



DECEMBER
1989

NEWS FROM THE PLAINS

THE OREGON-CALIFORNIA TRAILS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

P.O. Box 1019, Independence, MO 64051-0519 (816) 252-2276

GATEWAY CHAPTER PRESENTS HONORS AT LUNCHEON

Article by Larry Bunse
Photos by Jackie Lewin

On November 11, 1989, thirty-three member, friends, and guests of OCTA met in Hiawatha, Kansas, to honor the family of Jim and Betty Sudbeck, who were recently named Kansas "Ranchers of the Year". The Sudbecks, nominated by the Gateway Chapter in St. Joseph, Missouri, are only the third recipients in Kansas to have received this honor since the organization was founded. The luncheon, sponsored by the Gateway Chapter, also provided an opportunity to recognize the efforts of several additional Kansans who have made significant contributions in researching and preserving the trails in the northeast corner of the state.

After lunch, Francis Peniston, president of the Gateway Chapter, introduced Ross Marshall, president of the Trailhead Chapter and vice-president of the national organization, who explained the purpose and activities of the Oregon-California Trails Association and the significance of the "Rancher of the Year" award. Next, the various committee chairmen from the Gateway Chapter gave brief descriptions of the work of the Research, COED, Mapping and Preservation, and Program Committees. After thus presenting to the guests an introduction to the activities of OCTA, the program next turned to the recognition of those to be honored. Certificates of Appreciation were presented to Patty Grollmes, Helen Sourk, and Ron Koehler. Grollmes and Sourk were recognized for their efforts to preserve the site of the Log Chain Pony

Express Station, southeast of Seneca, Kansas. This site, owned by these two sisters, received its name from the quagmires found in the vicinity, which often dictated the use of chains to pull out mired wagons. Members of the Gateway Chapter visited Log Chain last summer and were welcomed with refreshments, plenty of local history, and even a demonstration of "horse-powered" plowing.

Ron Koehler, editor of the Hiawatha Daily World, was next recognized for his work in researching the trails in northeast Kansas. He has already provided valuable information in the form of plotted trail maps to the Gateway

Research Committee and was instrumental in organizing and guiding last summers' field trip to Log Chain and other sites.

After the Certificates of Appreciation were handed out, Jackie Lewin, Gateway Program Chairman and national board member, next introduced Jim and Betty Sudbeck, and their son, Curtis, and explained why the Gateway Chapter had nominated them for this award. Jim, Betty, and their three children live on a farm near Bern, Kansas. The Nemaha River crossing on the St. Joe Road is located on their property.

continued •••••



Ross Marshall, vice-president of OCTA, (center) presents the Kansas Landowner of the Year Award to Jim and Betty Sudbeck and their son, Curtis.

When the Gateway Chapter began researching the St. Joe Road two years ago, the Sudbecks were visited by Chapter members who explained the significance of the site. At first maybe a bit incredulous, the Sudbecks soon became active participants in the research on their farm. During the 1988 National Convention in St. Joseph, the Sudbecks, dressed in period costume, welcomed four bus loads of visitors to their farm.

Rich Nolf, Director of the St. Joseph Museum, described the trail site for the luncheon participants. The second of three major river crossings on the St. Joe Road, the Nemaha was forded at this particular location because a limestone ledge extended across the river here and provided a firm footing for wagons and livestock. This crossing was noted by many diarists for its natural beauty. However, the site also brings grim reminders of the dangers of overland travel in the

mid-nineteenth century. Numerous graves were mentioned by diarists, many a result of cholera which was all too prevalent on the early part of the trail.

After the "Rancher of the Year" award was presented to the Sudbecks, Harmon Mothershead and Larry Bunse closed the program by presenting a brief sketch of the St. Joe Road. Hopefully, the guests left the luncheon aware of the important part they play in preserving the trails. It is only through the cooperation of such people that OCTA can continue its work.



Ron Koehler, Kansas trail researcher, is recipient of Certificate of Appreciation.



Dr. Francis Peniston, President of Gateway Chapter, presents Certificates of Appreciation to Helen Sourk (left) and Patti Grollmes (right) for their work in the preservation of Log Chain Pony Express Station.

ROSE ANN'S TWO TRACK

This is my first issue as editor of News From the Plains. I am still learning the ropes and do appreciate all the assistance and copy I have received.

A newsletter is a vital communication link in an organization, especially one with a widely scattered membership as this. I think we can all see the value of our newsletter. However, I can only work with the information I have and that is where all of you come into play. This is an appeal to chapter leaders, committee leaders and members in general to send me information. In theory the newsletter is published quarterly, in March, June, September and December. I plan to get things on schedule and keep them that way. Deadlines for copy will be the 15th of the month preceding each issue, i.e.

February 28

May 15

August 15

November 15

If you want your information in the newsletter, it will be up to you to see that I have the information. If you have comments or suggestions on how to make the newsletter better, please feel free to write to me.

I am certainly not a trail expert, but I believe that I have the skills necessary to do this job well. I am not an "insider" in this organization so I have to depend on all of you for my material. I do not write this newsletter, I edit it. Send me your schedules, plans, trip reports, committee updates, articles, pictures, whatever. If you need any material returned, let me know when you submit it to me.

It would be nice to have more than I can use for each issue.

If you have read this far, I will say no more except:

THE NEXT DEADLINE IS

FEBRUARY 28, 1990!

Rose Ann Tompkins, Editor

1125 W. Mission Dr.

Chandler, Arizona 85224

(602) 963-3565

OCTA HISTORIAN, RUTH ANDERSON, is requesting items for the organization's permanent historical records. Various members in leadership positions have received communication from her, however, there may be others of you that could help her.

Ruth is interested in such things as reports, minutes, newsletters, publicity items, programs, constitution & by-laws, photographs or other such items for permanent record. At last report, she has convention programs, but not complete convention folders. She also needs a copy of Volume 1, No. 2 of the Overland Journal. It is only available in photocopy now and she would like an original if someone was willing to donate it to the archives.

To contact her concerning items you have, write to: Ruth Anderson, 330 South Highland, New Ulm, MN 56073.

CHAPTER REPORTS

TRAILS HEAD

We are in the midst of helping plan and carry out the dedication of the National Frontier Trails Center in March. All members of OCTA are urged to attend.

Saturday, February 24, 1990 at 10:30 am, a general chapter meeting will be held at the Johnson County Historical Museum, 6305 Lackman Road, Shawnee, Kansas. Janet Campbell, director of the county museum system, will present a brief program on the "Trails in Johnson County." The museum has a small permanent exhibit on the trails in the area.

On May 19, 1990, we will have a program centering around the Watts Mill Historical area.

In October, we are planning a trek along the trail from Lawrence to Topeka.

James Lee

ARIZONA

The Arizona chapter's trail trips tend to be backwards to many chapters since the cooler months are the best time to visit many locations. The last field trip was held the weekend of Nov. 4-5 in southern New Mexico along Butterfield Trail sites. Details of this trip are found elsewhere in the newsletter.

The chapter has the following activities scheduled before their annual planning meeting in mid-July.

Jan. 26-28 Boat trip on Lake Powell from Wahweep to Hole-in-the-Rock, Utah. Contact person: Jack Root (602) 749-9679

April 7-8 Beale Road traces in the Kingman, Az area. Contact person: Rose Ann Tompkins (602) 963-3565

June 16 The 2nd Annual Trails Symposium in Tucson, AZ. Contact person: Harland Tompkins (602) 963-3565

IDAHO

The Idaho Chapter has a tentative trip scheduled along the California Trail through Granite Pass to Wells, Nevada during the latter part of June. The definite dates will be determined at the chapter's annual meeting in April, as well as the calendar for the remainder of the year.

Larry Jones

NEBRASKA

We have another Trail Trek scheduled in late spring to continue following the trail across Nebraska. This trek will start generally in the area of Fort Kearny and travel west from there for the day. We hope to have another trek somewhere in the western part of the state at another time. A report on a trek of last May is found elsewhere in this newsletter.

Work on the Omaha convention in August of 1990 will consume most of the time and the efforts of the chapter.

Bob Berry

NEW CHAPTER ORGANIZED

UTAH CROSSROADS

As many as fifty are expected to attend a special meeting at Salt Lake City on January 25 to choose officers for OCTA's newest chapter, plan a 1990 field trip and hear a presentation on the Mormon Trail from Fort Bridger to Salt Lake Valley, opened by Lansford Hastings and followed by the Donner-Reed Party in 1846. OCTA membership in Utah has more than doubled in recent months, and they have been approved by the national board as a new chapter, named Utah Crossroads.

At the January gathering, LaMar C. Berrett, past department head of LDS Church History at Brigham Young University, will tell about his research over the past 14 months for a new book on the Mormon Trail. In that time, Dr. Berrett has spent forty days and covered more than 8,000 trail miles between Salt Lake City and Fort Bridger.

Also at the meeting, Randall Wilson, Nominating Committee chairman, will present for approval recommendations on the new chapter's first slate of officers and board members. H. Rush Spedden, an authority on the Hastings Cutoff from Salt Lake Valley to Pilot Peak in Eastern Nevada, will outline plans for the chapter's first field trip next year.

Members of the committee to organize the new OCTA chapter in Utah included David L. Bigler, Al Mulder, Dr. Jay M. Haymond, Steven K. Madsen, Randall Wilson, H. Rush Spedden, Linda Thatcher and Bill Hartley.

The January 25 meeting will be held at 4 pm in the Board Room of the Utah State Historical Society, 300 Rio Grande, Salt Lake City. All interested in joining the new chapter are urged to attend.

David L. Bigler
11696 S. Oak Manor Dr.
Sandy, Utah 84092
(801) 576-9316

GATEWAY

The November program report is found on page one.

Jan. 9 - 7 pm, Sr. Citizens Center, St. Joe. Marilyn Taylor discusses the Iowa Indians - trail days, present and future.

March 13 - 7 pm, NMSU, Maryville, Mo. Dr. Harmon Mothershead gives a tour of the Missouriiana Collection and the library, to include what is available for trail and history research.

April 21 - Saturday field trip to the Marysville, KS area with several trail sites to be visited.

May 8 - 7 pm, to be determined.

June 12 - 6 pm, Highland Mission, Highland, KS. A picnic on the grounds and a tour of the mission.

July 10 - 7 pm, Riverfront Park, St. Joe. A program concerning the Missouri River; including the area wetlands and natural history of the 19th century river, and a trail perspective of the river.

Jackie Lewin

NATIONAL FRONTIER TRAILS CENTER

OPENING SET FOR MARCH AT THE SQUARE IN INDEPENDENCE, MISSOURI

THE CITY OF INDEPENDENCE has planned a Trails Rendezvous week for the opening of the National Frontier Trails Center in late March. A part of this complex will house the national offices of OCTA, thus, plans for the center have been eagerly followed by OCTA members. Activities include the dedication of our national headquarters on Saturday, March 24. OCTA does plan some specific activities, you may contact the office for more details. The following is an outline of some of the activities planned.

FRIDAY, MARCH 23

Private dinner and reception for various dignitaries.

SATURDAY, MARCH 24

9:30 P.M. - Public ribbon cutting ceremony by the Governor at the site.

3:00 P.M. - OCTA Dedication of national headquarters on site.

7:00 P.M. - Dedication of Pioneer woman statue.

MONDAY, MARCH 26

9:00 A.M. - Oregon Flag Raising

7:00 P.M. - Mini-pageant on Oregon Trail, Truman Library Theater.

TUESDAY, MARCH 27

9:00 A.M. - California Flag Raising

7:00 P.M. - "Wagons Ho" musical dramatic presentation William Chrisman High School.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 28

9:00 A.M. - Mexico Flag Raising

10:00 A.M. - Pageant presented by students and choir from Santa Fe School. Dr. Marc Simmons will make presentations to students.

Evening - Musical narrative followed by reception, William Chrisman High School.

Other events planned include:

A Commemorative Quilt to be hung in the reception area.

Rocky Mountain Fur Traders encampment.

1,000 Fourth Grade Students from all schools in Independence are participating in an art contest.

Antique Show and Sale on the second floor of the museum.

TRAILS CENTER DIRECTOR CHOSEN

The National Trails Center now has a director, Daniel D. Holt. A native of Kansas, he has worked previously at a number of historical societies, museums, universities and libraries at places in Kansas, Missouri and Illinois. He left the position as Director of the Liberty Memorial Museum and Archives in Kansas City for this position.

His publications and presentations are include his master's thesis on the Mexican War; "A Threatening Environment: Fear Factors on the Frontier" for the Western Illinois University Regional Studies Symposium; and "Manifest Destiny and Vested Western Interests, Illinois, 1844-1848" for the Illinois History Symposium. He has a number of professional affiliations.

Mr. Holt's equal levels of experience in museums, archives, and developmental programs; his experience in promotion and fund raising; and his commitment to broad-based education assure that Mr. Holt will be a great asset to the National Frontier Trails Center.

OCTA ACQUIRES PADEN COLLECTION

The name of Irene D. Paden will forever be associated with the history of the Overland Trails because she made trail history herself by writing two books that have become classics in the field.

Now, OCTA will help to preserve and make known this story through the acquisition of a collection of artifacts, gathered along the Overland Trails in the 1930s by the Paden family. A gift from her son, Dr. William W. Paden, of Alameda, CA, these objects will be on special exhibit when the National Frontier Trails Center opens in late March in Independence, MO.

Bill Paden, a retired dentist, will be present at the opening and will speak

about his mother's work. Irene Paden, whose scrapbook of press clippings and family photo album have been loaned for the occasion, was the author of The Wake of the Prairie Schooner and Prairie Schooner Detours, both published in the 1940s. She also edited the diary of 1850 pioneer Madison Barryman Mooreman, who followed the Hastings Cutoff and the Carson Emigrant Road.

Irene Paden's nine years of research has inspired many others over the years to follow the western routes and relive the pioneer experience. Her's were the first books on the overland trail that Bill and I read in the mid-1960s while vacationing at the Silver Lake cabin of a family friend, who had explored sections of the Utah and Nevada deserts with the Padens. Two wheel rims, one from a conestoga wagon, dug from the

sands during a summer's research still exist at the cabin, formerly owned by the Lyle Mewhirter family.

So it was with great anticipation that we looked forward to meeting Irene Paden's son in July, 1989, while in California on vacation. We spent a fascinating morning at the 100-year-old Alameda family home, which had been taken down to bare bones and restored.

Bill Paden explained how his parents became interested in the overland trails: his father began work with Dr. Herbert Bolton of the Bancroft Library on a book about the DeAnza Trail, which was to be his PhD thesis as well. This sparked Mrs. Paden's interest and she decided to research the overland trails herself, taking voluminous notes. Af-

continued • • • • •

• • • continued

ter writing only four chapters, she submitted them to the McMillan Company in New York and they were immediately accepted. Irene Paden's notes and map collection are now at the Holt-Atherton Center at the University of the Pacific in Stockton. Although William G. Paden (Irene's husband) was Director of the Holt-Atherton Center for many years, his papers are at the Bancroft Library, along with more than 80 diaries he acquired. A full professor of history, he also served for many years as superintendent of the Alameda public school system.

Irene Paden and her husband spent their honeymoon on a pack trip. Most of their research trips were made between 1932 and 1940, camping out many nights in a tent. For their son, the one major attraction of these family vacations was that he was allowed to drive before he was old enough to apply for a license. The Padens usually traveled in a Chrysler "it never got hot" but his father really preferred a 1923 Dodge, "which would go anywhere since it had been developed during World War I as a staff car and had steel wheels. He would rent one for \$5 a day from any farmer that had one," his son recalled. He also added that at one time Henry Ford had been interested in building a special car so the Padens could check out the trails across Mexico.

Bill Paden remembers the Salt Desert was "better than the Humboldt, which was hotter." He also tells the story of a train stopping one day and the concerned brakeman going out onto the desert in see if the Padens were all right. The Padens spent many of their last years on the Humboldt desert and in the Sierras, he added.

Sharon Mewhirter Wood, now living in Anchorage, Alaska, and her family joined the Padens one summer. She recalls that for her teenage brother an incentive was time to fish after fixing at least one flat tire a day on the open touring car they drove while accompanying the Padens.

Bill Paden described his mother's favorite attire during these research trips: a 1930s long black pleated skirt

continued on page 8 • • • •

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Many thanks and a hearty welcome to Rose Ann Tompkins, our new Editor of NEWS FROM THE PLAINS. She also is Editor of the Arizona Chapter newsletter. Our thanks to Chuck Dodd, Chairman of the Publications Committee who, in spite of a very heavy job related work load, edited the post-convention issue.

A very special thank you to Dr. William W. Paden for donating the Irene D. Paden Collection of trails artifacts to OCTA for permanent display at the National Frontier Trails Center in Independence, Missouri. See related story in this issue of NFP.

Several of our members are very active volunteers in the March 23-28, 1990 opening of the National Frontier Trails Center by the City of Independence. Barbara Magerl - Chair of California Trail Day, Polly Fowler - Chair of Santa Fe Trail Day, and Jeanne Miller - on the Steering and Pioneer Woman's Statue Committees. Hope you can come

to Independence and participate in the exciting variety of activities.

Many thanks to the City of Independence for restoring the historic flour mill laboratory building on the Trails Center site and providing it for OCTA's Headquarters. Please join us on Saturday, March 24th from 3-5 pm for the OCTA Headquarters opening:

- OCTA Trails Photo Exhibit Dedication
- Irene D. Paden Collection Dedication
- Headquarters building Ribbon Cutting by OCTA Founders
- Reception for Members and Distinguished Guests
- OCTA Authors Book Autographing Party

You are also invited to join us on Sunday March 25th from 9 am to 4 pm for OCTA's Mid-Year Board Meeting.

We hope that you have reserved the dates August 9-12 on your calendar and plan to join the OCTA gang in Omaha for the exciting 1990 Convention planned for us by Bob Berry and the Nebraska Chapter.

Bill

FOUR DIRECTORS TO BE ELECTED

The Nominating and Leadership Committee (Ross Marshall, Chairman) reports that four members of OCTA's Board of Directors are to be elected at the annual meeting in Omaha in August. Suggested candidates and nominations are now being accepted.

Terms expire in 1990 for Merrill Mattes, Karen Buck Rennells, Larry Jones and Frank Tortorich. Mattes and Rennells are ineligible to be reelected at this time, each having served two three-year terms.

Under OCTA's bylaws, all current members of OCTA are eligible to be nominated and/or to submit one or more suggestions for nomination. Also, any current OCTA member may submit one or more written and signed nominations as long as each contains written and signed endorsements from three

additional members.

Whether the suggested or endorsed nominee is new, a previous nominee, or an incumbent, the bylaws require that the following material be submitted to the Chairman of the Nominating and Leadership Committee before the nomination can be considered:

A brief description of the person's trail qualifications and experience,

A brief description of the person's OCTA activities,

A statement of willingness to serve, if elected, signed by the nominee.

Deadline for receiving suggestions and nominations is April 2. Nominations should be mailed to:

Ross Marshall
6624 Craig Road
Merriam, KS 66202
(913) 962-6445

Ballots will be mailed in May.

The following article is taken from the PORTLAND OREGON JOURNAL of January 26, 1936.

COVERED WAGON COMMUTER

RECOUNTS EXPERIENCE IN
THREE JOURNEYS ACROSS
PLAINS IN EARLY DAYS

by Marcella Raws

Three times she crossed the plains in a covered wagon, and a fourth time still in a covered wagon, she braved three mountain ranges and the valleys between, which stretched from central California to her new home in the unsettled districts of eastern Washington.

How many pioneer women can equal the record of Mrs. Luanna Denton, 83-year-old expert on covered wagon housekeeping? Mrs. Denton divides her time among her five children, two of whom live in the Wood River Valley near Fort Klamath, and while her gnarled fingers are busy with sewing or knitting, her memories harken back to those days before the Civil War, when she started her first long trek.

Luanna, or Annie, as Mrs. Denton was called, was a very little girl when her father's ox teams joined the long train which was heading into California, but her recollections are vivid.

"It was one long picnic for us children," she recalls. "We were too young to realize the dangers before us, and too healthy to mind the jolts and changes in water and altitude. It seemed wonderful to ride for days and days, eating our meals around a campfire, and not having to worry about taking baths and washing behind our ears. I never did understand how mother kept us so clean. There were always fresh aprons for us girls, and when we reached a water hole, or a spot along the river where the train stopped for repairs or crossing—my, what a scrubbing we would get! All the women would have fires going under their big, black kettles full of soft soap and river water, and everything in camp would be clean when we were ready to start on.



Mrs. Luanna Denton, age 83
(1936)

"One time when we were thus laid up, something happened which came close to being a tragedy. There was a dry river bed not far from camp and it was full of clean, white sand which just coaxed us children to come and play in it. Seven of us were making caves and mud pies, when I was sent back to the wagons for something. I don't remember now what, probably a big spoon, or a cup for digging. When I returned, I couldn't find the rest of the children. I called and hunted, but there wasn't any answer. Finally, I ran back to camp, thinking they were there. When the grownups found out the children were missing, they started searching, and found moccasin tracks along the bank. There was great excitement, the men preparing to follow the kidnappers, the women weeping for their children. The men had two friendly Indians for guides, and they found the Indian camp and children just about dark.

The six little folks were being held for ransom, and many swift horses and fat cattle changed hands before they could be brought back, quite unharmed, but mightily scared.

Of course, I felt very badly because I hadn't been in the river bed to be captured, too. It seemed hard to come so close to an adventure and still miss it. The whole thing was so impressed on my mind that years later when I was married, and living along the Natchez River in a wild part of Washington, the only thing I was afraid of was that the Indians would steal my babies—though of course they never attempted such a thing.

"One other Indian adventure on that same trip I never will forget. There was a young man with the party who had boasted that he would kill the first Indian he saw. Of course, he didn't do so, for most of the Indians were friendly, and he would have forgotten his boast if the rest of the party had let him, but they kept throwing out sly quips and hints about what an Indian Killer he turned out to be.

"Finally, just to show them they were wrong, he shot a squaw who was riding along near us on a pony. Almost instantly, it seemed to us, there were fifty Indians around the white boy. They dragged him away from the wagon train, and made ready to kill him. Father hurried us children into the wagon so that we should not see it, but children are curious, and there were many little holes and slits through which we could peek, so we saw it all.

The warriors didn't wait to kill the boy. While several of them held the men of the train at bay, the rest started to scalp their victim. We could hear his cries and see the blood dripping to the ground. Then they were not satisfied with what they had done, but started hacking off his skin little by little. We children stood there, horror stricken but unable to take our eyes from the scene, and today it is just as real to me as it was over seventy-five years ago. Too

continued •••••

real to be comfortable.

"After the Indians had finished with the boy they went over the whole wagon train and took what they wanted. None of us dared to oppose them, whether it was the best saddle pony or some woman's Sunday dress. Finally, they rode away. I am not sure what tribe of Indians they were, but I think from the approximate length of time we had been traveling that it might have been the Cheyennes.

"It was not long afterward that we met the only herd of buffalo the train encountered. The captain had had experience with buffalo herds, and when he saw the great cloud of dust in the sky and felt the earth tremble with their coming, he gave the signal, and all the wagons were driven into a large circle with horses and cattle on the inside. The men didn't know what was coming. They expected an Indian raid, but pretty soon we saw the enormous, shaggy herd pouring over the brow of a low swelling hill. I don't know how long it took for them to go by the wagons. It seemed to us like hours. They were on a gallop and fortunately crossed our path a few hundred feet ahead of the train.

"I don't believe the wagons and all the men with their guns could have stopped them if they had decided to cross right where we stood. The dust, and the musty smell of the animals was suffocating, and we were mighty glad to see the end of them.

"Most of the wagon train was going to California after gold, but father meant to farm. He drove a herd of cattle out with him and packed all the farming implements he could carry. We settled just south of Fresno, and father dug the first irrigation ditch in that part of the country. Gold was plentiful along the head waters of King's River, and there were many miners. They showed us children how to find colors in the refuse from the mines, and we often spent days down there hunting for little nuggets, which we put in our brother's old shot sacks. When the gold was sent to San Francisco to be minted, our sacks came

back with twenty dollars apiece - and weren't we proud of ourselves!

We loved California, but mother hated it. It was a wild country and much upset in those days just before the war, so father finally decided to sell out and start back to our old home in Arkansas. This was in '61. There was a very small train this time, for most people were coming west - not going back. In some ways it was a much harder trip than the former one, although we encountered no hostile Indians.

"We ran short of food, though, and short of water, which was worse. We were farther south than we had been on our Westward route, and water holes were hard to find. Sometimes we had to carry water for two or three days, sometimes we could find none.

"However, we finally got back to Arkansas and father bought back our old home. We arrived just in time for my oldest four brothers to be drafted into the war and none of them came back. Mother grieved for her sons but was thankful for her baby boy, and two others nearly grown. One day these two loaded up a wagon with big red apples and hauled them up into Kansas where they sold at twenty-five cents apiece. Then these boys never came back. They died with the cholera, and were buried in the same grave. This was the beginning of the terrible cholera epidemic which swept across the plains, killing many in the wagon trains the next two years.

"Mother was so unhappy over the loss of her six fine sons that she, too passed away. Then we girls had to take charge, and help father to bring up our baby brother. My older sister did the housework and I did the spinning and weaving.

"I made the cloth for our clothes and for the household linens, and I wove coverlids. None of us went to school much. There weren't many anyway, after the war. So I grew up and married Mr. Denton, and had my first baby. Then we decided to come West again.

"I had learned much about housekeeping in a wagon," Mrs. Denton continued, "and arranged things so they would be handy. Baby was so good. He was no trouble at all, and there were lots of

folks along, just hungry for the feel of a baby in their arms, and I always had someone to mind him.

"One thing we always had in our wagon was plenty of candles. When we ran short, my mother-in-law would prepare the meals and I would dip candles. They weren't as nice as those made in a mold, but they gave a good light. Each housekeeper carried a copper kettle for water, two or three iron kettles and a Dutch oven. We nearly always had game, and as we could get fresh meat in the settlements we passed, we lived well.

"So we landed back in California, and afterwards moved up through the Rogue River Valley, and along the Columbia to Eastern Washington. We were right among the Indians and many miles from another white family, but after all the months I had spent in camps and covered wagons my little two-room log cabin among the pines looked mighty good to me.

"As the children grew and other white families moved in, we used to have good time visiting back and forth. The young folks would move the furniture back against the kitchen walls and dance, while we older ones gossiped by the fire in the other room. We were good friends with the Indians. I learned to talk Chinook, and told them stories, and when my next baby was born an old squaw took care of us. She was so gentle and careful with the baby, but what a time she had getting his clothes on right - especially his diaper!"

Years passed, and the children moved away and made homes for themselves. Then the Dentons moved into Oregon and settled in the Rogue River Valley.

"I enjoy riding in trains and automobiles," Mrs. Denton said, "and don't believe I'd not be too old for another trip if I had to make it, and I'd enjoy it, too, which is more than you young folks today can say."

And Mrs. Denton's eyes twinkled over the top of her glasses while her hands were busy putting the finishing touches to the thumb of the mitten she was knitting.



..... Q & A

The following inquiry is from Lawrence Nielsen of Redmond, OR

"I have a question that has bothered me many years. I have not been able to receive a satisfactory answer.

"Oxen are nearly always tied together in pairs by a yoke. On the other hand, horses and mules have individual harnesses. Why the difference? Why don't we use yokes on horses and harnesses on oxen?"

The question was put to Aubrey Haines of Tucson, Arizona. His reply :

"Our traditional way of hitching oxen — by yoking; and horses and mules — by harnessing, was dictated mainly by anatomical differences in the animals. The ox does not have the proper body conformation to pull well against a breast-strap or horse-collar, but it does have a fleshy hump over the front shoulders for the yolk to rest against. Conversely, the horse has no hump, but can pull very well against its breast. Hence, in our particular society the yolk was generally used for the one and the horse-collar for the other.

"But what has been said is a general-

ity only; an ox can be worked in harness by inverting the horse-collar to put the closed end up and thus gain some hold against the hump, and emigrant families did just that, usually in desperation — replacing the worn out or lost horse or mule with an ox or the family milk cow. But it was only an expedient and seldom made a good team, as the Bible hints ("Thou shalt not plow with an ox and an ass together," DEUTERONOMY 22:10). As far as I know, there is no way a yoke can be used on horses; here, again, the reasons are anatomical.

"There are societies in which the ox was hitched differently. In those with a predominantly Spanish cultural background, as Mexico, the ox was hitched by lashing a stout pole to the horns of two animals, and that was secured in turn to the carrita's tongue. The Red River carts of Canada, being essentially of French origin and quite similar to the vehicles in common use in France until after World War I, used an arrangement somewhat like a horse-collar when the motive power was an ox, but there was also a loose "cinch" back of the animals shoulders to which the cart shafts were secured."

TRAILS HEAD TREK IV

September 16, 1989

from report by John Leamon

Trail Trek IV was organized to cover the Santa Fe Trail from Arrow Rock to Independence. Unlike previous trail treks, it was decided to use rented vans to transport the participants. One 15 passenger van, one 12 passenger van and one car were used to transport the 29 attendees. Donations were solicited to defray the costs. Ross Marshall brought three walkie-talkies which were a big help in keeping everyone informed among the vehicles.

Departure was from a parking lot at Truman and Noland Roads in Independence. Due to circumstances, departure was delayed until 9:45. On the way to Arrow Rock the trek stopped at Sappington Cemetery which is located about six miles southwest of Arrow Rock on County Road TT. After that a stop was made at the house built by Dr. Sappington in 1840. It is now owned by Dr. John R. and Mariana Lawrence.

We arrived in Arrow Rock at 12:30 and had lunch at The Tavern. We left Arrow Rock by way of Santa Fe Spring at 2:15, an hour and a quarter later than planned. Followed the trail out to just beyond the Neff Tavern site via US 41 and then left the trail to go directly into Marshall. During trail blazing the roads northeast of Marshall were found to be too primitive for vans and too far out of the way for efficient use of time. North of Marshall the trail was picked up again and followed to Independence. A short detour was made in Lexington to the Civil War battlefield and Anderson House.

The trek ended at 5:30. It was a great Trail Trek IV!

News From the Plains
is a quarterly publication
of the
Oregon-California Trails
Association,
P.O. Box 1019,
Independence, MO
64051

.....
• • • *continued from page 5*

with a white middie blouse. An essential accessory was a very large safety pin to fasten the skirt together between the legs so she could ride horseback astride. He added that his mother, who died in 1976, liked to take photographs but he did not consider her to have been a very good photographer.

The Irene D. Paden collection includes more than 30 artifacts, which Bill Paden remembers were found along the Overland Trails. A grey ceramic tea pot with a darker grey design is missing its raffia handle but otherwise is in excellent condition. When Irene Paden found the teapot, she was certain the lid must be close by and dug in the dirt until it turned up. Calling attention to the logistics of covered wagon living are: a butter mold; a No. 6 (or No. 9) sad iron; an iron cleaver without its handle, a horn scoop; the top of a coffee grinder; candle holders and knives. There are also two pieces of wooden

wagon wheels found at Register Rock in Wyoming and a metal brace tool from the Carson Pass in California as well as two cast iron snow shoes, one round and one square, for a horse and/or ox.

The largest artifact in the Paden collection will be the miniature Pelton Wheel, a water pump found near Sutter Creek, that provided water to work the miners' cradle for washing out gold. It measures 24 inches in diameter and weighs 45 pounds. But the Paden family's favorite object is the metal hub from a Mormon handcart, identified when Irene Paden found a complete handcart in the basement of the capital building; the existence of this handcart had not been noted until she discovered it.

The Paden Collection will help OCTA continue to interpret the westward experience and will be on permanent loan to the Trails Center.

Jeanne H. Watson

ARIZONA CHAPTER TRAVELS TO NEW MEXICO TO SEE BUTTERFIELD TRAIL SITES

The first weekend in November was our field trip planned by the Carters in Las Cruces, NM. Jim rented a van so we just sat back and left the driving to him!

It was a nippy start of a beautiful day on Saturday morning when we headed for the fairgrounds, our first stop. We met Jerry McDonald, a Paleontologist who has unearthed a variety of animal trackways, left in an ancient muddy shoreline. He is gradually reconstructing the 280 million year old layers taken from the original site to a building at the fairgrounds. It was very impressive and will be written up in a spring issue of National Geographic.

Next were several of the Butterfield Stage stops in central New Mexico, including Rough & Ready, Goodright and Cooke's Spring. We also stood on the hilltop where Whipple's boundary marker for the US/Mexican border was put in before the Gadsden purchase. At Cooke's Spring, we also saw the adobe remains of Fort Cummings, including the graveyard. All of these sites were miles from anywhere, looking just as remote as they did when used by the stages and emigrants. There were several local experts along with us to ex-

plain what we were seeing, and that added to our understanding.

We broke up the travel with lunch in the city park at Deming. Carters had arranged to have sub sandwiches made up special for us and they were very good, and very large! No one went away hungry.

After a flat tire and a quick change by the wagon master and passengers on our way back to Las Cruces, we met for dinner at La Posta in Mesilla. This wonderful Mexican restaurant is the site of another of the stage stops. We met after dinner at Carter's home for dessert and business meeting.

Sunday morning we were off again, stopping to see the Picacho station site, and another boundary marker. There was also an unscheduled stop for purchase of chili strings, fresh from the fields. The final stop was at Fort Seldon, now a state park. It is quite well preserved and well worth the stop.

We scattered for home, feeling again that we had seen and experienced a bit of history. Our thanks to Jim and Marion Carter for all the planning that went into this successful outing. What a great way to spend a beautiful fall weekend!

PRESERVING OUR HISTORIC OVERLAND TRAILS:

The Story of OCTA

by Ruth Anderson,
39 pages, 8 1/2"x11"

Written by OCTA'S Historian, this soft-cover book tells the story of the founding of OCTA and the growth and preservation activities during the first five years.

\$5.00
plus \$1.50 P&H

Order from:
OCTA Headquarters
P.O.Box 1019
Independence, MO
64051-0519
(816)252-2276



Arizona Chapter members, with guides and guests pause for a group photo in Deming, New Mexico during their November field trip to visit Butterfield Trail sites.

COLORADO AND NEBRASKA CHAPTERS JOIN IN TOUR

Julesburg, CO to Bridgeport, NE
May 6, 1989
from report by Joseph W. Fairfield

Some 40 people in 20 to 25 cars assembled around the Julesburg (Sedgwick County, CO) museum. Jim Stretesky and Gene Mikelson had consented to lead off the tour in the Julesburg area.

The trek got underway about 8:45, starting from the museum in Julesburg, heading east over the viaduct, and proceeding south to just before the approach to I-76. At this point a county road heads west. Approximately 2 to 3 miles west the first stop was made at the "Italian Caves".

The Italian Caves were so called when a winery was established around the turn of the century on this spot and caves were used for underground storage. Jim Stretesky and Gene Mikelson gave a joint talk about the caverns and the Oregon Trail in the vicinity.

The site of the first Julesburg was the next stop. Gene and Jim gave a talk about the historic old Julesburg and old Fort Sedgwick, approximately one mile further west. During the talks they also explained how they had marked the historic sites with flags on the sites of the first and second Julesburg, old Fort Sedgwick, and the cemetery on a hill, south of the fort site.

The trek then crossed the river into the town of Ovid, CO, east about 3/4 mile, and on down to the north side of the South Platte River. At this point, trail ruts can be seen as the Oregon trail crossed the river from the south, heading north about 3/4 mile east of Lodgepole Creek. Lodgepole Creek runs on the east side of Ovid. A Pony Express marker is there, the location being about 400 ft or so NW of the abandoned sugar factory, just east of Ovid.

From the north side crossing, the tour went north and east, stopping at the site of the 3rd Julesburg, near the UP railroad and Highway 385, south and east of Chappell, NE.

Crossing the NE/CO line approximately 1/2 mile south of the I-80 overpass over Highway 385, the trek turned west on a "Minimum Maintenance" road and crossed Lodgepole Creek. In a field just west of the creek, an archeological report by Gale Carlson of the Nebraska State Historical Society said the site of "Nine Mile Pony Express Station" was "3 miles" southeast of Chappell (in this area).

The next stop west was the site of a June 7, 1944 WWII bomber crash (SE of Chappell), explained by Hort Quinn, a World War II bomber veteran, and Gene Mikelson from Julesburg, who had come up and viewed the scene shortly after the crash.

About one mile SE of Chappell, two other possible sites of the "Nine Mile Pony Express Station" were also said to have existed. Judge Larry Rahe of Chappell said that near the Chappell Airport hanger, in a depression near the wind sock there, many years ago before the highway obliterated it, many artifacts were found, somewhat indicating a possible Pony Express site station may have been there. Another possible site is under the east "on ramp" of I-80, or just north of where the tour stopped on a county road. (Gale Carlson, in his archeological report for the future interstate highway, shows a print: Plate XIII: "Excavations at the Chappell Site, Deuel County", but this is about two miles closer to Chappell than his [above] report.) (Mattes and Henderson say in their Pony Express booklet: Nebraska station No. 28 - Nine Mile Station: This site is in Sec. 26, Township 13 North, Range 45 West, two miles southeast of Chappell, in Deuel County.)

From the Husky gas station across the viaduct south of Chappell, the tour headed west along a country road which follows the south side of Lodgepole Creek, finally coming out on Highway 30, about 5 or 6 miles west of Chappell.

continued • • • • •



Trail Trek group gathers for a picture at the Prairie Schooner Museum at Dalton, Nebraska.

• • • continued

At Lodgepole, NE and the site of "Pole Creek Station No. 2", Hort Quinn, long time historian and resident of Lodgepole, gave a talk on its approximate location, (Mattes and Henderson say: "It is possible that it may be identical with the site of the ranch occupied hereabout by E. Farrell in 1865").

Then we went west to the site of the St. George Ranch, about 3 1/2 miles east of Sidney, NE, now owned by Randy Faessler of Sidney. At this site, the trail crossed Lodgepole Creek, heading north up a ravine and on to the tableland, toward Bridgeport. "Old maps identify this as the stage ranch of Rouliette and Pringle, with well fortified buildings, part dug out, part sod and logs. The ford must have been at or near this point. This place had importance as the junction of the old California Road and state route heading for the North Platte, and a new state route heading due west for Bridger Pass and Salt Lake City. (This latter is the 'Lodgepole Route' which later became the Union Pacific route to Cheyenne)." — Mattes and Henderson.

This is also the junction where Eugene Ware in his book "The Indian Wars of 1864" says he was returning from the north and met one of his men who had discovered an abandoned wagon train, about 15 miles west of this junction. This writer, along with Paul Henderson in the 1970's drove the 15 miles west of this junction, coming out about 1/2 mile or so west of the overpass leading to the Sidney Nebraska Technical School, and almost in the front yard of the late Sidney, NE historian, Clark Fuller.

We finished the morning trek at the old Fort Sidney Museum headquarters in Sidney, NE and took a museum and lunch break. After lunch a short swing was made through the historic old Fort Sidney area. Then we headed north to the Old Government Well site, SW of Gurley, NE. Although little is known about it, the "Government Well" was mentioned by Mrs. Carrington, a military officer's wife, in her diary. Historian Paul Henderson said the distance would figure about right for a watering

hole and stop for the Pony Express and emigrants heading across the broad tableland before reaching Mud Springs. (SE corner, Section 12, T 15 N, R 50 W, or about three miles south and one mile west of Gurley, NE on Highway 385.)

Our next stop was Dalton, Nebraska and the Prairie Schooner Museum. While there Bob Berry took a photo of the group by the Prairie Schooner Museum sign, then all headed out for the next stop, Mud Springs.

Mud Springs, now a tree covered spot on the Oregon Trail with a fish pond, is owned by Charles Cape of Dalton, NE. It was a Pony Express and a Stage Station, the ground plans having been made by Lt. Caspar Collins in 1864, according to Paul Henderson. After the siege of Julesburg on February 2, 1865, the war party of Indians headed northwest. In the early morning of Saturday, February 4th, the station was attacked and an alarm was sent to Col. Collins at Fort Laramie. A detachment of soldiers from Fort Mitchell, just west of the Scottsbluff National Monument, were sent by foot, during the cold of February, 55 miles to the relief of Mud Springs. Later Col. Collins arrived with a detachment from Fort Laramie. The resulting fight led east to the North Platte River, where the Indians retreated across it and went on north. John Warning, in his book "War on the Plains", described the incident at Mud Springs. Later, members of the tour group ascended the hill south of the monument where rifle pits, dug at the time, can be seen today.

From Mud Springs the tour proceeded to Courthouse Rock and Jail Rock. A view from the parking lot shows the Oregon Trail as it came from the southeast, around to the northeast and on to the northwest. Southwest of Courthouse Rock, along Pumpkin Creek, the Pony Express Trail, according to Paul Henderson, crossed, as well as the later Sidney to Deadwood trail. Paul Henderson had stated to this writer several times that the Pony Express, being lighter, crossed the sand dunes west of Courthouse Rock and rejoined the Oregon Trail north and west of the rock; whereas the heavier wagon trains went

around the rock east and headed northwest to meet the Oregon Trail coming from Ash Hollow.

As it was getting late in the afternoon, it was decided to conclude the trip there, telling people of the Oregon Trail museum in Bridgeport, the location of the Amanda Lamin (or Lamme) grave east of Bridgeport, Chimney Rock to the west (which can be seen from Courthouse Rock by walking west of the parking lot to a little higher ground) and other historical spots, including emigrant names on the south side of Courthouse Rock.

From comments heard, everyone seemed to have enjoyed the tour.

CLOSE-OUT SALE

William H. Jackson Prints

Reproductions of water
color paintings of
legendary landmarks:

**CROSSING THE
SOUTH PLATTE**
13"x20"
was \$100

**APPROACHING
CHIMNEY ROCK**
10"x15"
was \$85

**INDEPENDENCE
ROCK**
13"x15"
was \$85

NOW:
All three for
\$29.95
plus \$3.50 P&H

Order from:
OCTA Headquarters
P.O. Box 1019
Independence, MO
64051-0519
(816)252-2276

OREGON-CALIFORNIA TRAILS ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 1019 / Independence MO 64051-0519

Nonprofit Org.

U.S. Postage

PAID

Indep. MO

Permit No. 244