

Volume XVII, No. 3

Newsletter of the Oregon-California Trails Association

July, 2003

## 2003 Convention: Rutnuts Take Manhattan

OCTA members will get a taste of the emigrant experience of "Trails, Tallgrass, Trials" during the 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Oregon-California Trails Association Convention in Manhattan, Kansas, August 11-16.

While OCTAns personally won't suffer too many trials, they will hear about them. And they will personally enjoy the tallgrass plains and get up close and personal with the trails left by those who traveled overland 150 years ago.

A week-long schedule of entertainment and education is planned, including what organizers promise will be an opportunity to see trail ruts and segments not previously viewed by most OCTA members.

Three tours are scheduled on three days each, two days of speakers are planned, the annual Awards Banquet will be held, the Book Room will be open throughout the Convention and it all wraps up with a day-long visit to historic Fort Riley on Saturday.

There is no deadline for registering for the Convention, although bus tours are filled on a first-come, first-serve basis and a late registration fee of \$20 will be applied after July 10.

While the registration desk at the Manhattan Holidome will be open on **Sunday, August 10**, for early arrivals, con-



*One of the special guests at the 2003 OCTA Convention will be Flat Skylar, shown here with friend Ginny Hogan at the End of the Oregon Trail center. Ms. Skylar might be coaxed to share her adventures on the Trail. See story on page 6. — Photo courtesy Barb Pretzer*



vention activities begin on **Monday, August 11**, with a pair of Pre-Convention bus tours. One will feature the western section of the St. Joe Road and the other travels from the upper Wakarusa River Crossing to the Kaw River.

While the Board of Directors is meeting all day on **Tuesday, August 12**, convention-goers will have their choice of three separate bus tours, each of which will be repeated on Thursday, August 14 and Friday, August 15.

The Kaw River Crossing Tour (Tour A) starts in Topeka at the Kansas Museum of History and ends at the Louis Vieux Cemetery, with trailside stops at several rut locations, the Herbert Reinhard Green Memorial (once tallgrass prairie), the site of the St. Mary's Indian Mission, and the Westar Energy Oregon Trail Nature park.

Cannonball Run (Tour B) starts at the Vieux Cemetery and includes a stop for lunch in Westmoreland. Highlights of the

*(continued on page 4)*

## From the Editor's Desk . . . by Bill Martin



There is little OCTA members enjoy more than getting out to walk the trails. Next best, when they can't get out, is to *talk* about the trails. That's one of the great things about an OCTA Convention, because it gives us an opportunity to do both, to experience ruts and swales and, when we're not doing that, to learn from the experts.

I'll admit, when I first heard that OCTA was going to Manhattan, Kansas this summer, I wasn't all that excited. I appreciate the opportunity to see new places, but The Little Apple isn't exactly a tourist destination (perhaps especially in August). My formative experiences with the trails came on the Black Rock and Forty-Mile deserts and the Sierra Nevada. Those experiences were further nurtured by OCTA conventions in other western locations. Kansas is virtually unknown territory. And, of course, really, really flat.

But despite those prejudices, the more I thought about it, the more I read about planning for the 21<sup>st</sup> OCTA Convention, the more it stimulated my history gene. Reading John Mark Lambertson's piece on Kansas in the most recent *Overland Journal*, sealed the deal. I can't wait to get there – and neither should you.

The Overland experience wasn't only about climbing mountains, crossing deserts, fording rivers or, simply, survival. At its beginning, the emigrant experience was about getting started, jumping off and settling in to the tedium and monotony of plodding westward. And it was here, on the Kansas prairies, that many of our ancestors first tested their worthiness for the journey to California or Oregon.

Just the opportunity to stand on the banks of the Little Blue River and contemplate that thought would probably be reason enough to make sure you are in Manhattan this summer. But

it gets even better when you contemplate the exceptionally packed schedule convention organizers have put together for us when we arrive.

Manhattan will give us an opportunity to experience the legendary tall grass prairies from a close-up, insider's perspective. We'll get a good look at Fort Riley, out of whose gates blue coats rode to protect emigrant wagon trains. We'll visit emigrant graves, walk around Alcove Spring, roam where the buffalo did (and still do) and walk in swales seldom seen by OCTA members. As convention organizers rightly boast, "All the Convention tours will have sites never before seen on an OCTA tour."

The Convention will also bring that history of the trails alive for us in the meeting rooms. From keynoter Don Coldsmith's overview of the pioneer trails to Scott Price's history lesson on Fort Riley, there's something to suit just about every historical taste, from cattle drives to cholera, from murder to murals.

If you are a regular at OCTA Conventions, I don't have to tell you about what's in store when it comes to renewing old friendships and making new ones, or the "I didn't know that" moments you'll share during your week in Kansas.

If you've never been to an OCTA Convention, this should be the year. You are a member of the nation's leading trails preservation organization for a reason, most likely related to your love of history and heritage. This summer, there's no better place to indulge that love than Manhattan, Kansas.

I admit I've come full circle, from something less than excitement to outright enthusiastic anticipation. I can't wait to get my first taste of The Little Apple.

-- Bill Martin



## News From The Plains

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Masthead Photo Courtesy of Denver Public Library,  
Western History Collection.

### Submission Guidelines

*News From The Plains* welcomes news, features and photos related to the work of OCTA and its members and to the preservation of our trails heritage. Material is due 30 days prior to publication dates. Material should be sent either on a computer disk (in Word or text format; please make sure you include a hard copy) or via e-mail.

Pictures are appreciated and can be sent via e-mail, on a disk (jpg format) or originals for scanning.

**Next Deadline Is September 1, 2003**

## From The President . . .

by Randall Wagner



Paul and Helen Henderson's remarkable collection of western emigrant trail diaries, journals, books, documents, research, photographs and maps is now archived at the North Platte Valley Museum in Gering, NE. In a real sense, the collection has come back home.

I had the opportunity to speak at the Grand Celebration Ceremony for the completed remodeling and expansion of the Museum. Much of the work involved the construction of a new Western History Archive built specifically to house the Henderson Oregon Trail Collection. Executive Director and Curator John Versluis and a staff of dedicated volunteers are hard at work getting the collection properly cataloged and archived. It was a big job. It is a huge collection.

For me, the journey to Gering was a trip down memory lane. When I last saw the collection (sometime in the late 1960s) it was the dominant feature of the Henderson's modest home in Bridgeport, NE.

It was stacked on shelves, stuffed into file drawers, tucked under furniture, piled neatly on the floor, organized on tables and chairs, scattered across desks, and hung on walls.

The entire house was a research library and, I expect, only Helen really understood the filing system. Still, I had no idea how large it was until I saw it all organized in countless trunk-sized archival file boxes at the Gering museum. It is impressive in both volume and content.

I spent a couple hours browsing through the diary collection I used so extensively while writing the script for the 16mm documentary Paul and I produced on the Trail across Wyoming.

I once again marveled at the magnificent hand-drawn maps that Paul labored over for endless hours on his basement drawing board. John Fremont and his staff did not spend as much time, or pay as much attention to detail, as did Paul with his free-hand style and mug full of colored pens and pencils.

For the past several years the Henderson Oregon Trail Collection has been stored at the University of Wyoming's American Heritage Center where it was semi-ignored and al-

most lost among the larger collections.

Now it is where it belongs: back on the Trail (literally) in the shadow of Scotts Bluff and Chimney Rock. Now it is the centerpiece of an impressive, growing and well-managed western history archive. The Henderson family made the right decision in bringing this wonderful resource back home. OCTA thanks them and we also thank the North Platte Valley Museum directors and staff.

Word comes from Bill and Jeanne Watson that the Pioneer National Historic Trails Studies Act is now moving in both houses of the U. S. Congress. The legislation came within a whisker of final passage in the last congressional session, failing only due to lack of time to resolve some minor differences between the House and Senate versions of the bill.

Things look better now and we hope to have good news by convention time. The Watsons have been tireless workers for OCTA on this, and other, legislative causes. They have my sincere appreciation.

Vice President Dick Pingrey is chairing a committee of officers and directors that will review all applications for the position of Association Manager. The committee plans to interview selected top candidates early in August and, if they find the right individual, introduce him or her at the Manhattan convention general membership meeting on August 13th. Word is that there is no shortage of applications for the position. The challenge for the committee is to find the one that will be a perfect fit for OCTA.

Speaking of the Convention, it is again time for all officers, directors and committee chairs to submit activity reports. In addition, please contact me directly (RWagnerfoto@aol.com) as quickly as possible with any items any of you wish to have placed on the Board of Directors meeting agenda. (I would like to place a deadline of July 10 on that, but I recognize the mail may not deliver this newsletter to you much before that.)

The 21st Annual Convention at Manhattan is shaping up to be something really special. I suppose that's fitting, with the organization now old enough to legally drink. Hope to see you all there!  
— Randy Wagner

## From Headquarters . . .



This spring, OCTA acquired the largest donation of materials in over a decade. OCTA members Dr. and Mrs. David White visited OCTA twice in May to deliver some very important cargo -- 40 cartons of collected biographies, 19<sup>th</sup> century government reports, reference works, books on American Indians and original volumes (dating back to 1812) of the "Niles Register." The White collection will be placed on loan to the Merrill J. Mattes Research Library at the National Frontier Trails Center. (For information on donations, see Jeanne Watson's article on page 7.)

Dr. White is the editor of the impressive eight-volume series *News From the Plains and Rockies, 1803-1865*. His article "Western Trail Bibliographies (A Guide to Sources)" appeared in the *Overland Journal*, Volume 19, #2 last summer.

When asked if he was saddened to part with his library, he remarked "not in the least," for he was "delighted and relieved to find a good home for his collection." Thank you, Dr. White for sharing your love of history with so many who will utilize your collection!

John Mark Lambertson, Director of the National Frontier Trails Center, has written an article that appears in the latest *Overland Journal*, Volume 21, #1. It is entitled "Hopes and Fears, Excitement and Tears: Jumping off on the Oregon and California Trails." Reading this article, we know you will be inspired to celebrate those early trail experiences on the Plains by joining us at the 21<sup>st</sup> Annual OCTA Convention in Manhattan, Kansas August 10-16, 2003.

In and around the organization:

(continued on page 8)

## Convention *(continued from page 1)*

tour include swales at Copperhead Creek and Rosemary's Meadow and the S.M. Marshall gravesite.

Between the Blues (Tour C) travels between the Big and Little Blue Rivers, with visits to sites and trail segments on both the Independence and St. Joe Roads, including Alcove Spring and the Historic Trails Park and Pony Express bar near Marysville.

After touring on Tuesday, the opening reception will be held at the Columbia Theatre and Oz Museum in Manhattan, including tours of the facility, which first opened in 1895 and was restored in 1994, and extensive memorabilia from the movie "Wizard of Oz."

Two workshops are also scheduled on Tuesday. Evening, one on the "Basics of Preservation" (Leslie Fryman and Dave Welch) and the other on "Nineteenth Century Black Powder Guns" (Buster Schmitz).

**Wednesday, August 13**, gets off an early start with a pancake breakfast beginning at 6:45 a.m. After the General Business Meeting at 9 a.m., the **Keynote** address will be delivered at 10:30 a.m. by author Don Coldsmith, who set the context for the rest of the convention with a discussion of pioneer trails from the prehistoric era to today.

Other speakers on Wednesday will include Barbara Burgess on the Independence Road, Charlene Peddicord on the Oregon Trail through Pottawatomie County, Dr. Ramon Powers on Asiatic cholera on the trail, and Mary Conrad on the western movement in murals.

Chapter meetings will be held at 4:15 on Wednesday and the annual **Awards Banquet** will begin at 6 p.m.

**Thursday, August 14** is devoted to a repeat of the three tours, with evening workshops on women's clothing and quilting. **Authors' Night**, offering a chance to have books signed by your favorite writers, will be held from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. in the Book Room.

The tours are repeated on **Friday, August 15**. Also on Friday, speakers include Chris Jefferies on western cattle drives, David Jackson on the California Gold Rush letters of James and David Lee Campbell, Jack and Patricia Fletcher on the Cherokee Trail, John Call on emigrant Asa Cyrus Call, Tee Loftin on John Fremont, Lloyd Gundy on the history of the Oregon Trail Memorial Association and the American Pioneer Trails Association, and Will Bagley on murder and mayhem on the Oregon and California Trails.

Also on Friday, workshops will be held on archaeology at Hollenberg Station (Marsha King), the Census of Overland Emigrant Documents (Bob Kabel), artifact collections (Jeanne Watson, John Mark Lambertson and Dick Davis), convention planning (Jim Budde) and chapter development (Ross Marshall and Beth Finger).

The highlight of **Saturday, August 16** will be the visit to Fort Riley, which is celebrating its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary (see separate story on page 5).

Also on Saturday, there will be a hiking tour through swales and buffalo pastures to the S.M. Marshall Grave Site and a tour to the Konza Prairie Biological Station, which includes native prairie and buffalo herds.

**Book Room** hours are: Tuesday, 1 p.m.-9 p.m.; Wednesday,

## Welcome to "The Little Apple"



A visit to Manhattan, KS is a visit to accidental history. That it exists where it does reflects both the ambitions of men and the uncertain ways of nature.

Long before the first settlers came, a large Kaw Indian Village stood on the site of present-day Manhattan, near the mouth of the Big Blue River.

By 1854, two small settlements had been established, Canton and Poleska, later consolidated under the name of Boston. The city of Manhattan came into being only because the Kansas River was low in 1855.

That spring, the Cincinnati and Kansas Land Company left Ohio on the steamboat Hartford, headed for central Kansas via the Ohio, Mississippi, Missouri and Kansas Rivers. Their goal was to settle a town and name it Manhattan, thinking it might become a second Manhattan, New York.

On the way up the Kansas River, three men went ashore and took a hired wagon to what is now Junction City. That was where they intended to start the Manhattan of the midwest. But meanwhile, the Hartford ran aground in the Kansas River south of the confluence of the Blue and Kansas Rivers.

As a result, the Cincinnati and Kansas Land Company and all of the small groups of settlers already in the area joined forces to form a town, which they agreed to call Manhattan.

The first post office was established in 1856, and the city became incorporated February 14, 1857. Manhattan has grown steadily since then.

Today, "The Little Apple," nestled among the picturesque Flint Hills, is home to over 45,000 people. The region includes the last large preserve of native tallgrass prairie in the United States.

Manhattan is also a college town. Blue Mont Central College was opened in 1859. Three years later, it became Kansas State Agricultural College – the first land-grant college in the nation – now Kansas State University.

Because of its river location, nature challenged early residents with floods that took a devastating toll on homes and businesses. But each time the citizens rose above the destruction to rebuild, eventually winning the All America City award following a 1951 flood. The city is now protected by Tuttle Creek Dam to the north and Milford Dam to the west, and is growing in all four directions.

*Courtesy Manhattan Area Chamber of Commerce*

10 a.m.-5 p.m.; Thursday, 9 a.m.-9 p.m., and Friday, 9 a.m.-9 p.m. Tickets for the **OCTA Raffle** and opportunities to bid on **Silent Auction** items will also be available in the Book Room.

(For late registration information, or other details, consult your Convention booklet; visit the Convention website at >[www.KANZA-OCTA.org](http://www.KANZA-OCTA.org)<; or contact OCTA Headquarters at (816) 252-2276 or >[octa@indepmo.org](mailto:octa@indepmo.org)<; Vern Osborn at (785) 494-2449 or >[cosbo@kansas.net](mailto:cosbo@kansas.net)<; or Jim Bradley at (785) 457-3579 or >[jamesb@kansas.net](mailto:jamesb@kansas.net)<.)

## OCTA Will Help Celebrate Fort Riley's 150th Birthday

*One of the highlights of the Manhattan Convention will a day-long visit to historic Fort Riley on Saturday August 16, ending with a late afternoon barbecue on the Cavalry Parade grounds. The following will help you put your visit into historical perspective.*

Fort Riley was originally, and briefly, known as Camp Center because the original surveying crew believed it to be close to the geographical center of the U.S.

When it was dedicated as Fort Riley on June 27, 1853, it was named in honor of Major General Bennett C. Riley, who led the first military escort along the Santa Fe Trail.

Its primary purpose was to protect people and trade over the Oregon and Santa Fe trails. Later, after the Civil War, its troops helped protect workers building the Kansas Pacific Railroad from Indian attacks.

Located west of Manhattan, on the north bank of the Kansas River three miles from Junction City at the junction of the Republican and Smoky Hill Rivers, Fort Riley was one of the a number of military posts established at strategic points in the West.

The Fort has been home to both the Seventh Cavalry and the First Infantry Division, known as the "Big Red One," both of which have played important roles in military history.

The original fort was built around a broad plain that overlooked the Kansas River valley. The fort's design was similar to most built at that time, with buildings constructed of the most readily available material - in this case, native limestone.

Anticipating greater utilization of the post, Congress authorized appropriations in the spring of 1855 to provide additional quarters and stables for the Dragoons. In July of that year, 56 mule teams arrived, loaded with materials, craftsmen and laborers.

Construction work had progressed several weeks when cholera broke out among the workers. The epidemic lasted only a few days but claimed 70 lives. Work gradually resumed and buildings were readied for the arrival in October of the 2nd Dragoons.

The first territorial legislature met there in July 1855. Slavery was a fact of life and an issue within garrison just as it was in the rest of the country. The seeds of sectional discord



*The historically accurate Fort Riley color guard in action.*



*The fully restored Custer House on the grounds of Fort Riley.*

were emerging that would lead to "Bleeding Kansas" and eventually, civil war.

Increased tension and bloodshed between pro and anti-slavery settlers resulted in the use of the Army to "police" the troubled territory. They also continued to guard and patrol the Santa Fe Trail in 1859 and 1860 due to increased Indian threats.

The outbreak of hostilities between the North and South in 1861 disrupted garrison life. Regular units returned east to participate in the Civil War while militia units from Kansas and other states used Riley as a base from which to launch campaigns to show the flag and offer a degree of protection to trading caravans using the Santa Fe Trail. In the early stages of the war, the fort was used to confine Confederate prisoners.

Following the Civil War, Fort Riley played a role in western Indian wars. General George Armstrong Custer and his wife lived on the post from late 1866 to the summer of 1867.

The Custer House, Quarters 24, was built in 1855. For many years historians believed the Custers lived in the structure. Today the House has been restored with furnishings dating from the 1870s and 1880 and will be open for OCTA visitors.

OCTA members will be bussed to Fort Riley on Saturday morning and will have their choices of three tours, including a bus tour of the Historic District, a walking tour of the Historic District, and a bus to the Territorial Capital.

There will be lunch on the Cavalry Parade grounds, following by welcoming activities, a cavalry program and speakers, with a barbecue beginning at 4:30 on the parade grounds.

Speakers during the Fort Riley outing will include:

- Scott Price, for Community Relations Manager at Fort Riley, "*Evolution of A Frontier Fort;*"
- Dorman Lehman, retired museum director, "*The Fort Leavenworth to Fort Riley Military Road;*"
- Lee Whitley, author, "*The Smoky Hill Trail;*"
- Gaylynne Sherratt Childs, executive director of the Geary County Historical Society and Museums in Junction City, "*Rheetta Morris Returns to Pawnee;*"
- Ron Harris, a retired history teacher at Fort Riley and facilities manager for the Geary County Museum, "*Events of the First Legislative Meeting in Kansas.*"

## Flat Skylar on the Oregon Trail

*A modern-day and somewhat unorthodox traveler on the Oregon Trail is Flat Skylar. The following was submitted by OCTA member Barb Pretzer, grandmother of Skylar German, Flat's Skylar's namesake. Or maybe it's the other way around. Anyway, you will be able to meet all of the Skylars at the Manhattan convention.)*

Skylar German is in the second grade at St. Mark's Grade School, which is near Colwich KS, about 12 miles west of Wichita. Brent and Annette German are Skylar's parents and she has a 10-year-old brother, Dakota.

Mrs. Schrader is Skylar's second grade teacher at St. Mark's. Early in the school year, the class read the book *Flat Stanley*, by Jeff Brown. In the story, Stanley becomes flat when a bulletin board falls on him. He then gets to take many adventures because his parents can send him places by mail – which is much cheaper than airfare!

Inspired by the story, each child in Skylar's class made a life-size flat, paper image of themselves in order to do their own adventure around the world. The first recipient that received Flat Skylar was to return a postcard from their area and then send her to someone else, preferably in another state or even country.

If the recipient was going on a vacation, Flat Skylar said she would love to go with them. She promised she wouldn't eat much or talk too much and that she would be very photogenic on any adventure (vacation) she was taken!

The real Skylar wanted to hear via postcards or pictures of where all Flat Skylar had been on her adventures. As the postcards/pictures came back to Skylar and the other second grade students, they tracked their adventures on a world map at school, thus learning a little bit about each location.

Flat Skylar was first sent to Don Cooper, a friend of Skylar's grandmother Barb Pretzer. Don, being a member of the Oregon-California Trail Association, thought it would be real educational for Skylar and her entire class to follow Flat Skylar along the Oregon Trail from beginning to end.

He contacted several OCTA members along the route of the Trail. He asked them to take pictures of Flat Skylar at key locations of the Trail; send the pictures and a brief explanation of the site back to the school so that it could be presented in an educational format to the second graders; and then send Flat Skylar on to the next party on Don's list.

They all agreed to do their part and it has been 100 percent successful! Flat Skylar made the entire trip beginning in October and returned to St. Mark's Grade School in April with only a few Band-Aids (with wound explanations written beside the Band-Aids).

Not only did Mrs. Schrader teach her class about the Oregon Trail, but the other second grade class attended some of the presentations! In fact, the fifth grade class even borrowed some of the material for a class project they were working on!

Skylar and her family joined OCTA and hope to be in attendance at the national convention to be held in Manhattan, KS in August 2003. Hopefully she will get a chance to meet a lot of the people who hosted Flat Skylar throughout her travels down the Oregon Trail.

## Kansas Emigrants: What Could They Expect?

Emigrants who passed through Kansas were just starting their long overland journey. What could they expect as they crossed the plains? Here's a sample:

1. Plenty of grass, water, fuel, and game.
2. Between Independence/Westport and the Kansas River they had fairly easy travel, which provided a "shake down," and travel organization was refined.
3. Once across the Kansas River, the cattle no longer left during the night to "go back to the barn."
4. Although they became "on alert" for Indians the minute they crossed the Missouri border into "Indian Territory," there was little interaction, except at the crossings of the Kansas and Vermillion rivers. All of it was non-threatening, although emigrants complained that they were over-charged, which left them with a negative opinion.
5. Storms encountered were sometimes quite violent and many emigrants commented in their journals on the incredible lightning.
6. In the mid-1850s, the Trail between Missouri and Lawrence became hazardous because of the Border Wars that were precursor to the Civil War.

This is just a little overview for your understanding of what occurred. We'll attempt to fill in the gaps and answer your questions when you come to the convention. See you in Manhattan August 10-16, 2003!

– Carol Osborne

## Manhattan Postmark

The traditional pictorial postal cancellation will be available once again at the 2003 OCTA Convention in Manhattan.

Ward Crowley has made arrangements for the special cancellation to be applied to envelopes submitted by stamp collectors, convention attendees and others desiring a souvenir of the convention.

This year's postmark will feature the 2003 Convention logo – "Trails, Tallgrass and Trials" – and appropriate wording.

Members not attending the convention can obtain examples of the cancellation by submitting a stamped, self-addressed envelopment to: Convention Station, c/o Postmaster, 500 Leavenworth St., Manhattan KS 66502-9998.

A self-addressed stamped size #10 envelope should also be enclosed for safe return of the souvenir postmark. Requests should be sent no more than one week prior to August 13, nor more than 30 days after that date.

Visit the OCTA Bookstore  
On the World Wide Web:  
[www.OCTA-trails.org](http://www.OCTA-trails.org)

## Volunteers Help Make The OCTA Convention Possible

An OCTA convention wouldn't be possible without lots of volunteers who put in lots of hours to make sure OCTA members have the unique trails experiences we have all come to expect from the annual gathering of rut-nuts.

Listed below are the names of some of the people who have been involved in planning the 2003 Convention in Manhattan, KS.

Says Carol Osborne: "It takes quite a crew to pull off a convention such as we have annually in the Oregon-California Trails Association. The past convention chairmen can attest to this, and when we committed our Chapter for the 2003, I did not realize the effort that is involved and the amount of cooperation needed. We have a great crew, and I thank all of those listed below; however, I know there are many others that I'm not full aware of. Here are all the soldiers."

Ken & Arleta Martin, Della & Ernie White, Jim & Marian Bradley, Glenn & Yvonne Larson, Charley & Mary Weickert, Jack & Jenne Barley, Bill & Molly Ledeboer, Ben & Karen Meek, Carol Cook, Duane Durst, Duane Iles, Dorothy Hoebler, Mary Conrad, Barbara Burgess, John Reese, Jim & Rosemary Forst, Barb Pretzer, Don Larson, Jeanette Suboter, Wallace Carley, Doc Maskil, Pat & Alicia Keegan, Jack & Maxine Haller, Jo Plummer, Barbara Magerl, John & Phyllis Mann, Gail & Muriel Carbiener, Mary Rowson, Janet Lucas, Charley & Ethlyn Taylor, Dorman Lehman, Marie Dellen, Don Cooper, Joyce Hazleton, Mary Ann Tortorich, Marilyn Hines, Jim & Judy Budde, &. last but not least, Ross Marshall.

-- Vern Osborne, 2003 Convention Chairman

### Convention Photos Wanted

Want to share your enjoyment of the sights of the annual Convention with others?

Send your favorite pictures from Convention activities and we'll print them in *News From The Plains*, on a space available basis, giving credit to you, of course.

We're especially interested in seeing snapshots of OCTA members on the tours, at Fort Riley and otherwise enjoying themselves trekking around Kansas.

Send your pictures by September 1. Most helpful is sending them in a .jpg format by e-mail to >octanfp@aol.com<.

You can also mail the pictures (to P.O. Box 811, Georgetown TX 78628) for scanning.

We cannot guarantee that the pictures will be returned, although we'll make our best effort if requested.

Thanks for your help.

*The Editor*

## Thinking About Donating? OCTA Collection Is Ready

The Merrill J. Mattes Library in Independence, MO, a major source of information and research about western trails, is continuing to accept donations from OCTA members and others.

Established in 1990 by OCTA in cooperation with the National Frontier Trails Center, it is consulted by researchers from all over the country. Much of the research material is on loan from OCTA to the Center.

The Library is named for the late Merrill J. Mattes, noted trails historian and author and a founding member of OCTA, who donated his personal library of more than 1,400 publications. He continued to add research materials up until his death. His family also donated awards he received for his contributions to western history.

Other donations of books and research materials include more than 400 trail diaries and reminiscences given by George Watkins, an OCTA member from Idaho. Many other OCTA members have made donations to the Library, including single volumes about the trails.

Recently, Charles Little of California has been working with other research facilities to obtain copies of their holdings for placement in the Mattes Library.

In addition to OCTA gifts, the Mattes Library also has a collection of research materials, including original diaries and letters, purchased by the Trails Center, as well as publications it has been given directly.

The Mattes Library is administered by NFTC Director John Mark Lambertson, a professional archivist.

To make a donation to the Library, OCTA members should go through OCTA. Contact OCTA Headquarters Manager Kathy Conway by calling (816) 252-2276 or by fax at (816) 836-0989.

Arrangements can be made to mail donations and fill out donor forms for OCTA records. After being recorded by OCTA, these will be placed in the Mattes Library.

Donations to OCTA's new Western Overland Trails Collection at the California State Library in Sacramento should also be reported to OCTA Headquarters.

-- Jeanne Watson, Collections Chair

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## Wagon Wheels On The Internet: OCTA Website News

\*\*\* IMPORTANT \*\*\*

### *"Member's Corner" Entrance Now Requires User Name & Password*

Effective July 1, 2003, OCTA Members will need to enter the following information to gain entrance to the "Member's Corner" section of the OCTA website:

**User Name:** octa  
**Password:** trailswest

This requirement is necessary in order to limit access to the information found in this section to OCTA members only.

Note: Please safeguard this information by not sharing it with non-members. Periodically, we will change the User Name & Password. When this occurs, we will communicate this change to Members in future issues of *News From The Plains*.

If you forget what the current User Name & Password is, don't worry. There is an email link to request that the User Name and Password be sent to you again.

### **Old Website Information Transition Complete**

All of the information from the old OCTA website has now been carried over to the current website. As a result, the "Old Website Format" link has been removed from the left menu bar.

### **What's New?**

One of the best features of the new website is the "What's

## Headquarters (continued from page 3)

OCTA's video "Saving a Legacy – The Oregon California Trails" continues to be a popular sales item. Recently OCTA member Carol Osborne placed an order for 15 copies of it for her women's group. The group has now donated copies to each school district in their counties. Great way to educate the younger set about the importance of preservation. Thank you Ladies!

This summer Jan Hill will retire from her teaching career. She and Bill are working on their newest book, *Lewis and Clark – Yesterday and Today*. Once this project is finished, we are hoping we can enlist Jan for a committee position.

Jackie Lewin and Marilyn Taylor's book, *On the Winds of Destiny: A Biographical Look at Pony Express Riders* will soon be available from the OCTA bookstore.

Kentucky members Dr. Glenn and Judy Marsh, before they venture out on the Oregon Trail, always stop in and visit Headquarters. We have missed their visits for the last couple of years and learned that Glenn was in a bad car accident two years ago that kept them from traveling. While he was recovering, Judy encouraged Glenn to write a book. It is entitled *The Shortest Pencil*. This little book is full of keen and humorous observations about life. It is mentioned here because he has written several pages about their journeys along "our

New?" section which you can access directly at <http://www.octa-trails.org/News>

Check this page frequently simply to keep up with news from headquarters and throughout the organization. Also, make sure that you send us news from your chapters, committees, personal treks, etc., so that we can add your news to the OCTA "What's New?" page!

### **New Content**

We will continue to add more content as time goes on. One of the best aspects of this new website design is that it makes the addition of content so much easier. Some sections are still in the process of being filled but check back to watch the progress. And we've got the "modern treks" restored so if you would like to place information about some of your summer treks on the website, get in touch and we'll tell you how to send us the information for easiest posting.

### **Questions & Suggestions**

We encourage members to send us suggestions and questions about any issues related to the OCTA website. To facilitate this communication, there is a "Webmaster" feedback link located in the lower left-hand corner of each web page.

*Lesley Wischmann, Internet Committee Co-Chair*  
[lesleywisch@earthlink.net](mailto:lesleywisch@earthlink.net)

*Mark Wheeler, Internet Committee Co-Chair*  
[Webmaster@OCTA-Trails.org](mailto:Webmaster@OCTA-Trails.org)

## Websites of Interest

Visit these websites for information and historical background before you arrive in Manhattan. Each website has links to other areas of interest.

### **KANZA Chapter:**

[www.KANZA-OCTA.org](http://www.KANZA-OCTA.org)

### **Kansas State Historical Society:**

[www.kshs.org](http://www.kshs.org)

### **Kansas University:**

[www.ku.edu/history](http://www.ku.edu/history)

### **Manhattan Chamber of Commerce:**

[www.manhattan.org](http://www.manhattan.org)

trail" and their rewarding and memorable experiences with OCTA members Karen Buck, Randy Brown and Bill and Edna Barber.

And speaking of traveling along the trail – be sure that when you are seen out traversing the trail terrain that you are properly attired. (Please see our ad for OCTA merchandise elsewhere in this issue).

And lastly, don't forget to mail your Official OCTA Ballot for Board of Directors by July 15, 2003 to be included in the count!

-- Kathy Conway, Headquarters Manager

## Report From the NTPO

By Dave Welch  
National Preservation Officer

Perhaps by the time you read this, we will have a decision on the legislation before Congress authorizing feasibility studies to determine the eligibility of approximately sixty alternate routes and cutoffs of the Oregon and California Trails as National Historic Trails (NHT). I am cautiously optimistic, but it should be remembered that the legislation authorizes studies and does not designate the trails. Much work remains to be done.

The feasibility studies are part of the process for obtaining NHT status as laid out in the National Trails System Act. Trails may be scenic, recreational or historic. Our interest is, of course, the historic trails.

The criteria for including a trail are (1) historical significance, (2) national significance and (3) potential for public interest and recreation.

While an attempt has been made to make the evaluation as deterministic as possible, much subjectivity remains. It is, therefore, imperative that all information on the trails be brought to the attention of those making the determination at the National Park Service. You will hear more about this if and when the legislation passes.

Of the 60 or so routes and cutoffs that we have included in the legislation, we should anticipate that some might not qualify for NHT status. That should not diminish our efforts to map, mark and protect those routes as prescribed by historic preservation laws.

*One of the great misunderstandings that I once shared is that designation as an NHT provides significant additional protection. It does not.*

Protection for the trails on public lands comes from the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) and processes prescribed by the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA). NHT designation is not required for protection under these laws and designation as an NHT does not, by itself, bring NHPA and NEPA into play.

Under the NHPA and NEPA, Federal agencies are required to consider the effects of their actions on historic properties, which are defined as resources that qualify for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. Note that qualification for the register, not actual listing, is required.

Qualification for the National Register is based upon historical significance and the physical integrity of the resource. Again, some subjective decisions are required, especially with respect to the physical integrity of the trail. OCTA's *Mapping Emigrant Trail Guide* is a widely used standard for making this assessment.

According to the instructions for registering a property, "the quality of significance ... is present in buildings, structures (including roads and trails), and objects that possess integrity of location and setting" and "are associated with events that have made significant contribution to the broad patterns of history; are associated with lives of persons significant in our past" or "have yielded, or are likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history."

(Continued on page 16)

## COED Program Update

By Bob Kabel  
Interim COED Chair

OCTA's Census of Overland Emigrant Documents (COED) project continues to develop.

Progress continues on the revision of the COED surveyor's manual, which involves the addition of many route codes not previously included in the database. This has also led to significant improvements in the survey forms.

Major advances have been made in the conversion of the COED database and administrative programs from FoxPro to Access software. These conversions are necessary for the manipulation of the database into a form that will allow public access.

It means transferring the existing data into the database, the translation of information from new surveys into digital form, and the tracking of all activity from the location of documents through entry into the database.

The COED database contains citations of 143 archives in which surveyed documents may be found. A review of all contact information for these archives has been completed. In addition to updated mailing addresses and telephone numbers, we now have e-mail addresses (when available) and web site addresses (for nearly all repositories).

Kathy Roubal continues to mine the nooks and crannies of her home for data and historical files from her 15 years of work on COED. Our receipt of this information is enabling a major effort in organization of all files and quality control of the data files in the pipeline before they can be entered into the database. This work is now well advanced and, when it is complete, the database which currently comprises 2,263 documents should grow to well over 3,000.

Some activities are now complete. Sales of the *Emigrant Names* CD have now reached 199 copies for an income to OCTA of \$5,571, not including some accounts receivable. We have many indications of successful use of the software and in instances where purchasers have contacted us with problems we have been able to solve their problems.

The scanning of the surveys underlying the current database and *Emigrant Names* is complete, the paper and electronic files are secure in diverse locations, and the surveys are now available for sale.

Most surveys are from five to twenty pages long and sell for \$10 each. The cost for longer surveys is \$1 per page beyond twenty. Surveys of interest may be ordered from OCTA headquarters and will be printed and mailed upon request and payment.

Please note that these are surveys of documents and not the documents themselves. Nevertheless, they may contain information that is not included in *Emigrant Names* or in the entire COED database.

The work of the past year has been supported by a \$10,000 Challenge Cost Share Project agreement with the Long Distance Trails Office of the National Park Service. The NPS also provided financial support for an organizational meeting of potential participants in COED.

(Continued on page 16)



## News From The Chapters

### Crossroads



*Jack and Pat Fletcher making a presentation on the Cherokee Trail Diaries at the dedication of the marker in May at the Donner-Reed Museum. — Photo by Al Mulder*

Trail activities for the Crossroads Chapter started in May with a one-day field trip by bus on section of the Lincoln Highway in Tooele County.

The bus tour included stops at Deadman's Cave, the old Lincoln Highway bridge on Dugway Proving Grounds, and Orr's Ranch in Skull Valley.

Security was tight at Dugway. Cameras were left at the gate and all participants had to register. Chapter President **Brent Reber** arranged the tour and guides **Jess Peterson** and **Roy Tea** provided interesting facts and stories on western Utah trails and the 1919 highway.

In April, several Crossroads members took an auto tour with the Utah chapter of the LHA on the 1919 Lincoln Highway Fisher Pass route from Lake Point to Orr's Ranch. **Tom See** led the 20-vehicle convoy that stopped at Tom's Willow Springs Lodge in Fisher (Johnson) Pass for lunch and a presentation.

In May, several Crossroads members attended a Cherokee Trail marker dedication in Grantsville, UT at the Donner-Reed Museum site. Crossroads member **Lynne Turner** was the marker committee chairperson and the driving force behind the installation and dedication of the marker.

The marker was sponsored by the Daughters of the American Colonists, an organization which has placed the impressive metal micro-imaged Cherokee Trail signs in the several

states the trail went through, including those after it joined the California Trail.

During the dedication, **Jack and Pat Fletcher** made a presentation on the Cherokee Trail emigrants who used the Hastings Cutoff to reach California.

Two interpretive panels on the wayside exhibit at the Donner-Reed Museum have been replaced. Since the wayside exhibit was constructed by Utah Crossroads in 1996, the sesquicentennial year of the Hastings Cutoff, the original panels had been damaged by weather.

Crossroads Chapter and the City of Grantsville will jointly sponsor a project to place a kiosk-type roof over the wayside exhibit to protect the panels and viewers from inclement weather.

In late March, several chapter members attended a ceremony near Preston, ID, near the site of the Bear River Massacre, to witness the transfer of 26 acres to the Northwestern Band of the Shoshone Nation. The land was purchased by the Trust for Public Land with money raised from several sources.

The tribe is planning a small interpretive center to tell the story of the massacre that occurred on January 29, 1863, when soldiers under the command of Colonel Patrick Conner attacked the Shoshones' winter camp and massacred between 250 and 380 men, women and children. A larger interpretive center is planned near Logan, UT by The American West Heritage Center.

— Al Mulder



*Jesse and Nancy Petersen (standing) with Shirley Andrus (seated) at Orr's Ranch during the Lincoln Highway Tour. — Photo by Al Mulder*

Visit the  
**OCTA Bookstore at**  
[www.OCTA-trails.org](http://www.OCTA-trails.org)

## Gateway



Left to right, Suzette McCord Rogers, Barb Atkinson and Mary Ellen Martin at the Gateway chapter meeting.

— Photo by Jackie Lewin



Wolf River Bob Breeze welcomes speaker and OCTA Board member Chuck Martin.

— Photo by Jackie Lewin

The Gateway Chapter of the Oregon-California Trails Association held its spring programs on March 6 and April 3. Approximately 60 people attended each of the excellent programs.

On March 6, OCTA Charter Member and National Board Member Dr. Chuck Martin of Richmond, IN presented a program intended to acquaint attendees with the whole length of the trail.

His program, "Never Come the Land Route For God's Sake" (Lucius Fairchild, 1849) included slides and narration. He used the emigrants' own words to tell the story - the serious and the humorous - of the journey to California and Oregon.

On April 3, the Gateway membership meeting was held at the Pony Express Museum. The meeting opened with an account of the start of the first Pony Express at 7:15 p.m. on April 3, 1860. The account was given by Travis Boley, Director of the Pony Express Museum.

The evening program was presented by John Mark Lambertson, Director of the National Frontier Trails Center in Independence. His program was titled "Hopes and Fears, Excitement and Tears: Jumping Off on the Oregon and California Trails." Through the use of emigrant diaries he gave the audience an idea of what it must have been like to leave the United States and begin a journey to the West.

Gateway has two summer outings planned. On May 10, two OCTA interpretive signs were to be dedicated, one at the Iola Cemetery overlooking the Wolf River Valley and crossing and the other at the Courter-Richey Cemetery with its first graves dating from 1849.

On June 7 the group planned to travel by tour bus along the western part of the St. Joe Road in Nemaha and Marshall Counties, KS.

— Jackie Lewin

## Trails Head

The Trails Head Chapter sponsored a trek on May 10. We were attempting to retrace the old road from Liberty, MO to Fort Leavenworth and it is thought this was the first time anyone had attempted to follow this old route. Liberty and Fort Leavenworth are two early locations that predate the villages of Independence, Westport and Town of Kansas.

Just a few of the many sites we took in included the square in Liberty, early homes of the Dougherty family, site and ruins of "Multnomah," the rural 1855 mansion of famous frontiersman John Dougherty, site of the village of Barry and the location of the original Missouri border before the 1837 Platte Purchase. The trek ended in historic Weston, MO with time to visit some of the interesting shops located on historic main street.

We will have a Chapter meeting on July 10 with a program focusing on the individual members of the Lewis and Clark

expedition. Ross Marshall will be the presenter.

The OCTA Convention in Manhattan, KS is drawing near. The Kanza Chapter has planned some great tours along with other activities with something of interest for everyone. If you have not yet registered, I would suggest you do so soon. I have heard that at least one of the tours will need a second bus.

These folks have located and identified some amazing ruins in Northeast Kansas and I am looking forward to seeing them for myself. Mary Conrad's speakers committee has done a fine job of lining up speakers on various subjects of interest to trail folks. Ross Marshall, Lee Kroh, Bob Boland and Dick Nelson will be leading a pre-convention tour. It should be a great convention. I hope that a great number of people are planning to attend.

— Dick Nelson

## Southwest

On April 28, thirteen Southwest Chapter Trail Turtles met in St. Charles, MO to begin a ten day odyssey over the Boone's Lick and Santa Fe Trails.

Although there were moments of great confusion in trying to make our way through the traffic of several cities, we managed to always find each other again, thanks to our maps and FRS radios. Trail Boss Tracy DeVault and his No. 1 assistant, Judy DeVault, keep the turtles in line. At the start of the trip they gave each of us a ball cap with RUTNUT on it, maybe so they could keep track of us.

We spent the first two days on the Boone's Lick Trail. In case you are not familiar with this trail, it was developed in the early 1800s by two of Daniel Boone's sons as a way to bring salt from their salt works in central Missouri to market. It became one of the main '49ers land routes across Missouri from the east as they made their way to the jumping off places along the Missouri River.

Frank Peters of St. Louis was our guide the first day and David Sapp of Columbia was our guide the second day. Both have done extensive research on this trail and we were fortunate to have them with us, showing us trail sites we would have never found on our own.

There are many DAR markers all along both trails, some in the true locations they were marking, some not. One such marker, for the Davault Tavern, sat on the frontage road to I-70, since the building itself, if it was still around for assisting trail travelers, would be located in the median of the interstate. Nearby was the cemetery with a number of Davault family members, ancestors of our Trail Boss, with only a slight variation in spelling.

We visited New Franklin and had our group picture taken by the friendly local lawman. We gathered around a marker declaring it to be the start of the Santa Fe Trail while a smaller marker behind it declared it to be the end of the Boone's Lick Trail. Technically, neither statement is correct,



*The Trail Turtles pose outside OCTA Headquarters during their visit to Independence.*



*Trail Turtles gather for a group photo in front of trail markers in New Franklin. This photo was taken by a helpful local police officer (not necessarily in the performance of his duties).*

but it gives this small Missouri community its claim to fame and both true locations are within a few miles - though in different directions from each other.

In Independence we made a stop at that famous site, OCTA Headquarters, visiting with the various people who help keep our organization running. Then we spent an afternoon at the Arabia Steamboat Museum. Though several had been there before, it was a must see of the trip, and enjoyed by all.

Leaving Missouri behind, we drove into Kansas, keeping as close to the trail as was practical in the time we had and visiting as many sites as possible. We saw swales and springs and crossings. We saw forts and museums and ruins and landmarks. We also saw the power of thunderstorms on the plains. It was the week of the tornado outbreak in Kansas and Missouri and we felt lucky to see only black clouds, lightning and rain. The land was green and lush, with wildflowers and birds. Also, unfortunately, ticks. Almost enough to make us wonder about our number of thirteen.

As some of the group came east to our rendezvous, they took the Cimarron Cutoff, led by Richard and Marie Greene. But as we traveled west, we took the Mountain Branch of the trail and moved into the more rugged miles of the trail, over Raton Pass. On our last full day together, we had lunch at the famous St. James Hotel in Cimarron, NM.

At that point some of the turtles began to leave the group and by the time we reached the Santa Fe Plaza and the end of the Santa Fe Trail, there were only six left for a picture at the marker. This stalwart six celebrated the finish of the trail at the old La Fonda Hotel, lamenting that just as in trail days, not all could make it to the end.

*-- Rose Ann Tompkins*

## Northwest



Northwest Chapter trek participants near the St. Paul's Mission and submerged HBC Fort Colville. — Photo courtesy Glenn Harrison

## Jim Renner Receives Ackerman Achievement Award

Jim Renner of Molalla, OR has been named winner of Richard and Trudy Ackerman Meritorious Achievement Award, as selected by officers of the Northwest Chapter.

For his long-time, effective service to Western trails, Renner's name will be added to a plaque at the National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center near Baker City.

A native of Milwaukie, OR, Jim received a Bachelors Degree in geography from the University of Oregon and a Masters Degree in cultural geography from Oklahoma State University.

During his graduate studies, Jim created the Archive of Oklahoma Fiddlers through a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Jim also served two terms as Oklahoma's folk-artist-in-residence taking folk music into the public schools.

When he returned to Oregon in 1989, Jim was hired by the Oregon Trail Advisory Council to coordinate the 1993 Sesquicentennial of the Oregon Trail. In 1991, the Governor's Council became part of the Oregon Trail Coordinating Council (OTCC), a private, nonprofit organization created to organize and coordinate the 1993 Sesquicentennial celebration. Jim directed the creation of new exhibits for the state's Oregon Trail kiosks and promoted interpretive programs and community events.

After the Sesquicentennial, Jim became the OTCC's Executive Director. Using lottery funds allocated by the Legislature and funds received from the sale of Oregon Trail license plates, the OTCC administered grants that were given to Oregon Trail interpretive centers and to projects on Oregon's four national historic trails.

When the Oregon Legislature passed the Oregon Historic Trails bill in 1995, the OTCC became responsible for promoting and developing 16 historic trails in Oregon. Jim's testimony and legislative contacts were essential in gaining their

The Northwest Chapter has had a busy spring.

Lethene Parks led an 11-car caravan to many fur trading forts, missionary sites and military forts in the Spokane and Colville area. She had prepared a 50-page tour book and we used CB radio communication.

Some of our members participated with the Idaho chapter in the placement of a series of historical markers noting the Utter-VanOrnum Disaster.

On June 7 -- National Trails Day -- Chuck Hornbuckle led several members and some Boy Scouts in remarking the 5.7-mile section of the Oregon Trail from LaGrande to Hilgard Park. This time GPS readings were taken where the carsonite posts were placed. The following day, Tuck and Kay Forsythe let some hikers on the 1836 Whitman route near Meacham.

On June 14-15, some members participated with the Idaho Chapter in a 4-x-4 outing in Oregon from Vale to Wagontire.

The Northwest Chapter has a wide variety of outings and activities planned for the summer. On July 12 Jim Tompkins was to lead a car caravan to French Prairie.

The NW Chapter picnic will be held on Sept. 27 (specific location was pending at press time) with trail music and other entertainment.

The chapter was seeking final approval of the placement of an historical marker on the Free Emigrant Road on October 11, followed by a hike and possible trail marking. This commemorates 150 years following the Elliott wagon train's use of the route to Eugene. The route saw continued use for the next ten years.

-- Glenn Harrison

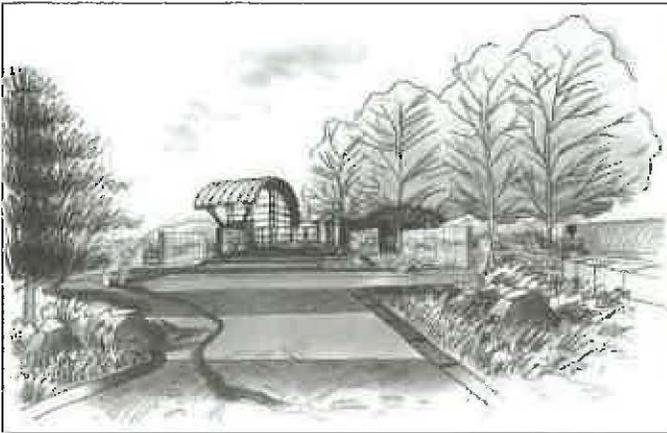
recognition. His work led to the publication of the Oregon Historic Trails Report laying out its recommendations for Oregon's 16 designated historic trails. Through Jim's recommendations, the Oregon Historic Trails Advisory Council (OHTAC) was created to oversee the trails.

Through the 1990s, Jim played an active role in OCTA, serving a three-year term on the national Board of Directors from 1992 to 1995 and serving as president of the Northwest Chapter of OCTA during 1994 and 1995, and again in 1997.

Jim has done much trail research, led many outings, talked with many people and drafted many grant requests all in an effort to promote the Western migration trails.

In 1998, Jim became the Deputy Director of the Oregon Travel Information Council where he continues to assist with the placement and maintenance of Oregon's historic signs through his work with the Oregon Historical Markers Committee. During 2000 and 2001 Jim chaired the Oregon Historic Trails Advisory Council and assisted in promoting trail related outings and projects. He continues to serve on the OHTAC Executive Committee.

## California-Nevada



Artist's conception of the planned Trail Center in Elko, Nevada

### Planning Continues For Elko Trails Center

The California National Historic Trail Interpretive Center to be built near Elko, NV passed a major mile marker in recent weeks on the road to completion.

"We just finished the Conceptual or Schematic Design phase and now we will fine tune the building and exhibit designs in the Design Development phase," said Dee W. Lloyd, California Trail Center Manager.

The Design Development phase is planned to be completed in mid-December 2003. The remaining workload includes producing the construction documents and then going out for bids. The construction contract is planned to be awarded in late 2004.

"While it may sound like we're a long ways from having our Trail Center built, it's just around the corner," said BLM Elko Field Manager Helen Hankins. "We're maintaining the schedule we set a year and half ago and we still plan to open in Summer 2006.

"This has been a grassroots project since day one when a group of local OCTA members decided they wanted a trail center in Elko. They secured \$15 million in partnerships from the City of Elko, Elko County, State of Nevada, and Congress. The excitement is growing and we'll keep people informed as progress continues."

— Mike Brown, Bureau of Land Management

**Manhattan,  
Kansas  
August 10-  
16, 2003**



Little-known emigrant trails were remembered, awards presented and a once-in-a-blue-moon tour and dinner at a private mansion dating back to 1851 were highlights of the California-Nevada Chapter's spring symposium held in Eureka.

The two-day meeting was hosted by Tom Hunt, his sister Fran Taplin and niece Tammy Pruden. Lectures and a chapter meeting were held on the campus of the College of the Redwoods.

Speakers stuck to history of the old trails west. Tom Hunt spoke on the trail William Nobles laid out from the Black Rock Desert along the edge of Smoke Creek to Lassen Meadows and on to Shasta City in 1852. Richard Silva spoke on the Lockhard Road in the Fall River-Pitt River area. Mark Wilson described John C. Fremont's route through California.

Dave Welch and Leslie Fryman presented OCTA's preservation program and Dick Davis reported on the chapter's agreement with the California State Library.

A highlight of the symposium was dinner and a tour of the Carson Mansion, built in 1864 by lumber king William Carson.

Six Certificates of Appreciation and one Lifetime Achievement Award were presented during the symposium.

The Lifetime Achievement Award was presented to Mary Mueller "for her selfless dedication in preserving the historic western trails." Her activities have included serving on the National Board of Directors, Managing Editor of *Trail Talk*, chair of the OCTA Membership Committee, and involvement in a number of convention and chapter committees.

Certificates of Appreciation were presented to Bill and Beverly Webster, Charles Little, Ford and Ellen Osborn, Doug Crary, Bernie Scoles and Patty Knight.

-- From "Trail Talk," the CA-NV Chapter newsletter

### 2003 OCTA Annual Fund Drive Final Results

Annual Fund	\$ 3,230
Archaeology	35
COED	187
Education	1,425
Endowment	6,128
Graves & Sites	1,268
Preservation	1,056
Special Publications	490
Trail Mapping	<u>1,411</u>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$15,230</b>

Contributions received after April NFP deadline:  
Carole and C. Ross McClellan, Dru Bower, William G. Bate, Bonnie Ryder Bliss, Charles Davis, Jane and George Petrie, Judy and Glenn Marsh.

## Idaho

Idaho Chapter members helped dedicate the first historic signs of the three Utter Wagon Train death sites on May 24 in Owyhee County. Don Shannon, author of *The Utter Disaster on the Oregon Trail*, was the featured speaker. Two additional signs were scheduled to be dedicated on June 17 near Farewell Bend, OR and Nyssa, OR.

On May 17-18, Chapter members and guests spent two days remarking several miles of the South Alternate Trail. These are portions of the route that were originally marked by Wally Meyer.

Many of the 16-year-old markers were still in place, but needed new decals. The BLM office in Boise supplied new carsonite posts and decals. Workers replaced 39 trail posts and put new decals on 38 older posts.

The first day, several miles of two separate routes of the Alternate were marked from Murphy, ID near Rabbit Creek toward Guffey Butte. This included one short stretch of newly discovered ruts, about one-half mile long.

On the second day, the main route of the Trail from the top of Sinker Creek grade, around Sinker Creek Butte and around the eastern and northern sides of Murphy Flat was remarked.

On June 26-27, Chapter President James McGill was to teach and lead a college credit field trip class from Arco, ID along portions of the Goodale Cutoff.

Planning is underway for a September 13-14 field trip from Castle Butte in Owyhee County to all of the historic Utter/Van Ornum sites, sponsored by the Idaho Chapter and the Owyhee Historical Society. For details, contact James McGill at (208) 467-4853.

— From "Trail Dust," the newsletter of the Idaho Chapter

## N.J. Schools Honor Watsons For Trails Education Programs

Bill and Jeanne Watson, co-chairs of OCTA's Trails Liaison committee, have received a special award from the Ridgefield Park, NJ Board of Education for presenting programs about the Oregon and California National Historic Trails.

It acknowledges their 10-year commitment to the fifth grade students of three elementary schools by "volunteering their time to delight the children with an interesting presentation."

The Watsons, who lived in New Jersey for 22 years before moving home to the San Francisco area in 1997, present slide programs for two classes at each school and include information about pioneers from New Jersey.

Once, three sixth graders, who heard the program the year before, left the noon lunch line to tell the Watsons how their families followed parts of the overland routes during the previous summer, which required traveling from the Hudson and Passaic Rivers to the Missouri.

For these programs the Watsons take samples of lye soap, hardtack and a hand-dipped candle for students to touch and this year included new handmade nails as well as two brand-new ox shoes made by an Illinois blacksmith and mounted on a wooden plaque.

Even with explanations, this puzzled airport security people who couldn't understand why anyone would want to carry such an item, let alone a dry (but well wrapped) buffalo chip.

The Watsons became involved with the Ridgedale Park Schools when a teacher and technology coordinator, Nils Abate, called OCTA headquarters for information and volunteer Elaine McNabney answered. She suggested he contact them and so this OCTA-Ridgefield Park Schools connection began.

## Endowment Drive Help Booklets Available From OCTA

A series of booklets to help OCTA members make decisions about contributing to the organization's Endowment Funds are now available from OCTA headquarters. Gathered by OCTA's Special Endowment Fund Drive Committee, the booklets provide details about a variety of gifting programs.

Topics covered include general estate planning and information on various gifting techniques, including those that use real estate, securities, annuities, charitable remainder trusts, living memorials, life insurance, living trusts, retirement plans and other options.

According to Committee Chair Richard Pingrey, the booklets are part of a program designed to inform members about how they can apply current tax laws in making estate-planning decisions. "These informed decisions could help our members protect their assets and provide for their family and the future of OCTA," Pingrey said in a May letter sent to OCTA members.

The letter accompanied a brochure outlining the need to build OCTA's Endowment Funds to assure that funds are available to help preserve the emigrant trails for future generations. Many non-profit organizations have large endowment funds to help provide financial stability. OCTA's long-term goal is to establish an endowment fund in excess of \$1 million, about double what it is today.

One of the ways to do that is to encourage members to include OCTA in planned giving programs through which bequests can have favorable tax consequences.

To obtain any of the booklets, contact OCTA headquarters, by phone at (816) 252-2276, via e-mail at >octa@indepmo.org<, or by writing to OCTA, P.O. Box 1019, Independence MO 64051.

## Trails Bill Continues Move Through Congress

The Pioneer National Historic Trails Studies Act, S-635, was approved by the U.S. Senate in mid June and was awaiting action in the House of Representatives.

Congressman Richard Pombo of California is new Chair of the House Resources Committee that will hear S-635 and a the House version, HR-1051.

The newly appointed staff head for the Resources Committee is in the process of moving from Congressman Pombo's Stockton, CA headquarters and apparently will wait for receipt of the Senate bill before taking action on HR-1051 or S-635.

We now need each OCTA member to contact their Representative either locally or in Washington and urge him/her to support HR-1051 and S-635, the Pioneer National Historic Trails Studies Act.

Senator Allord's Willing Seller bill, S-651, was scheduled to for mark-up on June 25. This bill extends Willing Seller authority to all National Trails not now having that authority,

including the Oregon and Mormon Pioneer Trails. The 1/4 mile limit on either side of a National Historic Trail is expected to be included in this mark-up.

At a Senate committee hearing held on May 6, Gary Werner of the Partnership for the National Trails System testified about the impact of trails preservation on oil and gas development, which had been raised as a concern. Werner said that of 120 permits issues near historic trails, only seven had visual mitigation requirements attached by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management or the Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office.

OCTA did not testify at the hearing, but included testimony with written comments submitted by Werner.

During the hearing, Senator Orrin Hatch of Utah, primary sponsor of S-635, urged passage of the bill. He said it would not create new trails across public or private lands, but would allow the National Park Service to recognize new research on significant sites along trails corridors.

-- Bill & Jeanne Watson, Trails Liaison Co-Chairs

### COED Report (Continued from page 9)

We have just received approval of an amended CCSP agreement that will provide the new COED team with \$25,000 for the coming year. This is a tremendous expression of confidence in the probability of realization of the potential value of the COED project.

A COED workshop is scheduled for the Manhattan convention. Unlike previous COED workshops that focused on how to conduct a survey, this one-hour session will be devoted to conveying the essence, and discussion of the future, of COED.

COED is about much more than the surveying of documents and many diverse skills are required by the team. We hope that many OCTAns will want to be a contributing part of this stimulating and rewarding activity.

I would like to acknowledge major contributions in the above-mentioned activities by Rose Ann Tompkins, Don Buck, Dave & Wendy Welch, Pat & Jack Fletcher, Barbara Kabel, Shann Rupp, Kathy Buob, Jim & Sallie Riehl, and Sharon Manhart.

### Stanley Kimball Passes

Stanley B. Kimball, 76, well-known historian and a member of OCTA's very first Board of Directors, died May 15 in St. George, UT following a long battle with cancer.

Kimball, a charter member of OCTA, was descended from Heber C. Kimball, his great-great-grandfather, who became Brigham Young's first counselor just five months after settling in the Salt Lake Valley.

Although he spent 44 years as a Professor of History at Southern Illinois University, Kimball was a leading expert on the Mormon Trail and author of several books. He also served as president of the Mormon History Association.

Although he spent his professional career in the St. Louis

### NTPO Report (Continued from page 9)

The historic integrity of roads and trails can be best described as the ability of the property to convey its historical significance to the public.

Since the western migration, and the story of those that made the journey, is a singular event of western history, few argue the historical significance of the trails, except in cases where use was very limited.

However, the historic integrity of the emigrant trails is measured in subjective terms that require emotional response, yet at the same time these terms are applied to the "real" physical condition of the trails as they can be seen today. NEPA and NHPA provide a mandate for organizations like OCTA to assist agencies in evaluating trails and the effects of development on trails, a task that requires constant vigilance and effort.

If you have gotten to this point of the article, you are probably feeling overwhelmed by the terminology and processes. That is understandable, but these processes are the foundation of trails preservation. Our efforts to protect trails often evoke emotional responses, but that is not sufficient by itself to preserve their remains.

For more about trails protection, I hope you will attend a workshop given by Leslie Fryman, the California-Nevada Chapter Preservation Officer, and myself at the Manhattan convention. We will be available for an extended questions and answers session on Tuesday night. You may also contact me at [welchdj@attbi.com](mailto:welchdj@attbi.com) or 253-584-0332.

area, Kimball spent summers teaching at several other universities, including Brigham Young. He retired to St. George in September 2001.

Kimball is survived by his wife, Violet, four children and nine grandchildren.

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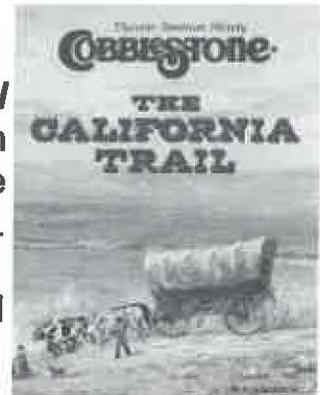
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