silver Anniversary Oregon Trail Revisited*, but now all significant routes will be described in detail.

Why has the Kansas City trails network been so mysterious all these years? First of all, our trail story begins with the Santa Fe Trail, which began in 1821, nearly two decades before the Oregon and California Trails had significant travel. In the Kansas City area, Oregon and California emigrants used the established Santa Fe Trail routes for the first thirty miles or so.

Although there are diary accounts and other primary documentation available on the early years of the Santa Fe Trail, it was primarily an international trade route, between the frontier of the United States in Missouri and the closest settlements in the new country of Mexico, which were at Santa Fe and Taos. Generally speaking, traders and freighters did not do the kind of diary writing that Oregon and California emigrants did.

Secondly, we had two outfitting towns, Independence and Westport, which were located in Jackson County, Missouri, several miles apart. Each had its own network of routes for the first thirty miles or so mentioned above.

Thirdly, our trail routes began on the Missouri side of the state line. With the passage of the 1830 Indian Removal Act, non-Indians were not allowed to live west of the Missouri border and therefore no outfitting towns were available west of the Kansas City area.

The main issue, however, was that Jackson County began to be settled in the mid-1820's. Up until 1854, with the passage of the 1854 Kansas-Nebraska Act, which opened up Kansas for settlement, Jackson County was rather rapidly and thickly settled. With farms, fences, and a county court that designated where county roads could be, the trail was moved around frequently. Essentially, the entire remaining length of the Santa Fe, Oregon and California Trails was free to go as it wished on unsettled lands. Not so in Jackson County.

Because of the above situation, the trail in Jackson County has



Deep swales are visible at Fort Leavenworth, where heavy supply wagons left the Missouri River adjacent to the fort, the oldest operating fort west of the Mississippi.



The swale in Kansas City's Red Bridge Park with deep indentations left by wagons pulling up out of the Big Blue River. A DAR marker can be seen at the top of the hill.

been a complicated issue. Surveys were done in those early days, but some of them were localized and trail information in them was not always clear. The trail routes on the Kansas side are much easier to research because it was surveyed in the 1850s by the U.S. General Land Office and was much more accurate and informative.

Whether the overland traveler started at Independence or Westport, both route systems went not west, but essentially south-southwest, following the routes first used by the Santa Fe Trail traders and freighters. Most of our rivers and streams run from the south to the north and drain into the eastward flowing Kansas River and Missouri River. Therefore, going straight west from these two towns meant going up and down and crossing many streams.

These routes converged in western Johnson County, Kansas just west of present-day Gardner, Kansas. This is flat farmland and the Oregon-California Trail branched off at that location from the earlier Santa Fe Trail and headed northwest to cross the Kansas River and wind its way into Nebraska and the Platte River Route.

There are two other routes that need to be mentioned.

Many emigrants outfitted in Westport and followed the Westport Route to its intersection with the Fort Leavenworth Military Road at Gum Springs. From there, they proceeded up this Military Road to use existing military routes from Fort Leavenworth, intercepting the Oregon-California Trail from Independence and Westport near Marysville, Kansas.

The other route was called the 'California Road' and went west from the Westport Route near the Gum Springs area, then went almost directly west to the Bluejacket Crossings of the Wakarusa River near Lawrence and there joined the Oregon-California Trail from Independence and Westport. This shorter but more difficult route was used by early travelers, including John Fremont, and became popular again as the 'Border War' heated up in the mid-1850's.

We have nearly 40 tour guides trained and guide books written which will give Convention 2000 guests a series of high-quality tours on the above routes. We look forward to showing each of you how easy it is to understand the complex Kansas City trails network.

OCTA Board Member Ross Marshall is Chair of the 2000 Convention in Kansas City.

There's Room At The Inn

When you call the 800 reservation number for Adam's Mark, OCTA Convention headquarters in Kansas City, IF you are told there are no rooms available, that may or may not be true. We are coming close to the number of rooms we blocked, so we make this suggestion: Call Adams Mark directly at (816) 737-0200 between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m. and ask for Reservations. There are several other groups at the hotel during our convention who may not need all the rooms they blocked, so consider checking on cancellations. Otherwise, try the nearby motels listed in the registration packet. The deadline to receive the special convention rate is July 7.

— Barbara Magerl



A portion of the Shawnee Methodist Indian Mission, built in 1839. It was the setting for the Kansas Territorial Legislature's first sessions and during its history hosted such famous guests as General John Frémont, Francis Parkman, Marcus Whitman and Sir William Drummond Stewart. — Photo by Barbara Magerl

Convention Bits 'n Pieces

VIP GUESTS: Joining OCTA at the Opening Reception at the National Frontier Trails Center on Wednesday night will be Independence Mayor Ron Stewart of Independence. Kansas City Mayor Kay Barnes will join us at 8:30 a.m. Wednesday morning.

WHAT D'YA KNOW?: Do you know the difference between Westport and Westport Landing? Upper and Lower Independence Landing? Wayne City? Why are there so many feeder routes to the Primary Route? There are 38 well-trained guides eager to help you sort this out on five different tours. If you haven't signed up yet, better make it quick!

IT WILL AMAZE YOU! The Steamboat Arabia Museum, site of Saturday's barbecue, is one of a kind. Buried under 45 feet of farmland were the remains of an 1856 riverboat with 200 tons of frontier merchandise, including French perfume, edible foods, gorgeous buttons, contraband rifles, and much, much more. Part of the hull, the snag that took the boat down, and the boilers are exhibited, along with a map showing dozens of Missouri riverboats still resting in their watery graves. We're serving Kansas City Masterpiece barbecue, making it an evening you won't want to miss.

— Barbara Magerl

Another Debate: Just Don't Call Them Migrants?

Do you suppose the families who followed the trails westward spent any time at all wondering what to call themselves? Were they emigrants or immigrants? Did it make any difference to them? Should it to us?

Early this spring, an innocent enough suggestion on the Overland Trails internet list sparked a dialogue about just that subject among various OCTA members.

In response to a posted question about how to learn about the trail, Dick Klein posted some commonsense advice:

"I would suggest exploring as much of the trail as you can. Then walk as many miles in the footsteps of the immigrants as you can. Academic study is fine, but I've found that to really get a taste and appreciation of what the pioneers experienced, it's best to walk the walk."

That prompted Shawnee Cavnar-Brown to wonder, "weren't the trail travelers called emigrants...? The people who came from, say Ireland and England, they were called immigrants, right? So you could be, at once, both emigrant and immigrant, right?"

A possible explanation came from Jim Tompkins, who said the travelers "chose the word emigrant for themselves because

it differentiated them from immigrants. Emigrants were Americans migrating to a different part of America."

"To be entirely accurate," contributed Ross Smith, "our trail travelers were emigrants from Missouri, etc., and immigrants into Oregon, etc. But if they called themselves emigrants, then that's good enough for me."

"I don't see how you could be an emigrant without also being an immigrant," suggested Lesley Wischmann. "Unless you're adrift at sea, in space, whatever. Although if that was your original destination...."

Lynda Durfee offered her own experience in the matter. For a course on the Western Movement a few years ago, she wrote a short paper on women who crossed the plain.

"I used the word 'emigrant' extensively," she recalled, "and the professor crossed it out every time it appeared and wrote 'immigrant.' Darn it, they called themselves emigrants!!!"

Finally, Tom Laidlaw said he "couldn't resist" reviving an earlier discussion (see *NFP*, January, 2000, "OCRA? Emigrants' Reality vs. Historians' Perspective") by asking:

"So, then what did they travel on? Emigrant Trails, Immigrant Trails, Emigrant Roads, or Immigrant Roads?"

— *Bill Martin*

Looking For Ancestors And Finding OCTA

Bob Hamilton, Gateway Chapter Vice President, wasn't looking for OCTA when he started his first search. He wasn't even looking for the trails. He was looking for a great-great-uncle, Private Bennet Tribett, whom he learned about in a letter he found hidden behind an old photograph.

The letter was sent from Three Crossings and concerned his g-g-g-uncle's death in 1862. Not yet familiar with the trails, Bob began an ardent search for the grave, when he happened to notice Three Crossings on a modern state map of Wyoming. A trip west, although not resulting in any material help, led him to the address of the Lander, Wyoming, office of the Bureau of Land Management.

Craig Bromley, Lander Resource Area Archaeologist with Wyoming Bureau of Land Management, and his staff researched information in the letter and located a grave near Three Crossings of the Sweetwater, on the Oregon Trail near present-day Jeffrey City, Wyoming. As an added bonus, the grave was included in a photograph of the Three Crossings Station Site taken by William Henry Jackson in 1870.

When BLM was able to gain permission to visit the site from private landowners, they discovered the wooden marker in the

WH Jackson photograph had been replaced by a headstone and frame in 1928. Bob Hamilton with his wife and daughter visited the grave. Displaying a genuine understanding for historical records preservation, Bob donated the original letter to the Fort Caspar Museum. It was Caspar Collins, for whom the fort and city are named, that brought Bennet Tribett's unit, the 6th Ohio Volunteer Calvary, to the frontier in March, 1862. Bob's great-great-uncle was 18 when he died of pneumonia in December, 1862, and was buried near the trail at Three Crossings.

Bob was surprised to learn from Bromley that a national organization, OCTA, dedicated to trails and grave preservation was located near where he lived in Kansas City. Once introduced to the trails by members of the Trails Head Chapter, Bob was hooked and joined Gateway as well.

You can read more about the story of Bennet Tribett on Gateway Chapter's Webpage on the OCTA website, www.octa-trails.org. The full story is detailed in two parts in the first two issues of Gateway's newsletter for 2000. You can request a copy at stjopioneer@aol.com or by calling (816) 671-0138.

— *Marilyn Bryan*

**Visit the Kansas City 2000 Convention Website
at www.trailshead.org**

On The "Rhoades" To Emigrant Trail History

By *Bernie Rhoades*

Trailmasters Muriel and Gail Carbiener lead an immensely educational tour of a section of the California Trail that many consider the most forgotten and remote part of any Western Emigration route.

May 24-25, with the many private property owner's permission, a four wheel drive group composed of Carbieners, Mike and Dell Rose Banks, Richard Klein and Bernie Rhoades, successfully and excitedly transited Granite Pass, from Raft River "Parting of the Ways" at Idaho Interstate 86/84 to Thousand Springs at Highway 93 in Nevada

Using the new *Trails West Guidebook*, beginning on the Raft River (Idaho) ranch of Lyle Woodbury, crossing the wheat/sage open prairie, we encountered McClenden Springs, Almo and the Emigrant Massacre marker. Departing the plain, our California Trail is joined by the Hudspeth Cut-off from the East, and eventually, after a beautiful up-canyon transition from paved to gravel road, we entered the legendary Silent City of Rocks Preserve.

Rock-bound emigrant signatures were examined and the axle grease "brand" of my 1846 Great-granduncle Daniel Rhoads was viewed on Pagoda Rock. Many "cousins" had seen that item for generations, but the best was yet to be discovered 40 miles away on Record Bluff.

Under a sunny broken sky, the group walked Pinnacle Pass, saw Hensley's Salt Lake Cut-off blend in with the trail, and saw Granite Pass for the first time in the distance beyond the sage brush covered open expanses of Junction Valley at TW marker C-11.

Leaving the few remaining log structures in the valley, the group four-wheeled up and over Granite Pass, and stayed adjacent to the trail until it cut down the steep ridge to Birch Creek on the Ward Ranch. We sidled and shimmied into Utah, getting roof top CB antennas broken off and side rear view mirrors rammed in by overgrown greasewood and junipers,

hence, back into Idaho. Only three tires of the vehicle ahead were touching the ground as we gained the Peg Leg Mine road on Birch Creek; seconds later, ours was likewise.

Yes Virginia, you REALLY DO need "high clearance 4 WD vehicles" in TW/OCTA country.

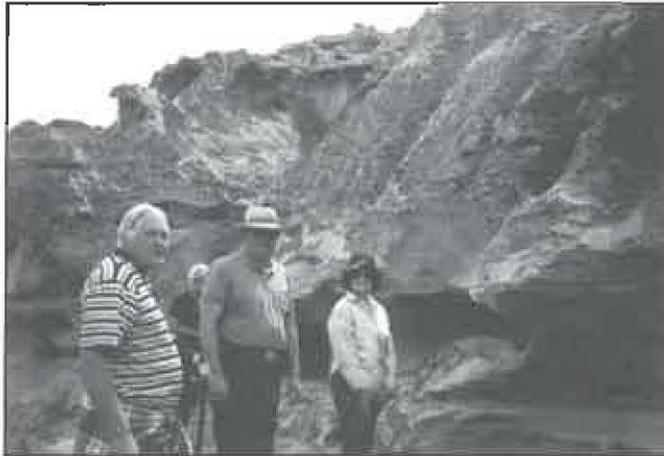
As the day was nearing an end, half the group camped out for the night, the other half heading for a shower in Burley. Little, if any, wildlife was in evidence.

Reassembly occurred the next morning for a continuation down to Flat Iron Bluff in Goose Creek Valley. Tall grass and green meadows proved it was a wet spring. Eventually we traveled brown dirt dusty roads to the Bedke Ranch, with threatening dark clouds beginning to move in the distance. Record Bluff revealed four hitherto unknown Rhoades family 1846 signatures, "C (Catherine) Rhodes, John Rhodes, H V Rhodes (?), and __Rhoads," An unpredicted highlight, second only to Granite,

which brought tears to this writer's Rhoades eyes.

Weather was a non-issue until entering Goose Creek/Thousand Springs Valley going west, upon which a HORRENDOUS desert squall inundated the departing crew, who exited in a flood of muddy brown rainwater gorging every normally dry Nevada stream crossing. (Four hours later, the same storm spawned a tornado that wiped out an Albertson's store in Salt Lake City.)

The satisfied group broke up at Highway 93. I drove south of Wells/Elko to the bottom of the Donner/Hastings barrier, the Ruby Mountains, where antelope are everywhere. By doing a figure "8", I was able to cross Overland Pass and loop back over Harrison Pass, viewing distant desert lightning flashes. Eventually I was able to view the end of the Hastings Cut-off where the South Fork of the Humboldt dumps into the Humboldt proper, just south across from the beginning of the Greenhorn Cut-off. A very moving experience for this descendant.



Left to right, Bernie Rhoades, Mike Banks and Muriel Carbiener. Dell Rose Banks is in the background.

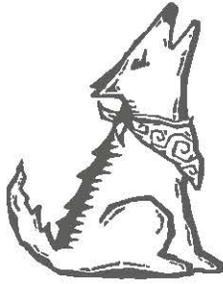
— Photo by Gail Carbiener

California Trails/Greenways Conference Scheduled

The 17th Annual California Trails and Greenways Conference will be held in conjunction with the 15th National Trails Symposium which will be from Sept. 21-24, 2000 in Redding, CA.

On Sept. 21, there will be an all-day California Trails and Greenways Conference. The National Trails Symposium opens that evening. There will also be meetings, field trips and mobile workshops on the 20th and 21st prior to the symposium. Universal Trail Assessment Process workshops will also be held before and after the Symposium.

Details on the symposium can be found on the American Trails website at <<http://www.outdoorlink.com/amtrails>>.



NEWS FROM THE CHAPTERS

Trails Head

Trails Head is busy preparing for this summer's convention. Chairman Ross Marshall has ably organized a number of committees to assure that the myriad tasks and responsibilities are assigned and that each of the responsibilities is planned out and rehearsed. This convention will feature a number of facilities that are devoted to trails history year round, but it will also show conventioners how many evidences of the trail still exist in an urban environment.

Another example of rediscovering trails evidence in the urban area is the study of the location and history of the Barnes place, which was a campground eight miles out from Independence, starting in 1849 and replacing the Archibald Rice campground of the earlier period. Local historian Walter Cook has carried on valuable research and persuaded our local chapter that we should explore the possibility of a memorial sign. Mary Conrad chairs the committee that will make a recommendation to the chapter before the convention takes place.

Many members of our chapter are participating in a spirited public dialogue about the advisability of providing an elevated walkway over the site of the early town of Kansas in order to afford both a view of the site and of the Missouri River. The issue at hand is whether the walkway, proposed by the City of Kansas City, might destroy or block access to archaeological remains of the town of Kansas site. Both pro and con viewpoints have been advanced at great length, and the issue is not yet resolved. The disputed site is located quite near the

steamboat Arabia Museum, which conventioners will visit.

Because the trail routes occupy most of the available hours of tour-guides-in-training, we decided that this year's chapter meetings would offer an overlook of the situations and conditions that led to western development. First in the series was Francis Cuppage, M.D., who spoke about "Lewis and Clark Expedition: Opening the West." Dr. Cuppage is both a Lewis and Clark enthusiast and an authority on early medicine. He showed that disease was rampant among Native Americans by the time the expedition made its trip, but Lewis and Clark did demonstrate that if explorers started out with healthy men, they returned with healthy men.

Bill Bullard presented a program exploring the mishaps, misfortunes and mistakes of Zebulon Pike, John Charles Frémont, and Stephen Long. He concluded that some sense of humor is a necessary adjunct to the study of Western American History.

Elaine McNabney presented "Little Elaine on the Trail," a first-person recollection of adventures of a young traveler on the Overland Trail. This is a marvelous performance, and chapter members accept with reluctance Elaine's insistence that it is the final performance.

All meetings have been held in easily accessible public places and advertised on public bulletin boards and in public newspapers in order to attract visitors, since we are attempting to create a broader base of membership in OCTA.

- Bill Bullard

California-Nevada

At the start of what appears to be a busy summer, chapter members are already looking forward to next year's Spring symposium in Southern California.

The Symposium, chaired by Joanne Hinchliff of San Jacinto, CA will be in Temecula, Riverside County, and will feature the history of early trails and roads into southern California.

Set for March 10 and 11, details are still being worked out, but the program will include talks by authors Phil Brigandi, John Robinson and Leon Lyman, plus a field trip led by Brigandi following the Southern Emigrant Trail/Butterfield Road.

Also planned are a self-guided tour of Old Temecula, which in early days was an Indian reservation and rancho of Mission

San Luis Rey, and a visit to the Temecula Valley Museum.

Leon Lyman will discuss Temecula as the setting for the novel "Ramona" and the home of mystery writer Earle Stanley Gardner.

Details on the March meeting will be outlined in the January issue of Trail Talk, CA-NV's chapter newsletter.

Frank Tortorich, who is a candidate for the national OCTA board, will lead a group in the Carson Pass area July 23-25, installing a marker on the trail in Hope Valley and cleaning up the Carson Pass area.

In August some chapter members and other OCTAns will meet at the annual convention in Kansas City. President Bill Webster is encouraging all chapter members and non-members

(continued on page 15)

MORE NEWS FROM THE CHAPTERS

Gateway

After the emigrants who took the St. Joe Road crossed Mosquito Creek and ascended the bluffs, heading west toward the intersection with the Independence Road, they kept to the top of the west-running ridgetops in what is now Doniphan County, Kansas. In April, the tops and sides of the bluffs would have been green with the first growth of summer grasses bursting through the rich topsoil of loess clay. Wagon wheel after wagon wheel rotating in line behind one another on the relatively narrow ridge would have worn off these grasses for emigrants following the first trains of the season.

Approximately two miles past the "Whetstine" swale (detailed in the March Issue of *News From the Plains*), the emigrants again were forced to turn a bit north and descend the side of the bluff to take advantage of the flat plain that would take them west to the crossing of the Wolf River. Today, if you stand on the driveway leading to the home of Harold & Eunice Frakes near Fanning, Kansas, you can see a distinct swale where the trains left their indelible mark on the landscape.

The Frakes have been gracious enough to allow Gateway Chapter to place markers along the swale to identify the St. Joe Road. In addition, they are diligent in protecting the swale from intentional destruction. Mr. Frakes, as property owner, understands the importance of the trail and can detail the trail route as it traveled to and from his property. It was with great pleasure and sincere gratitude that the Gateway Chapter awarded the Friend of the Trail Certificate of Appreciation to Harold and Eunice Frakes during a trail trek on April 30. As he accepted the award, with tongue in cheek, Harold Frakes chided, "You know the sound of the wagon wheels going by is sometimes so loud it keeps me awake."

On a rainy April Sunday in the year 2000, it was not hard for Gateway members, like Mr. Frakes, to imagine the sights, sounds and emotions of the emigrants as they crossed Kansas Territory. As Gateway members gathered for their trail trek on April 30, 2000, at the courthouse square in Troy, Kansas, the sun was shining and the air was mild. Before the entire group had assembled, clouds began to blow in from the west and the sky began to gray. The group headed off north along paved Mesquito Creek Road and turned west on the dirt roads that approximate the St. Joe Road, optimistic that they would be back on gravel roads before any rain threatened their path. But the storm moved in quickly and by the first stop on the trek, sprinkles of rain damped their trail maps. Then as they headed further into the hills, the sky opened with a downpour. Within minutes, the wet loess clay turned the roadbed into a slimy surface. Even four-wheel drive vehicles fought hard to keep from slipping sideways down hills and into muddy banks. A member in a two-wheel drive automobile had to rely on his own skill to keep his vehicle moving up and down the slick hills until a gravel road came to the rescue. Finally feeling cold and wet from the April rain and being forced to inspect



Harold Frakes, center, with tour guides Grace Jeschke, left, and Suzette McCord-Rogers, Gateway President.

— Photo courtesy of Marilyn Bryan

the swale from the confines of vehicles which were laden with loess mud, it was not difficult for Gateway members to understand Mr. Frakes's sentiment. In the mind's eye, Gateway members could envision soaked and mud-covered emigrants bent behind wagon wheels, rocking and heaving to get their burden unstuck and moving forward rather than sideways down the swale.

Poignant passages from the diaries of 20th century women who pioneered the plains and the prairies were the focus of a March 4 program jointly sponsored by the Gateway Chapter of the Oregon-California Trails Association and the St. Joseph Museum in St. Joseph, Missouri. The program was underwritten by the Missouri Humanities Council as part of its American Mirrors Program. The program was open to the public.

Francie Wolff, an independent filmmaker from Springfield, Missouri, discussed the joys and laments recorded by pioneer women from the 1850's to 1910, following a showing of her film, *Spirit of the Pioneer Woman*. The film was replete with photos and excerpts from the diaries of wives and daughters who joined their husbands and fathers in an unfamiliar land, facing even more unaccustomed tasks. The voices in the film described the effect on the women's emotions caused by isolation, hard work, peril, and uncertainty of success. In the midst of the physical struggle to tame the land, the voices also focused on the safety of the children and the rebuilding of social institutions in a barren place. Ms. Wolff's theme is that while history may have forgotten the individual names of these women, the impact of their efforts and values remains today.

— Marilyn Bryan

MORE NEWS FROM THE CHAPTERS

Southwest

SWOCTA continued its mapping program on the Southern Trail with an April week in New Mexico. It was the largest group of mappers to date, with fourteen participating in part or all of the days.



OCTA member Don Buck atop an evident trail trace dubbed "Dave's Descent," because it was located by Dave Hollecker.
— Photo by Rose Ann Tompkins

Chapter member Cam Wade of Socorro, NM has been researching the trail along the Rio Grande from Socorro to Hunter's Draw, where the trail leaves the river for good. He felt he had located two sections where it was necessary for wagons to leave the river valley and take to higher ground. Cam asked the group to come in for ground work after he had worked out the mileage from the diaries and maps, plus two flyovers.

These areas are north of Elephant Butte, where the river valley itself is now under a reservoir. One area, which Cam called the Black Hill Bypass, involved about twenty miles of trail to avoid about seven miles of river bottom. A small portion of trail was found in Simon Canyon, one of two possible canyons Cam had decided were used by emigrants. However, the rest of that trail segment was not located. Many miles were walked by the group without success. The area in question had an early gravel highway, a paved highway and now an interstate going through it, therefore we may never find it.

The other area we called the Narrows Bypass. The river goes into a narrow canyon at that point and all travelers left the river for a few miles, closely paralleling the river. We were able to map the entire stretch of four to five miles, finding a possible grave and good trail evidence.

For the first time, over 100 digital photographs and the Narrows Bypass mapped segment, drawn from the GPS readings, were put on a CD for those who participated. This was done in lieu of a formal report as has been done for some of the mapping weeks in the past. We continue to tap into the new technologies for our mapping whenever possible.

A chapter planning meeting will be held the weekend of July 7-10 in Strawberry, Arizona. Planning of next year's activities will be done as well as taking time for socializing and exploring the nearby countryside.

— Rose Ann Tompkins



SWOCTA mappers after a long day of looking for the trail. This campsite was in the bottom of Nogal Canyon, one of many dry washes that feed into the Rio Grande valley.

— Photo by Rose Ann Tompkins



SW Chapter members Bob and Betty Lee recently celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary. The Lees are charter members of both OCTA and SWOCTA. They have led various SWOCTA outings over the years, including the very first one to the Bonita Creek area along the Gila River. Betty was OCTA's Archaeology Committee Chair for a time and received the Meritorious Achievement Award at the 1994 OCTA convention. They are retired in Safford, Arizona.

Northwest

The Northwest Chapter has established a new Meritorious Service Award, named for Dick & Trudy Ackerman. The Award was unveiled at the chapter's General Membership Meeting in March by Jim Renner and Dave Welch.

Dick & Trudy are the first recipients and this award recognizes the long service they have given to the organization. Both are charter members of the NW chapter and National. The master plaque will hang in the awards gallery at the National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center at Flagstaff Hill outside of Baker City, Oregon. New recipients will have their names added on small brass plates attached to the plaque in addition to receiving a personal award.

The plaque reads: *"This award is given to members of the Northwest Chapter of the Oregon-California Trails Association for exceptional efforts to preserve western emigrant trails. The recipients have contributed to trails preservation, education and appreciation over a five or more year period. The award is made in honor of Richard & Trudy Ackerman. Mr. Ackerman was one of the founders of the Northwest Chapter and served as its president. He chaired two national conventions hosted by the chapter. On the national level, Mr. Ackerman served as President and as national Trails Preservation Officer. Trudy Ackerman has been Dick's associate and partner in all of these endeavors. The recipients honored below have followed the high level of achievement set by the Ackerman's."*

Also at the March meeting, Lethene Parks was sworn in as the NW chapter's new president.

On May 20th, Dick & Trudy Ackerman lead a group of 10 people along the Southern Route/Applegate Trail. Several new interpretive sites were seen; the one in the State Park near Eugene, one at Avery Park in Corvallis and another in Cottage Grove. We stopped at the Roseburg Court House and saw the sign marking the trail through the city of Roseburg, Oregon.

CA-NV

(continued from page 12)

to join for refreshments and a short chapter meeting on Wednesday, August 9 at 3:30 p.m.

Also in August there are two scheduled events. Chuck Dodd will lead a group on a four-day trek over the Black Rock-High Rock Applegate trail August 19-22, and Steve Larmore plans a hike over Roller Pass August 19.

Dave Hollecker has arranged a trip over the Truckee River route September 23, and Tom Hunt has a work outing September 29-October 1 to fence and mark the Nancy Allen grave on the Nobles' Trail.

On September 30 there will be a joint work party with OCTA and the U.S. Forest Service led by Joel Knowles.

Details of these outings will be outlined in the CA/NV newsletter in July.

— Patricia Loomis

The trip ended at Corvallis, Oregon via the western route where Dick showed us the old trapper's route and the dry (east) and wet (west) routes.

On May 24 & 25, Trailmasters Gail & Muriel Carbiener lead an immensely educational tour of a section of the California Trail that many consider the most forgotten and remote part of any western emigration route. A 4WD group successfully and excitedly traversed Granite Pass from Raft River "Parting of the Ways" via Idaho Interstate 86/84 to Nevada's Thousand Springs via highway 93. (See *Bernie Rhoades' story on Page 14 for more information about this trip.*)

From May 3rd to May 16th, Don Popejoy helped lead an Elderhostel tour from Independence, MO to Oregon City, along the Oregon/California Trail. This was the first of its kind and all agreed the 14-day trip was an event everyone would remember. One term the 34 Elderhostel attendees found fascinating was "seeing the elephant." When this term was explained to them, all once again agreed that seeing Don every-day, for 14 days, was their "seeing the elephant!"

Scheduled NW chapter outings include:

National Trails Day, June 3rd led by Jim Renner.

Whitman Route Auto Tour, June 10-11 led by Chuck & Suzanne Hornbuckle.

Siskiyou Trail, June 22-24 led by Richard Silva.

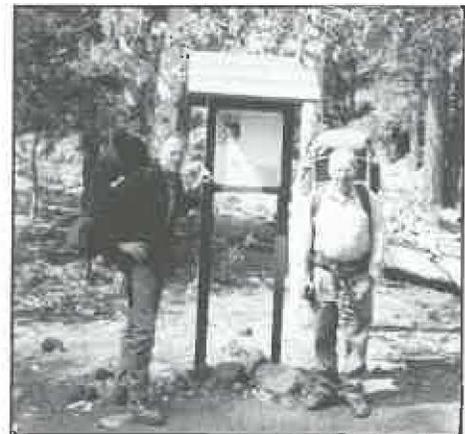
Meek Cutoff, July 15-16 led by Lowell Tiller.

Mullan Military Road Tour from Fort Walla Walla to Plante's Ferry crossing of the Spokane River, Sept. 16-17 led by Lethene Parks & Don Popejoy.

For information about these outings check the NW chapter's website >www.nwocta.com<

NW OCTA's membership has gone up by five due to the hard work of our membership guru, Joyce Bolerjack. The NW chapter now boasts a total membership of 260.

— Don Popejoy



Harold Drake, right, of San Carlos, CA, and Ron Volk, left, of Florissant, MO., on the first OCTA backpack prior to the Chico 1999 convention. Their leader could not make the trip because of a foot injury, but the two OCTAns reported the Walker trail was "a three-day hike in the beautiful Sierra."

— Photo courtesy of Ron Volk

Letters . . . Letters

Fellow OCTAns:

As you know by now, I am not running for re-election to the national Board of Directors. I wanted a little space in *NFP* to explain my decision.

I have very much enjoyed serving the organization and I believe that we face a number of critical decisions in the next few years as we grow into a more mature organization with a stronger and renewed focus on preserving the precious trail resources. OCTA's current leadership under Dave Welch and the projected leadership of Randy Wagner portends only good things for confronting the challenges we face. I would have liked nothing more than working with them.

On a personal level, however, this became impossible. Unfortunately, in the past two years, I have had to face the loss of both my mother and brother. The stresses of dealing with those losses have aggravated my MS to the point that I believe I simply must cut back on some of my responsibilities now. With my term on the OCTA Board expiring, it seemed a good time to step back from that. I regret that I have not been able to serve as effectively as I had hoped because of the upheavals in my personal life.

During my time on the Board, there was quite a bit of turmoil within the organization. I wanted to be sure that everyone knew that this was, in no way, a factor in my decision. I am absolutely convinced that OCTA has come through some rough spots a stronger and more vital organization which is eminently capable of carrying forth its mission. It was my privilege to represent all of you on the Board for one term and, if my health allows it, I may well consider running again in the near future. In the meantime, I will continue to do whatever I can to preserve the physical traces and history of the westward emigrant trails.

Lesley Wischmann
Laramie, Wyoming

Editor

News From The Plains

Recently I was talking with a friend about our love of the Trail and some of the things we do. As we talked, she said that she was sure that in her Mother's papers was a diary of a Great, Great Uncle that had gone to the California gold fields in 1850.

Needless to say, I was very interested and thrilled when she brought me a typewritten transcript of it a few days later. I made several copies and have sent one to Headquarters. Kathy suggested that I write you as you might want to put a note about it in the next issue. I told my friend that she'd fulfilled a personal dream of mine.

Her Great, Great Uncle was a physician, Dr. William A. Gordon, and he talks about all the cholera victims and a little about the treatment he attempted. He, being a well-educated man, wrote well and I found it a very interesting diary to read. I think others will too. Kathy said she'd make copies!

My friend also brought a very small gold coin to show me that Dr. Gordon had sent her Great Grandmother, his sister. It is a commemorative coin stamped on one side 1857 California Gold with the California Bear in the center; on the other side is an Indian head. I was very excited to see that as well.

I have asked my friend whether she thought the diary was known since she had a typewritten transcript; she said that only the family had copies to her knowledge. She has located the original and hopes to bring me a little more information about Dr. Gordon. He returned to Lexington, Missouri, after several years in California to resume his medical practice. I've asked her to see if he ever wrote about his adventures in California.

I thought there might be a few others that would be interested in knowing about this find!

Carol Osborne
St. George, KS

The Reading Trail (cont'd from page 17)

from many Gold Rush journals, letters or newspapers and combined them with bright, busy, clever, lively, humorous, and colorful illustrations. The texture of the rough canvas on which she painted adds to the overall historical yet homey feeling the book engenders. The end result is a masterpiece. There is no formal text to explain the gold rush, there is no need for one because the quotes and pictures tell the story. With word and art, Schanzer delightfully illustrates the adventures of sea travel, crossing Central America, and the overland journey to get to the gold fields the way the participants experienced it. She takes kids to the diggings and shows them what life was like in mining camps and San Francisco, the work and the play, the boom and the bust. She finishes her tales by settling California down. And she does it all in about forty delightful pages. For those of us who feel the need to

have things explained (mainly us adults), Schanzer ends with an author's note to clarify some aspects of the California gold rush and her process of making this book. True, this book is written and illustrated for children in elementary school (and likely some kids in their early teens), but I think it will be very apparent to your students or children and grandkids that you are enjoying it as much as they are. Spend a *lot* time just looking at and reading this book together--the pictures will capture your heart and tickle your funny bone and the quotes will pique your imagination and enlighten your mind. Isn't that what learning is all about!

I hope you and yours enjoy these *small* steps on the reading trail.

The Reading Trail



By Lyndia
Carter

Emigrants traveling west by covered wagon could find their way on their own by simply following the well-worn trail. However, they faced the journey with more confidence if they carried an accurate emigrant guidebook. They felt even safer and more assured if they had with them an experienced trail guide, such as a former mountain man or someone who had been out west before and was going there again. Children on the reading trail are much the same way. Left to their own resources, they can find good reading, but it is not as easy as having a list of good books to read. Furthermore, if they have a teacher, parents, or grandparents who can provide them with good books and share the reading experience with them, the journey becomes a pleasure trip. I find that with information books, as kids call them, the kids, especially if they are in elementary school, enjoy them and learn more from them *if an adult is involved with them*. They like to talk about the things they learn; they like to discuss the pictures; they like to ask questions beyond the text. You need to be with them on their journey of discovery. If you want them to enjoy learning about the trails, if you want them to grow up caring about the trails, you need to be there with them now, either with a book or on the road.

During a recent visit to the public library, I found four short (kids like that), well-illustrated (kids *love* that), and interesting information books about the West. Each is rather general and easily understood. They are excellent books to begin your elementary school age children on the reading trail to learning about the westward trails. As a former teacher, I highly recommend them to teachers. As a grandparent, they have my "good grandmother seal of approval." Do remember, just giving these to the kids, or checking them out of the library is good, but reading them together is better! Be there to explain, expand, discuss, and even correct if necessary.

Westward Ho! The Story of the Pioneers, written by Lucille Recht Penner and illustrated by Bryn Barnard (Random House, New York, 1997), is a take-off on the popular Landmark Books of years gone by, but for a younger, more visually-oriented audience. It is a picture book, so its 37 pages are brightly and profusely illustrated. It contains short, two-page chapters on many topics relevant to the westward movement. The text is simple and written in an interesting style. Though highly simplified, the information is for the most part excellent; it is made understandable on a child's level. In addition to some chapters dealing with general pioneer facts and stories, this book has specific chapters on the Lewis and Clark expedition, Daniel Boone, Moses Schallenger, the Donner Party, the Gold Rush, the Pony Express, and pioneer women and children. The information and stories about animals also increase the appeal to children. This book can get your young'uns excited about history early in their lives.

Westward Ho, Ho, Ho! (The Millbrook Press, Brookfield, Connecticut, 1996) combines historical fact with fun jokes and

riddles. Authors Peter and Connie Roop match each page of information with a page of jokes about the topic. Let the kids try the jokes out on you as you read the fact pages to or with them. They'll get a kick out of hearing you groan when they tell you the answer or punch line. Another nice feature is the list of suggested readings for each subject. This is great if the child wants to know more or has a report to do. This book covers various aspects of western history, including explorers, fur trappers, Native Americans, soldiers, buffalo, the trails and covered wagons, Pony Express, railroads, cowboys, outlaws, and the list goes on, providing useful, interesting information on each. Its length is appropriate as well; being just thirty-seven pages long kids can read it without a major investment of time. The illustrations by Anne Canevari Green are humorous line drawings that add to the fun. The writing style and jokes appeal to kids in their older elementary school years, say nine to twelve or so, for whom it is highly readable. No one ever said that you couldn't smile or laugh while you were learning, at least not since the willow stick and dunce cap years.

Getting more specific to the trails, *The Wagon Train*, one in the series *Life in the Old West*, by Bobbie Kalman (Crabtree Publishing Company, New York, Ontario, and Oxford, 1999), presents a wide variety of informational tidbits in a very readable manner. Kalman seems to sense what kids are interested in learning about emigrants and wagon travel; things such what they ate and how they cooked it; what they did if it rained or snowed; how the oxen and horses worked; what dangers the pioneers faced; what the daily routine was; and how they got along with the Native Americans. She has organized her material into a format that is very comfortable for the learning styles of young people in the middle to upper elementary grades and into junior high. The book uses main topics, sub-topics and supporting ideas, like a textbook, but is far more comfortable than a typical classroom book. Kalman makes a lush blend of illustrations, using modern photographs, child-friendly graphics and pictures, nineteenth century photographs, and period paintings, and more recent works of art. Glossary and index are also learning tools this little (31 pages) treasure. This is also a good book to take in the car while traveling the trail since it makes trail life understandable on a child's level.

I must admit this fourth little book, *Gold Fever! Tales from the California Gold Rush* by Rosalyn Schanzer (National Geographic Society, Washington, D.C., 1999), is my favorite of this time's books. In fact, I am charmed by this book. I *love* to read about the trails in the words of the emigrants themselves, but few children get turned on by reading a trail diary. However, kids love pictures and kids can enjoy short quotes from diaries, especially if they are funny or have an unusual twist or are very clever or are picturesque or home-spun. So to reach kids, Schanzer has carefully chosen fantastic quotes

(continued on page 16)

"Beyond The Wide Missouri"

18th Annual OCTA Convention - Kansas City, MO

It's never too late to make your plans to attend the 18th annual Oregon-California Trails Convention, this year headquartered at the Adam's Mark Hotel in trails- and heritage-rich Kansas City, Missouri.

Registration is accepted right up to the convention, although after July 1 a late registration charge of \$20 applies. Individual registration is \$40, family registration is \$60 and single day registration is \$20. Bus tours are \$45 each and workshops are \$10 each. Additional fees apply for luncheons, the awards banquet and the Arabia Steamboat Museum barbecue.

For registration information, call OCTA headquarters at (816) 252-2276 or Judy Budde, Registration Chair for convention organizers at (816) 941-0728. Keep in mind that space for bus tours and workshops is limited.



A limestone marker with the Santa Fe National Historic Trail logo marks the route where a slight swale may be found in Prairie Village, Kansas.

— Photo by Barbara Magerl

Featured Speakers

Wednesday, August 9

**Craig Crease: "The Nature of the Trace...
The Development and Evolution of the Santa Fe, Oregon
and California Trails in Kansas City" (Keynote)**

**Mark Kelly: "What Do I Do Now?
A Mountain Man's Dilemma"**

Friday, August 11

**Loren Horton: "Burials and Grave-Marking
Along The Overland Trails"**

**John Mark Lambertson: "Hopes and Fears, Excitement and
Tears: Jumping Off on the Oregon/California Trails"**

**Robert Manley: "Where Ends the Eastern Road:
The Missouri River Frontier As Obstacle and Opportunity"**

**Harmon Mothershead: "The Missouri River: Highway of
Exploration, Commerce and Competition"**

**Alan Perry: "Three Frontiers: Europeans and
Native Americans in the Century Before the Trails"**

**Arnold Schofield: "Wagons, Whiskey and Walkers:
Transportation Arteries of the Oregon, California
and Santa Fe Trails"**

Rodney Staab: "John August Sutter in Missouri"

**Michael Tate: Native American Relationships With Overlanders
Along the Oregon, California and Mormon Trails"**

Schedule Highlights

Monday, August 7

- 7 a.m. - 5 p.m. Bus Tour A (California Road)
- 7 a.m. - 5 p.m. Bus Tour B (River Landings)
- 1 p.m. - 3 p.m. Walk With Harry Truman

Tuesday, August 8

- 7 a.m. - 5 p.m. Bus Tour A (California Road)
- 7 a.m. - 5 p.m. Bus Tour C (Fort Leavenworth)
- 1 p.m. - 4 p.m. Field Trip: Trail History for the Visually Impaired
- 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. Board of Directors Meeting

Wednesday, August 9

- 7 a.m. - 8:15 a.m. Chapter Presidents' Breakfast
- 8:30 a.m. - 10 a.m. Annual Membership Meeting
- 10 a.m. - 12 noon - Speakers/Presentations
- 12 noon - Lunch (tickets required \$8)
- 1:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m. Workshops
- 3:30 p.m. - 5 p.m. - Chapter Meetings
- 5 p.m. - 9 p.m. - Welcome Reception at National Frontier Trails Center

Thursday, August 10

- 7 a.m. - 5 p.m. - Bus Tour B (River Landings)
- 7 a.m. - 5 p.m. - Bus Tour D (Independence Route)
- 7 a.m. - 5 p.m. - Bus Tour E (Westport Route)
- 6:30 p.m. - 9 p.m. Authors' Night
- 7 p.m. - 8 p.m. Petticoat Pioneers Presentation
- 8 p.m. - 9 p.m. Silent movie "The Covered Wagon"

Friday, August 11

- 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. Speakers/Presentations
- 12 noon Lunch (tickets required \$8)
- 6 p.m. - 9 p.m. Awards Banquet (tickets required \$26)

Saturday, August 12

- 7 a.m. - 5 p.m. Bus Tour C (Fort Leavenworth)
- 7 a.m. - 5 p.m. Bus Tour D (Independence Route)
- 7 a.m. - 5 p.m. Bus Tour E (Westport Route)
- 5 p.m. - 9 p.m. Steamboat Arabia Museum Barbecue Dinner and Tour (tickets required \$20)

Bus Tours

All bus tours are from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. and depart from the Adam's Mark Hotel. Each tour is offered twice during the week. The cost of the tours are \$45 each and include lunch. Consult the convention guidebook for details about the tours.

A - The California Road
Offered Monday and Tuesday

B - River Landings
Offered Monday and Thursday

C - Fort Leavenworth
Offered Tuesday and Saturday

D - Independence Route
Offered Thursday and Saturday

E - Westport Route
Offered Thursday and Saturday

Workshops

Workshops will be held on Wednesday from 1:30 p.m. to 3 p.m. at the Adam's Mark. Space is limited and pre-registration is required. The cost of each workshop is \$10.

"Storyliving: Jump Off At St. Joe"
Staff of St. Joe Museum

"Doing Historical Research in the Greater Kansas City Area," John Mark Lambertson

"Website Development"
Lesley Wischman

"Writing For OCTA's Publications"
OCTA editors

"Mapping Emigrant Trails"
with the Kanza Chapter

"Convention Workshop"
Jim Budde

"Archaeology Workshop"
Mary Adair or Mary Conrad

Book Room Hours

Tuesday, August 9 - 10 a.m. - 8 p.m.
Wednesday, August 10 - 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Thursday, August 11 - 12 noon - 9 p.m.
(Authors Night 6:30 p.m. - 9 p.m.)
Friday, August 11 - 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

OREGON-CALIFORNIA TRAILS ASSOCIATION

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Inside the *News*

- **New OCTA Endowment**
- **Charles & Mary Martin**
- **Kansas City Trails**
- **Applegate Hearing Held**
- **Chapter News**
- **Convention Update**

OCTA Convention
Kansas City
August 7-12