



DECEMBER  
1990

# NEWS FROM THE PLAINS

THE OREGON-CALIFORNIA TRAILS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

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



John Lynn of Peoria, IL, with his mountain bike on the Oregon Trail. See page 4 for his account of this trip.  
photo by Judy Probart

Dear Aunt Hattie,

I just get so excited about you'll comin out her to California in summer of '91.

Lately I had the pleasure of meetin your Wagon Master Thomas Mahach. He's just as handsome as hes is nice. I jus know all the information he gives you is goin to be the truth.

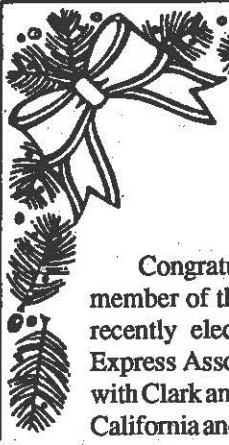
I must admit he's a little wet behind the ears compared to som of the other wagon masters that we've seen around. But Aunt Hattie, he's not abov askin fer help from thos persons mor knowledgeable than hien'is! Why he hisself tol us at a meetin near Sutter's Fort, (where a old campground is being renewt fer your wagon train) and that he's looking fer anyone who's willin to help him in all kinds of ways. Why Aunt Hattie, in ways I never knowed a wagon master would need at this end of the trail.

Why he havin peopl in charge of gittin music, people to git you a run down of the area-lik wher to go to git what you need, an even provide hows to git ther. I ev'n heard he'll have jobs fer people like me who don't know much about what needs doin' but just plain wants to help.

Why, Aunt Hattie, I just may git to hep make your stay a right nice pleasure. I'll writ you later with mor news-gotta stop 'cause Betsy needs milkin before I wake the youngin's up to do chores befor theys get to school.

Love from California,

Your Neice, Anna Mae



# PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Congratulations to Clark Maxfield, a charter member of the Utah Crossroads Chapter, who was recently elected President of the National Pony Express Association. We look forward to working with Clark and the rest of the NPEA on passage of the California and Pony Express National Historic Trails legislation.

This "chapters" issue of NFP illustrates the rapid growth of OCTA. In the early years, most activities were carried out by the national organization. We now have 10 Chapters including the new Utah Crossroads Chapter with 90 members. That is the same size as our 1983 charter convention. The variety of Chapter activities being carried out by our Chapters is a tribute to their dynamic leadership and active membership.

One of OCTA's key long range objectives is to "Establish a System to Monitor the Western Overland Trails Covered by the National Trails Act." Nationally, The National Park Service headquarters staff and I are working toward a partnership covering our trails. As a first step, we may receive a matching grant providing trail markers plus mapping and documentation supplies in exchange for our volunteer labor through the Chapters on the Oregon Trail. Also, Ron Lund and the Wyoming chapter are negotiating a partnership agreement with their state BLM. And, Past President Dick Ackerman is representing us on the Oregon Trail Sesquicentennial planning committee.

Wednesday, November 14th, I had the thrill of previewing the Mattes Library at Merrill and Clare's home in Littleton, Colorado. This unique collection of Western Americana historical publications has been donated to OCTA and will soon be available to serious researchers in the National Frontier Trails Center. On Thursday, with lots of help from Jim Bowers, OCTA's first Treasurer, and Jerry Motsinger, NFTC Acting Director, we packed the Library. As Merrill lovingly removed the publications from the shelves, we packed them into boxes. Friday, agreements were signed, with Merrill giving his Library to OCTA and we, in turn, placing it on permanent loan to the NFTC. Dan Holt, former NFTC Director, helped the packers securely load the 58 boxes into a truck. That evening, we celebrated Merrill's 80th birthday at his favorite restaurant. Saturday, the approximately 4,000 lb load was driven to Independence by Jerry Motsinger for cataloguing and installation. In Spring 1991, Merrill and Clare will open OCTA's Mattes Library at the NFTC.

We were not successful, this Congress, in obtaining National Historic Trail designation for the California Trail and the Pony Express Trail. Many thanks to the Legislative Committee for their hard work these past two years and to each of the OCTA members who wrote in support of HR-1109. Please continue your fine efforts so that we can achieve our goal during the next Congress.

In conclusion, I take this opportunity to wish each and every one of you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Bill Watson

## BUTTER CREEK CROSSING THE OREGON TRAIL

The Oregon Trail came from the east across Echo Meadows and turned southwest just west of here. The Butter Creek crossing of the trail is about one mile to the southwest. Because of the availability of water and grass in the area, it became a favorite campsite where stock were rested and recruited. It was also used as a burial location for emigrants who died.

One of those was Lucinda Powell Propst, who was born in Champaign County, Ohio, on February 19, 1817. In March 1852, with her husband Anthony and their five children, she left Sugar Grove, Illinois, for Oregon. While crossing the Blue Mountains in August, Lucinda became ill and died. Her body was carried in the wagon to the Butter Creek campsite for burial. Shortly after leaving there, Anthony Propst became ill, died, and was buried at the Philip Foster place on the western slope of the Cascade Mountains. The five children were taken in by relatives and the wagons proceeded to the Willamette Valley.

Researched and Placed by the:  
**OREGON-CALIFORNIA TRAILS ASSOCIATION**  
1990



Shown at left is a the plaque placed on Highway 87 in Oregon. More about this can be read in the Northwest Chapter report on page 15.

# LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

by Jeanne Watson

This was a roller-coaster year for HR-1109 with many ups and downs. Unfortunately, it ended in a down mode when the 101st Congress adjourned in complete exhaustion after all-night sessions on the federal budget and the controversy surrounding the National Endowment for the Arts. HR-1109 along with some 20 other bills ended up sitting on the Senate desk, waiting to be called up for a vote. These bills had an average of 7 to 9 "Senatorial Privilege" holds on them, which blocked movement to the floor for passage.

Throughout those last two weeks before Congress belatedly adjourned, there were still hopes that HR-1109 could make it despite the other complications. During that time, seven days a week, we conferred with and provided technical support to House and Senate legislative aides and the Senate committee staff. Numerous calls were made to OCTA members to discuss ways that they might help resolve problems through local or Washington Congressional contacts. Even up until the last day there were hopes that all blocks on HR-1109 might be removed in time for a last-minute Senate vote.

There blocks included amendments specifying the location(s) for visitor's centers. This created controversy among many constituents especially in Kansas and Nebraska. Congress forgot that, after the trail legislation is passed, the National Park Service has two years to study interpretive sites and recommend them in their trail interpretation plan. For example, the Santa Fe Trail interpretive plan was recently released.

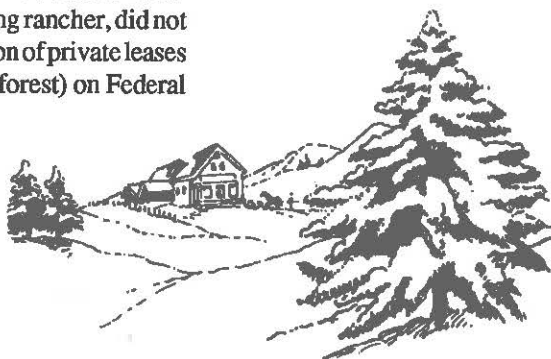
Another block was because Senator Wallop, a Wyoming rancher, did not want any condemnation of private leases (mineral, grazing, or forest) on Federal

lands. In the South Pass area, ranchers lease land from the BLM. In Nevada, there were efforts to modify or cancel private leases or BLM land. Also, there is concern about the planned Altamonte pipeline.

Congress does not plan to meet for a "lame duck" session. If they reconvene on Middle East policy, HR-1109 might be considered too.

We are reviewing strategy and plan to reintroduce the California and Pony Express trails legislation, with new bill numbers, after the new Congress convenes in January. By then, the House and Senate committee chair and membership will be appointed. A trip to Washington in mid-January is planned to strengthen Senate support. A new lead sponsor, to replace retiring Congressman Norman Shumway, is in the works.

Meanwhile, Legislative committee members are urged to make local contacts now, to your Senators and Congressmen/women, stressing the importance of giving National Historic Trail designation and protection to the California and Pony Express trails which played a key role in the westward migration. They are part of our national heritage, as well as that of the trail states and communities along the route. Most of the co-sponsors in the Senate and House were re-elected. Congratulate them and ask for their continuing support. If a change occurred in your state or district, please contact the newly elected office holder or their staff with information about the trails and our concerns for their protection.



## COMMITTEE REQUESTS NOMINATIONS

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 Sacramento in August. Suggested candidates and nominations are now being accepted.

Terms expire in 1991 for Donald Buck, Gregory Franzwa, Jacqueline Lewin and William Watson. Don Buck is ineligible to be reelected at this time, 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 1**. Nominations should be mailed to:

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

Ballots will be mailed in May.

# A 1990 TRAIL ADVENTURE

by John Lynn, Peoria, Illinois

*(John is a native of Peoria with a degree in history from the Univ. of Illinois. He is a lecturer/writer/photographer with special interests in American history and outdoor adventure. His interest in the western trails began while researching an early outfit of Peorians, led by Thomas J. Farnham, set out for Oregon in 1839. John was pleased to see, at many points along the trail, the markers and informative signs placed by OCTA. As a member, he expressed that it is good to see that the organization works, and that our membership fees are well-spent. He adds that there is much, as we all know, yet to be done.)*

I have a strong attachment to the land, as I think we all do, whether we realize it or not. One of my on-going interests is how the land (and especially the frontier) has shaped the American experience, past and present.

To get a better first-hand feel for this, I had hiked the 2100 miles of the Appalachian National Scenic Trail and canoed the 2300 miles of the Mississippi River. However a large part of the country, namely the west, was missing.

Since 1990 is the 100th anniversary of the historical "closing" of the American frontier, I felt that a trek this year along the Oregon National Historic Trail, which so well represents our national westerning experience, would be an appropriate way to close out my cross-country travels.

And so, flush with the pioneer spirit, and determined to capture the story of western America first-hand, I left Independence, Missouri, last spring to travel the route of the old Oregon Trail.

Wanting to experience the landscape, in some measure, as the emigrants had, I began the trip walking and carrying a backpack. But within the first 300 miles, I became alert to the fact that this was no longer the 19th century.

Where the emigrants had traveled across open prairie, I was obliged to walk roads. And those roads, to skirt private farmlands, were causing me to

walk about half-again farther than the old trail. Also, the emigrants didn't have to carry their belongings on their backs, as I was. (That's what those oxen and wagons were all about.) Indeed, I was experiencing the landscape more like the oxen than the emigrants.

Therefore, proving that I am smarter than the average ox, I purchased a Schwinn mountain bicycle at Hastings, Nebraska. Since the bike could travel virtually anywhere that a human foot could, and the frame, rather than my back, carried the weight of my belongings, I was soon able to experience the same landscape with much greater ease and speed. In fact, with the bike, I was able to take side trips and see more than I otherwise could have.

Carrying the Greg Franzwa maps and the Aubrey Haines book for reference, I stuck to the trail wherever possible, and where it was not, I rode the nearest more or less parallel route. I averaged about 50 miles a day--twice my daily walking distance in half the time.

Difficulties included the usual death wish attendant to self-powered travel, along with heat (107 degrees at Scotts Bluff), bike sucking sand and dust roads, rough gravel roads, and nagging headwinds.

The most enjoyable sections were the so-called "hiking" segments, especially the route through the Blue Mountains and the old Barlow Road through the Cascades. I also have a special fondness for the Alcove Spring in Kansas.

In all, it took 13 days of walking, 42 days of biking, and a total of 2450 miles of travel to cover the 2000 mile route. I completed the trip at Oregon City on July 29.

It was a trip that entailed the customary adventures and misadventures of camping, some wonderful encounters with local people and towns along the way, and a rich variety of western sights and sounds and smells that would have surely struck some familiar chords with the emigrants.

Like the emigrants, I had followed the North Platte River past Chimney Rock, looked for names at Register Cliff,

stood atop Independence Rock, surmounted the continental divide at South Pass, and rested at Fort Bridger.

I had squinted at blazing suns across seas of sage brush, felt storms soak me to the bone, smelled the mountain pines, savored meals of pork and beans at trailside, gazed at starry skies, and raised weary bones to do it all over again the next day.

I had sensed the exhilaration of the open road, felt the eventual fatigue of monotony, thrilled again at the first view of Mt. Hood, and finally stood, with both relief and a little emptiness, upon the banks of the Willamette.

Now, like everyone else, I am quite amazed at the emigrants for reaching Oregon in the way they did. Even knowing how they did it, I don't know how they did it.

But I suppose they completed the trip in the same way that we all accomplish anything. That is, we don't quite realize what we're getting into until we get into something, and once we get into it, we're so far into it that we can't get out, so we just keep going on until we get it done.

That they even began is perhaps the strangest thing. Apparently, they placed a great deal more faith in what they'd heard about Oregon than in what they'd heard about the difficulties in getting there. It was a perfect example of optimistic thinking — in the extreme.

Experiencing their mostly dry, desolate route, and, at times, seemingly colorless route, and imagining their everyday experiences along the way, I came to feel genuinely sorry for them. At any rate, there sure were times when I felt sorry for myself!

I sure hope it was all worth it to them. From what I could see of Oregon, as nice as it is, I just don't see how it could have been that much better—considering the 2000 miles in between—than the little green fields they'd left behind here in Illinois.

Anyway, to today's adventuresome travelers, I do recommend a mountain bicycle for Oregon Trail exploration. It offers some modern practicalities while still maintaining a genuine sense of trail

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adventure, and the contact with the landscape is essentially the same as that of the emigrants.

Indeed, exchanging the idea of wagon wheels for bicycle wheels was, for me at least, a good one. The biking of the Oregon Trail, in addition to the hiking of the Appalachian Trail and the canoeing of the Mississippi River, has completed what the Associated Press recently called "the triple play of American exploration".

I will now be putting together a slide show about the Oregon Trail and my experiences in traveling it for showing at schools and libraries throughout the Midwest.



## SUSAN BADGER DOYLE GAINS FELLOWSHIP

*The following is an excerpt from the MONTANA POST, Montana Historical Society, Vol. 28, No. 2, Summer 1990, page 1.*

### BRADLEY WINNER ANNOUNCED

The Montana Historical Society has awarded \$5,000 in research fellowships for the summer of 1990 as part of the James H. Bradley Research Fellowship Program. The Bradley fellowships, established in 1983 by a private donor, seek to encourage serious scholarship in Montana history and attract talented researchers to the Society's collections.

Two Bradley Fellowships were awarded this year. The senior fellowship, worth \$3,000, went to Gordon Morris Bakken, professor of history at California State University Fullerton. The first-ever graduate fellowship was made available to candidates for advanced degrees in history and other pertinent disciplines. Worth \$2,000, it went to Susan Badger Doyle, doctoral

# CONVENTION COMMITTEE SETS SCHEDULE FOR 1991 IN SACRAMENTO

BY BILL DILLINGER  
650 MILLS ROAD  
SACRAMENTO, CA 95864  
(916) 489-4854

A final schedule for OCTA's 1991 Convention in Sacramento was developed by the Convention Committee at a meeting November 3 in the host city.

The program for the August 14-18 convention includes tours of the Donner emigrant trail and of the Mother Lode country. There will also be a special event at Sutter's Fort State Historic Park, where the trek to California usually ended.

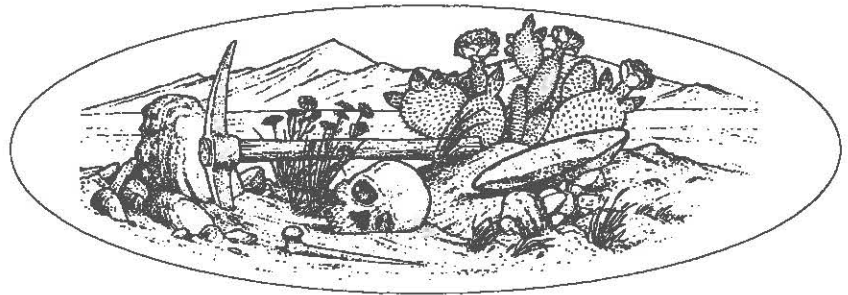
The anticipated 600 conventioners will also be offered guided tours of the area's major museums—the State Railroad Museum and the Sacramento History Center in Old Sacramento, the State Archives and the California Room of the State Library, and the Crocker Art Gallery, with its outstanding collection of Western art.

Tours are also being arranged for several State Historic Parks in the area, including the old Governor's Mansion, the State Indian Museum and Sutter's Fort, the Stanford Home, and the restored State Capitol.

A number of excellent papers have been scheduled, and some outstanding speakers. There will also be several workshops for OCTA members wishing to improve their skills and knowledge.

The OCTA board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, August 14, and the general membership meeting for Sunday, August 18. The Awards Banquet is planned for Saturday evening, August 17.

The conference hotel will be the Radisson, on Highway 80, a couple of miles north of downtown Sacramento. A list of other hotels, motels, eating places and RV sites will be available from the Conference Committee soon.



candidate in American Studies at the University of New Mexico.

Each fellowship requires four weeks of resident research at the Society and submission of an article length manuscript within one year to MONTANA THE MAGAZINE OF WESTERN HISTORY for possible publication. Awards are competitive and are judged on a number of criteria, including how extensively research fellows will use unpublished, primary source material in the Society's collections.

Doyle, who won the 1989 Burlingame-Toole award for the best

student article submitted to MONTANA, will continue her study of Bozeman Trail immigrants' diaries as part of her dissertation.

This was the first year Bradley Fellowships have been offered on an annual basis. It was also the first time a special category of competition has been designed to assist graduate student research.

(note from Aubrey Haines: Lt. James H. Bradley was killed Aug. 8, 1877, at the battle of the Big Hole, Montana.)

## ITS "UTTER" NOT "OTTER"

On October 2, 1860, Jacob and Joseph Reith arrived at the Umatilla Agency in Oregon and reported to authorities that a wagon train had been attacked by Indians near the Snake River in Idaho. Several people were killed and survivors were continuing on foot. The report indicated that the leader of the wagon train was named Elijah Otter. Actually the name was Elijah Utter. Official government reports, newspaper reports, and other historic records perpetuated the error, and in 1935, a memorial was erected on the courthouse grounds in Murphy, Owyhee County, Idaho reading:

ERECTED TO THE MEMORY  
OF THE OTTER MASSACRE  
1860  
FORTY FOUR PERSONS  
AMBUSHED BY  
SHOSHONI INDIANS EITHER  
KILLED OR SCATTERED. MOST  
AWFUL HUMAN EXPERIENCE.  
SITE TEN MILES EAST ON  
SINKER CREEK.  
ERECTED BY  
SONS AND DAUGHTERS OF  
IDAHO PIONEERS  
1935

Only sixteen persons, out of the forty four, actually survived. Seven of the survivors were children under the age of ten years. Twenty one were killed by Indians, five died of starvation, and two died of other causes.

Surviving members of the party were rescued by soldiers sent out from Fort Walla Walla. The wagon train was

attacked on September 9, 1860, and the survivors were rescued on October 24, 1860, forty five days later. The group of survivors had traveled on foot some seventy or eighty miles before making their final camp on the Owyhee River near where it flows into the Snake, in Oregon.

The Elijah Utter family consisted of twelve members, only one of whom survived. Emaline Trimble was a daughter of Abigail Utter, by a previous marriage. She later became Emaline L. Fuller and in 1892 published the story of her life, including a detained report of the massacre and subsequent horrible suffering by the survivors.

Another family on the wagon train was the Joseph Myers family consisting of Joseph Myers, his wife, Mary E. Myers, and five children, the oldest of whom was under ten years of age. Strangely enough, every one of this family survived. John Myers, a brother of Joseph, was killed by the Indians soon after the attack began. Shortly after the rescue Joseph Myers gave out reports that were published in several newspapers, including the Pacific Christian Advocate of Portland, Oregon, November 13, 1860, and the Pioneer and Democrat of Olympia, Washington, November 23, 1860. All of these reports correctly carried the family name of "Utter". Many years later two of the Myers family surviving children also wrote of their experiences in what is now accepted as one of the most horrible experiences encountered by the thousands of people who crossed the plains in covered wagons. Their stories confirm the spelling of the name of the leader of the wagon train as "Utter".

Possibly the most reliable source in finally determining the correct spelling

of "Utter" is the Walworth County Courthouse records in Elkhorn, Wisconsin. Those records show that Elijah P. Utter married Abigail Trimble on May 8, 1858. In the "Story of My Life" by Amaline L. Fuller she confirms that her mother Abigail Trimble married Elijah Utter of Wolworth County, Wisconsin in 1858.

It is my understanding that official records are now in process of change to reflect the correct spelling of "Utter". It's about time, after one hundred and thirty years!

As a matter of fact the name "Otter" was not the only error in historic records of the event. The Owyhee County, Idaho monument at Murphy, Idaho, and several other early records place the site of the Indian attack as near Sinker Creek, ten miles east of Murphy. The Idaho State Historical Society is now accepting Castle Creek, several miles east of Sinker Creek, as the probable site. The exact site of the attack will probably never be known.

Regardless of the exact site, it is my feeling that a suitable highway marker should be placed along Highway 78 near Castle Creek. After all, what may well be the worst wagon train disaster of the "Old West" should at least have a highway marker near the assumed site of the attack.

Leo F. Young  
Florence, Oregon

*(Mr. Young is a great grandson of the Joseph Myers mentioned in the article. Those at the Boise convention who went on the bus tour that included Murphy may remember the above noted marker in front of the county courthouse.)*

### CALL FOR FIDDLERS THREE

All Sacramento bound OCTA musicians should pack their musical instruments (fiddles, harmonicas, guitars, mandolins, etc.) for the August, 1991 Convention. Be prepared to join the OCTA "traditional music emsemble," which will provide background music of American traditional trail music (REDWING, TURKEY IN THE STRAW, SWEET BETSY, etc.) for the social gathering Wednesday evening, August 14. As the OCTA JAM GROUP is an impromptu organization, there may be other opportunities for the group to "render a few more tunes" during the convention. All instruments are accepted. Any questions or comments about the OCTA JAM GROUP? Or an comments about past convention entertainment? Contact : Olive Donaldson, P.O. Box 493053, Redding CA 96049, (916) 221-5521

# MULES VERSUS OXEN

## SOUTH PASS PIPELINE ISSUE

The following information is offered to the membership to expand on the article "A Pipeline Through South Pass?" in the September issue of NFP.

From the Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting, August 7, 1990. "Tom Hunt brought up the two recommendations made by the Wyoming Chapter which the board needs to act on. These are: 1) the Altamont route should not go through South Pass summit where the trail went through, and 2) if it has to go through the pass, it should go down the highway corridor, in an already disturbed area. Tom said this is because of the historic significance of the area. South Pass is where all the trails came together and was the only place wagons could cross the continental divide. Chuck Martin so moved, and motion was seconded and carried."

.....

### Reply from Tom Bell:

I would like to point out a few things OCTA members might care to know about the Altamont pipeline through the area we know and call South Pass. The article in the September issue of NFP may have passed on some critical misperceptions about some of the particulars of the route Altamont wants to take.

First of all, there is no recognized utility corridor through South Pass. The managing agency, the Bureau of Land Management, does not recognize a corridor there. The only corridor they do recognize is the one identified by them as the logical route for the pipeline through eastern Fremont County and Jeffrey City. Even that is not a corridor as such because no pipeline now runs the entire length. But that route would follow existing roads and utilities for about 95% of the distance from Lost Cabin to Opal, the terminus. The Lander Resource Management Plan specifically states (at page 6), "Major utility and transportation systems will be located to make use of existing corridors whenever possible . . ." That is why the BLM identified the Jeffrey City route.

There are not two pipelines through South Pass. There is not even one unless you construe the AT&T transcontinental cable as a pipeline. (As a matter of record, I objected to that cable going through in 1970 as much as I now do the pipeline.) There is one high-voltage transmission line which once served the Atlantic City Iron Ore Mine north of Atlantic City. (And there is an abandoned pipeline from the Sand Draw gas field in central Fremont County to what was the iron mine some 10-12 miles from South Pass.) Pacific Power & Light Co. people have told me that since they now have the newer transmission line through Jeffrey City (and in the utility corridor), there is a good chance the South Pass line will someday be removed. There is an abandoned railroad grade and there is the highway. But in relative terms, compared to what most OCTA members see in their everyday surroundings, with all that is there now, the area is what could be called pristine by today's standards.

If one pipeline is permitted to go through the area, it will have made the precedent for any and all others which might want to go the same route. The new Clean Air Act and the

### Reply from Ron Lund:

The Wyoming Chapter is in favor of the Jeffrey City pathway for the Altamont pipeline, as stated in the September issue of NFP. The following speaks to the points raised by Tom Bell.

1. Tom states that "there is no recognized utility corridor through South Pass". I described a utility corridor which I observed and walked along. Admittedly, I did not determine that it was formally recognized by some governmental agency. Along Highway 28 I observed the AT&T "pipeline". Tom correctly points out that this line is a transcontinental cable. This pipe, which contains wires and not gas or liquid, is commonly referred to as the AT&T "pipeline", and is labeled as a pipeline on several published maps, including the 1989 edition of the BLM map entitled "South Pass". I have photographs of this "pipeline" which crosses the main trail by boring under it, and which was re-vegetated with non-native grasses, leaving persistent scarring. I have pressured Altamont People to use native grasses if they put a pipeline through here and they have such plans in their proposal. Along Highway 28 I also observe electrical power transmission lines (which Tom says might be removed someday, but which are clearly in existence now). Along Highway 28 I observed (and I hiked for several miles along) the Northern Gas Pipeline, which is clearly labeled as such, and which was built to supply the iron ore mine mentioned by Tom. I have photographs of that pipeline, its identifying labels, and its branches which cross Highway 28 three times. Tom write that "There are not two pipelines through South Pass". He is quite right, and I did not say that there were. I wrote that there were two pipelines along Highway 28. These are the Northern Gas Pipeline and the AT&T cable line (called a pipeline by some). If Highway 28 should not be called a "corridor", then perhaps a "utility route" would be appropriate. The name may not be as important as the actual use.

2. Tom objects to my use of the term "recent mining operations" in reference to the iron ore mine on Highway 28. When dealing with historical subjects, the term "recent" is certainly subject to interpretation. An operation in the past 10 to 15 years is considered recent to me. He implies that such

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situation in the Persian Gulf can almost assure that other pipelines will follow.

What Dr. Lund means by the statement "disruption by recent mining operations" is certainly a mystery to local people here. The only recent mining of any consequence was at the iron ore mine some 10-12 miles to the north of the Trail and the Pass. The so-called Highway 28 alternate is not a viable alternate at all but a sell-out of the very area which I think OCTA is trying to protect.

The statement is made that the Jeffrey City alternative would be "prohibitively expensive". Yet, knowledgeable people here feel that the consortium of large companies pushing the pipeline is more concerned with getting into California ahead of competitors than it is with a five per cent cost over-run. They know that high profits are to be made in the lucrative Southern California market. Altamont has already spent an estimated \$750,000 (their figure) on a high-pressure PR campaign here in Fremont County, and they relentlessly push the campaign to their advantage.

The fact remains that the construction of such a large utility through the fragile, high-elevation area of South Pass will have a devastating impact. Bureau of Land Management men on the ground here have expressed serious reservations about the success of even the best intentioned reclamation efforts. Those who are familiar with the area question the relative ability of the landscape to absorb the impact of pipeline construction of such magnitude without the loss of its natural character. And the natural character is one of the unique assets of the area.

In a recent response to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC Data Response No. 90, p. 2), Altamont says it is prepared to bore (drill bore beneath) trails listed or eligible [if ground conditions permit] (my emphasis). But then the document says, "Due to the high cost and inherent uncertainty of success associated with directional drilling, Altamont is not in favor of this method for crossing trails." The pipeline will have to cross both the Lander Cutoff and the main Trail in the South Pass area. If the Jeffrey City alternate is used, the pipeline would cross an already heavily impacted area designated as a corridor.

It should also be noted that if Altamont is allowed to follow the South Pass route, and the construction schedule is maintained, construction will take place in the summer of 1993. That will coincide with the Sesquicentennial Celebration.

Tom Bell  
840 Kimberly Court  
Lander, WY 82520

an operation is not significant anyway, since it is "10-12 miles to the north of the Trail and the Pass". That location is quite true. That is precisely why I advocated such a location as a fall back position in case the Jeffrey City route fell through. That seems to me to be a much better place than the published preference of Altamont. There also seems to be objection to my description of the mine operation as "disruption". That is indeed my feeling about the large piles of mine tailings around the mine, some of which trailing piles I walked upon and photographed within a few yards of the highway.

3. Tom objects to my use of the term "prohibitively expensive" in reference to the Jeffrey City route. It is clear from my article that I was quoting Altamont's position on that issue, not expressing my own opinion. They claim that they cannot afford that route and stay in the race. Whether that is totally true or not, I cannot say. The Governor, who has publicly expressed support for the values of the Trail, does not wish to see the extra 30 million dollars go to construct that alternate, if less expensive routes are possible. He does not favor the original Altamont preference, either.

4. On the issue of boring under the trail at crossing sites, I have received written assurance from Altamont officials that such boring will take place. I have walked the Trail with Altamont officials to the site of the Trail crossing by the "AT&T Pipeline" (cable) and they pointed out how AT&T had bored under the Trail. They indicated to all present that they will similarly bore under the Trail crossings that they make. The exception to this was stated to be any site where the Trail was already obliterated, such as by plowed and irrigated fields. Of course, it is possible that they were not sincere. We must be sure that such assurances are included in the final documents.

5. It is stated that the BLM prefers the Jeffrey City Alternate. Some BLM people do, indeed, prefer this route. In my discussions with BLM people, I find that there is not actually an official BLM position. Some rather strongly favor alternates that have not yet been formally published. Some are concerned with the fragility of the Red Desert ecosystems and are not so sure about the Jeffrey City route. Some do not like the highway 28 route.

Mr. Bell makes several other points, but I don't think that they are meant to be included as my misperceptions. As a matter of fact, I quite agree with Tom on the issue of the fragile ecosystem involved here. The alternate routes have similar problems and similar champions who do not wish those other ecosystems violated. Altamont has never indicated to me that the pipeline route would heal over totally. We all know that there will be a residual scar. We can see it in the existing AT&T "pipeline", which was not properly re-vegetated. Proper care and technique can mitigate such scar. We must be vigilant to see that proper re-vegetation is part of the approved plan, wherever it is placed near the Trails.

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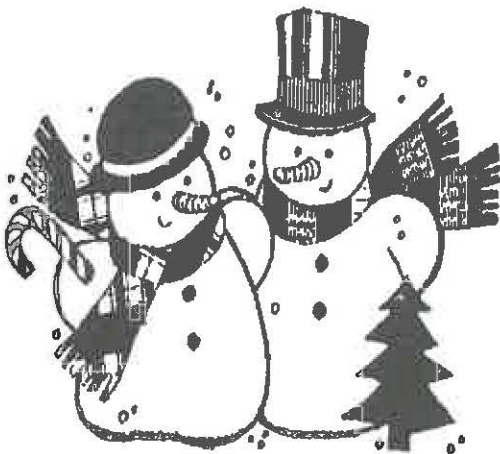
••••• conclusion of Ron Lund's reply

All of these issues have been discussed in detail at meetings of the Board of Directors of the Wyoming Chapter of OCTA. Many points of view have been heard, ranging from uncompromising opposition to staying out of the issue and letting Altamont go ahead with its plans. The recommendations by this Chapter have resulted from these discussions. Tom Bell has been personally invited to join our Chapter. Chapter members are welcomed at all meetings of the Chapter Board and at all general meetings.

Mr. Bell writes, in reference to the AT&T cable, that "As a matter of record, I objected to that cable going through in 1970 as much as I not do the pipeline". I do not doubt the truth of that, but I must observe that in spite of Tom's unyielding opposition, AT&T went right ahead with their plans to put the cable where they wanted it. The Chapter wishes to avoid a similar result with Altamont. Admittedly our approach is more pragmatic than idealistic. We wish to accomplish the possible. Our assessment of the possible no longer includes the Jeffrey City Alternate, although we have not abandoned that route as the most desirable.

In summary:

1. Our preferred route for the pipeline continues to be the Jeffrey City Alternate.
2. Our information points strongly to the conclusion that this Alternate will not be accepted by FERC. The Governor does not seem to favor this route. Some environmental groups oppose this route.
3. If we are correct in our assessment of the reality of things, then we should look to a fall back position that is short of total defeat.



4. The Highway 28 route that our Chapter had favored as our primary back up position has also been pretty well eliminated. The FERC representative did not favor the northern portion of that route because of construction difficulties through rock. Altamont finds construction problems and problems in dealing with another cabinet level in the government (since that route would enter National Forest lands under the jurisdiction of the Department of Agriculture).
5. Another route has been suggested by the FERC representative. This is not ideal, but it is, in our opinion, much better than the original Altamont route. This re-alignment recognized that there is value to moving the pipeline west of Highway 28, even if not as much as we would like. It indicated some degree of give on the part of Altamont that they have accepted this re-alignment. We, in our Chapter, have chosen to support this new alternate as a realistic option, holding out for the Jeffrey City route will only result in having the Altamont original pushed upon us.

We recognize that there may be other interpretations of the situation. We must be careful to stay with the facts and we should try to argue the issues and not necessarily challenge the competence of the players on the OCTA team.

I hope this is helpful in promoting clarity and that it does not add to the muddying of the waters.

Ron Lund, President, Wyoming Chapter of OCTA  
P.O. Box 40121  
Casper, WY 82604

*The following statement was received in late November and represents the latest information on the Altamont issue:*

The Altamont Gas Transmission Company has just advised Ron Lund, Wyoming Chapter President, that they have realigned their pipeline to move it away from the summit of South Pass and away from the Pacific Springs portion of the Oregon Trail. These route revisions will be included in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement to be issued by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission around the end of December 1990. As Ron Lund says: "This is an example of industry responding to the legitimate concerns of OCTA. Our requests were reasonable and Altamont handled them in a responsible manner."



*Campsite where emigrants camped just before entering Upper High Rock Canyon. View is looking east to valley emigrants came through.*

## CHAPTER TRAVELS TO MASSACRE RANCH

Story by Bill Rupp & Steve Moore  
Photos by Shann Rupp

Though we hate to admit it, we did have a great time in the desert traces. The event was a CA-NV-HA Chapter archeological investigation of the Massacre Ranch area in northwestern Nevada, June 21-23, 1990. Massacre Ranch, on the

Applegate-Lassen Trail, is a name that conjures up vivid impressions of a horrid event. But did such an event occur? The historical record seems to indicate no. One of our quests was to ascertain some clue of the origin and meaning of a large enclosure of rocks near the Ranch. For years, folklore had it that beneath the rocks lay the victims of the "massacre".

The archeological quest by OCTA people for artifacts of the emigrants' crossings of the High Rock desert country began at 2:30 pm in the "city" park at Cedarville, CA. Participants began arriving in the forenoon, turning the peaceful, calm park into an extremely busy assembly point. Our leader, Tom "Himself" Hunt described the program for the next few days and introduced Hugh Bunton, the archeologist from BLM who was going to oversee all of our activities.

At 2:45 a caravan of 28 cars and 66 people left Cedarville for the Upper High Rock Canyon country of Nevada. All vehicles had CB radios and Tom Hunt kept the airwaves busy pointing out the places of import and explaining our dusty road's relationship to the emigrant trail. We stopped to observe the 49er Pass on the Applegate/Lassen Trail which Tom explained was part of the longest stretch of trail (140 miles) recorded on the National Historic Register.

We arrived at Stevens Camp on BLM land 46 miles from Cedarville at about 4:30 pm. Shortly there sprouted 23 tents, 9 RVs, and our group had grown to nearly 80 people. The weather was perfect! The cold spring water and the trees (yes, real trees!) of the site was as much a delight to us as to the 49ers. The place is little changed. It had been

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*Singular Rock near Massacre Ranch, Nevada (compare with Bruffs drawing)*

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quite warm during the day, but as evening approached the cool weather of high desert nights arrived.

The schedule for Friday sounded as though it would need full energy from all. The campground was quiet by 10 pm and before falling asleep one could speculate on how many emigrants must have camped in that very spot. We know from the diaries that just about every party travelling this route camped there for a night. Good, sweet water and feed for the animals made this location a must.

On Friday, June 22nd, we left the campground at 8 am and went directly to Massacre Ranch. Here the group was broken up into three parties of about 20 people. Using compasses, metal detectors, and notebooks, we systematically scanned a trail segment, urged on by Hugh Bunton's request, Tom Hunt's whip, and diary reports of cached wagons and jettisoned supplies.

Each group had 3 to 5 metal detectors. All groups "swept" the area, while Hugh moved among the groups, tagging "leads" announced by the chorus of shrill tones and buzzes set off by the orchestra of detectors. If a good enough sounding was located, Tom Mahach was called upon to verify the find with his super granddad detector which boasted a disc almost the size of satellite dishes on top of some motorhomes. The big disappointment of the morning was that no sounds came from the purported cache on the ranch. Despite the paucity of the results, the process of the survey was a good experience. **It must be emphasized that this was a survey only, and no excavation or collection of artifacts by OCTA members took place.**

After lunch we changed locations and here the rewards seemed great. Enough evidence of soundings and artifacts on or near the ground surface caused Hugh to mark an area for future excavation by a BLM archeological crew. We were all well pleased with the find of a linchpin known to have been used only before 1851, a beautifully hand-forged chain, and other pieces of hardware which indicated a major find. Since all our work had been under the

supervision of the BLM in accordance with its rules, we feel we can rely on BLM to follow through with protecting, reclaiming and preserving this important find. Was it any wonder that our spirits were high when we returned to camp.



*Above: Bob Bunyard, owner of Massacre Ranch, enjoyed Saturday night BBQ with the Chapter.*

Tom Dougherty and his family must be credited for pulling off a fabulous dinner of BBQ beef, rigatoni, salad and dessert for nearly 80 people. A restauranteer would have been pleased with the results.

We were privileged at dinner to be joined by the owner of Massacre Ranch, Bob Bunyard. Bob was pleased about OCTA's activities, and he explained to some of us how he presently uses the land for cattle and sheep raising. Bob also alerted us that he is planning to sell the ranch and it is our hope that the buyer will be OCTA friendly.

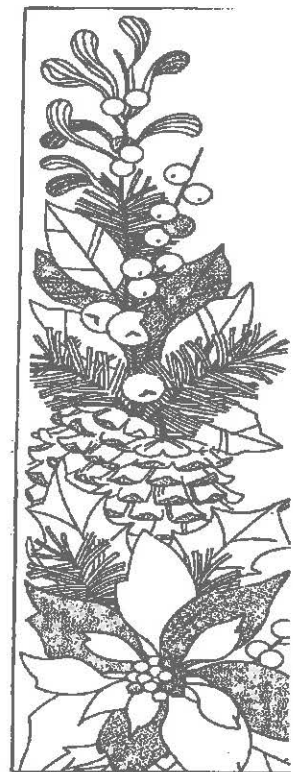
Friday night was much colder than Thursday night, but the good meal, fellowship, and successful day fueled a great night's sleep.

Saturday more "sweeping" of another area was done, and Tom Hunt led a group up the cutoff from Vya Springs to the 49er Pass. The CalTrans workers at Vya reported they had found emi-

grants' initials carved in soft rock at the top of the pass. The group did not locate any initials, but as Tom said — that would make a good adventure for another outing.

And, what of the enclosure of rocks at Massacre Ranch? If, indeed, there was no massacre, another possibility was that a wagon may have been cached there. Indeed, there are records of such caches in the area. The metal detectors located nothing, however, to indicate metal parts buried there. After our group left, some intrepid sleuths, including Don Buck, went back for another look. They observed that the stones of the enclosure had been cut, with square corners, a job that would take more time and energy than hurried emigrants could afford. Perhaps the early settlers of Massacre Ranch were the builders of a family cemetery there. Such is the type of research and mystery that keeps us going.

This outing had it all: good leadership, good production in verifying trail location, good food, good weather, and a great group of people. We were all tired and dirty, but happy at the end of this great outing. What's next?



**FIRST FIELD TRIP FOR CHAPTER**

by Dave Bigler

On May 12, 1990, nearly sixty Utah Crossroaders turned out for the chapter's first field trip—a daylong tour over the Pioneer Trail from Fort Bridger to Salt Lake Valley. This trail was opened by Lansford Hastings and the Donner-Reed Party in 1846 and followed by Brigham Young's Mormon company a year later.

Leader of the tour was chapter member Dr. LaMar C. Berrett, historian and former head of LDS Church History at Brigham Young University, who has carried out extensive research in recent years for a new book on this trail segment.

Highlight of the field trip was a visit to Cache Cave in Echo Canyon, just west of present Evanston, Wyoming, where early mountain men cached furs and Mormon General Wells made his headquarters during the so-called Utah War of 1857. Carved on the walls of the cave are names and dates from the immigration pe-

riod and the days of the mountain men. One tour participant found the name of his great-great grandfather, Matthew Ivory, engraved in the limestone.

Located on private property, this historic site on the Salt Lake Valley branch of the California Trail is almost always off-limits to visitors, so Crossroads' success in gaining admittance made the entire tour a rewarding experience.



*Above: Members enter Cache Cave on the Salt Lake Valley trail*



*Left: Dave Bigler (at left) and LaMar Berrett plan the next move from the mouth of Cache Cave.*

**EXPLORING THE SALT DESERT**

by Will Bagley

Utah Crossroads explored the Salt Desert section of the Hastings Cutoff on October 13 & 14, travelling between Grantsville, Utah and Pilot Peak, Nevada. Rush Spedden was trailmaster for 35 members on Saturday, while Roy Tea took the honors on Sunday. Both have devoted much time to the study of this trail segment; the Donner-Reed party would be a mere footnote in overland history if they'd had these gents for trail guides.

The trip began at Grantsville's intriguing Donner-Reed Museum which

houses a small but impressive collection of Salt Desert artifacts, many discovered by historian Charles Kelly in the twenties and thirties. After rounding the Stansbury Mountains, we explored Timpie or Big Spring, Burnt Spring, and Horseshoe Springs, following the emigrant trail as it looped deep into Skull Valley to avoid the marshes that bordered the Great Salt Lake. Cutting back into the western slope of the Stansburys, we saw the surprisingly beautiful Delle Springs, which was

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heavily used as a recruiting ground for 49ers. We were able to view Hastings Pass and the two key landmarks, Deseret Peak and Pilot Peak, that guided emigrants across the "ninety-three mile desert." Rush Spedden, from a careful reading of the sources, has proposed that Fremont's 1845 pack train took a pass to the south of Hastings Pass and recommended naming the pass after its discoverer, Fremont's guide, Auguste Archambeau.

The huge Deseret Ranch now occupies the location of Hope Well Springs, the key to the emigrant trails through Skull Valley. We crossed Skull Valley on jeep trails that parallel the remarkably well-preserved Hastings Road. As we drove through the sagebrush we gained a new appreciation of the emigrant's constant companion on dry trails—the dust cloud.

We reached the east side of the Cedar Mountains and stopped for lunch on the last water going west, Redlum Spring. The spring is set deep in a wash and probably hasn't changed much in the last 140 years.

Leaving Archambeau's Pass to the south, we followed the main emigrant trail north along the Cedar Mountains to Hastings Pass. This hard climb—which trail companies crossed in surprisingly short time—offered a spectacular view of the Salt Desert, with the low ridge of Grayback in the foreground to Floating Island, Silver Island, finally the blue bulk of 10,704 foot Pilot Peak. In between stretched green-gray expanses of greasewood and the stark white glare of the Salt Flats. From the summit of the pass it was hard to conceive that the first usable spring for overland travelers was more than eighty miles away.

The first day's exploration ended on Grayback Ridge, a steep hill that provided a more direct—and even more intimidating—view of the Salt Desert. Rush warned us to keep on the lookout for pottery fragments and we located the large corner of a job or pot.

Ten vehicles and 25 adventurers met Sunday morning on one of the dikes built to contain the evaporation ponds created during the Great Salt Lake pumping project which flooded large

sections of the trail east of Floating Island. Without an advocacy group like OCTA to call for preserving this trail segment, no official action was taken to mark the trail before it was flooded, though a team of state archaeologist excavated the probably site of the abandoned Donner wagons. As we could see from the edge of Floating Island, the evaporation pond did not extend as far as projected or completely obliterate ruts that have survived for 144 years. Even the trail segment that was covered is still identifiable.

Guide Roy Tea was full of fascinating trail tales. At their camp at Black Rock on the Great Salt Lake, the Donner party buried Luke Halloran in a coffin built from a wagon box next to the grave of John Hargrave, whom the Hastings party had buried earlier in a buffalo robe. According to Roy, two graves were located while excavating at Black Rock in the mid-1950's—one in a box and one wrapped in a skin.

Although we never found ourselves in the middle of the salt flats, it was easy to believe Roy when he said it's a disorienting, fearful place—the emigrant journals say that even the mules appeared to succumb to the general dread engendered by the place. The stark and surreal landscape—a sea of white salt surrounded by barren, dark mountains—is eerily unearthly.

After rounding the point of Floating Island we drove over Donner-Reed Pass and most members had a chance to walk across Silver Island. A view of the last ten miles of salt flat opened before us: between the volcanic rock and greasewood that cover the Silver Island formation and the green oasis of Pilot Peak lay another long reach of glaring white sand and salt, clearly traversed by the straight path of the wagon trail to Donner Spring (also called Relief Spring in earlier narratives). It drove home the grim reports of the journals: most travellers—their animals failed or failing—assumed they'd find water on Silver Island and now could see another ten-mile march ahead of them.

To preserve the trail—and avoid leaving our vehicles trapped in the mud that underlies the thin salt crust—we took a long detour around the salt flat.

On its western edge, we left the dusty roads behind and drove across the salt flat itself, a remarkable experience. It's the smoothest driving surface imaginable and the flat expanse conjures up mirages every bit as strange as the "monster" reported by Heinrich Leinhard. Sky-blue expanses of water immediately evaporated before we could reach them and the ends of islands were lifted into the sky.

The trail preserved in the salt is nothing short of incredible. The main wagon road is paralleled by a wider, fainter stock trail. The footprints of individual oxen appear to still be visible in the trace of the wagon road.

Rancher Dean Stevens was hospitable and aware of the significance of the trail. He let us eat lunch at his two log ranch houses at Donner Spring—the cluster of snow-fed ponds that saved the lives of those unfortunate enough to follow Lansford Hastings' worthless cutoff.

As an added bonus to our trail exploration, we stopped at the old Munsee Homestead, a well-preserved ranch founded about 1880. Eugene Munsee was an expert log house builder, creating a masterwork of the art out of hewn cottonwood logs, and the abandoned ranch is littered with hay rakes, harrows and other horse-drawn farm implements. (There may be a Crossroads project this winter to fence the site and put a good roof on the log house, which should help it last another century.)

Donner Springs marks the junction of the Hastings Cutoff with the trail of the Bidwell-Bartleson party, the first overland emigrants to California. We tracked the two trails south to a pass overlooking the Toano Valley and Silver Zone Pass, which Roy Tea recommended naming after John Bidwell and John Bartleson. From here we could see the start of the last third of the Hastings Cutoff: we crossed from Fort Bridger to Salt Lake last spring, from Salt Lake to Pilot Peak this fall, and while standing on Bidwell Pass, Doyle Reed volunteered to guide us on this last stretch of the cutoff—soon, we hope.





## CHAPTER ATTENDS PIONEER DAYS

Story & pictures by Jackie Lewin

The Gateway Chapter set up a display at the Iowa, Sac and Fox Presbyterian Mission Museum on September 8 and 9 for the annual Pioneer Days festivities. The museum which is operated by the Kansas State Historical Society is on the St. Joe Road near present Highland, Kansas. For those jumping off from the Missouri River crossings

near St. Joseph, the mission was a well known landmark. John Banks wrote on May 13, 1849:

*"We started for missionary station. I heard a sermon from a good speaker and was much pleased to hear the Indian children sing. It was a scene I shall always remember with pleasure."*

Three years later in 1852 John Clark also wrote of his stop by the mission:

*"Here we find a Smith to mend our broken waggon, also we see here a large farm under excelent cultivation with store & schoolhouse where they teach the young Indians & learn the old ones how to raise corn. This is a beautiful spot indeed; land rich & rolling, scattering trees, & small groves in the*

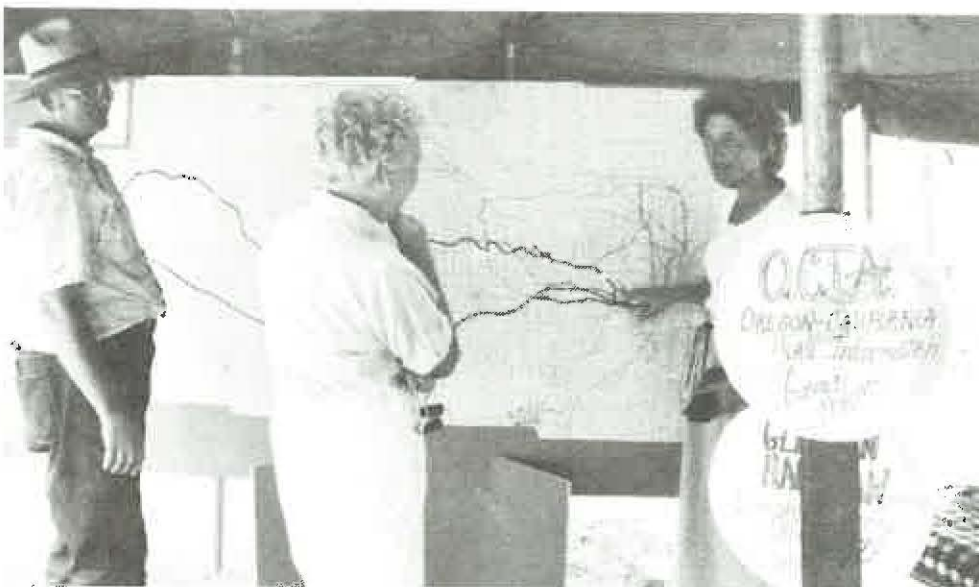
Gateway chapter officers elected in September, 1990:

President - Harmon Mothershead  
 Vice-Pres. - Larry Bunse  
 Secretary - Mary Maag  
 Treasurer - Glenda Leimbach

*Left: The feeder trail from the Iowa Point crossing of the Missouri River to the St. Joe Road passed through the grounds of the Iowa, Sac and Fox Mission. During the Pioneer Days festivities a tepee was placed in the trail swale just to the east of the mission.*

*distance. Many fine looking indians here. . . . They had come in here for the purpose of buying trinkets, but hearing the cholera was in our crowd left with the speed of an antelope. Four emigrants had just been buried. Many sick & some turning back. We dread the epidemic but push forward."*

Various local historical organizations, craftspeople and living history groups set up displays for the weekend. Native Americans of the Iowa tribe as well as representatives of other tribes were present in their traditional garb and members of the Baxoje Dance Group performed. The Gateway Chapter display consisted of a large map showing the St. Joe Road with its various feeder trails and the Pony Express trail through northeast Kansas. Chapter newsletters as well as OCTA's Overland Journals and News From the Plains were available for those interested. Not only was this a way to inform people of the area about the purposes and activities of OCTA but Gateway members found that several local people were a source of information for researching the trail.



*Mary Jo Sprague (right), Gateway member, explains the trail route to the Pioneer Day visitors at the Iowa, Sac and Fox Presbyterian Mission Museum.*

## ROWLETTS RECEIVE THE FRIENDS OF THE TRAIL AWARD

On August 11, 1990, during the OCTA Convention, it was announced that Don and Jean Rowlett of rural Ashland, Oregon were to be awarded the "Friends of the Trail" award. The Rowletts own and operate the Box R ranch which straddles the crest of the Cascades near Pinehurst, Oregon. The Southern Oregon Route of the Oregon Trail more commonly referred to as the Applegate Trail crosses their ranch and was the link between the lakes country and the Rogue River Valley. This award is given to land owners who make a special effort to preserve remnants of the pioneer trails or historic sites and help preserve the heritage of the western migration.

At a recent dinner at their ranch headquarters, a group of pioneer trail enthusiasts presented the certificate to the Rowletts.

OCTA is currently sponsoring legislation in Washington, D.C. to include the Applegate Trail under the National Trails Act.

## TRAIL SIGNS INSTALLED

On November 2, 1990, chapter members installed an Oregon Trail sign beside Highway 74 at Cecil, Oregon where the trail intersect is located. Cameron Krebs, a kindergarten student, was on hand and provided the much needed supervision during the installation. His mother, Maureen, came and inspected later.

Two Oregon Trail signs were also placed at some of the remaining ruts west of Echo, Oregon.



*Above: Don and Jean Rowlett, Friends of the Trail from Oregon.*

news items and photos  
by Dick Ackerman

*Below: Cameron Drebs, and his mother, Maureen, pose with the newly erected Oregon Trail sign at Cecil, Oregon.*



## PLAQUE DEDICATION

On November 3, 1990, chapter members, Propst family descendants, and guests gathered beside Highway 207 five miles south of I-84 for a plaque dedication. This is at the intersect of the Oregon Trail and a constructed pull-off. You'll find a copy of the plaque on page 2.

After the dedication, the group proceeded to Echo for a pot luck lunch.

### NEWS FROM THE PLAINS

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Rose Ann Tompkins, Editor

Chapter members view a portion of the Beale Road east of Flagstaff. The deep swale coming up the hill is visible on the right, as is the white diamond marker on the tree in the swale.

photo by  
Rose  
Ann  
Tompkins



## CHAPTER TRAVELS THE BEALE ROAD

story by Sheri Lee

On September 22 & 23, we circled our 4WD wagons in a Flagstaff parking lot, as directed by wagonmasters, Rose Ann and Harlie Tompkins, and head scout, Jack Beale Smith. Our goal was to visit some of the sites along the historic Beale Wagon Road.

The first federally funded highway in Arizona was built under government contracts to Lt. Edward F. Beale. The 1857 contract was for construction from Ft. Defiance to the Colorado River, and the 1859 contract was from Ft. Smith to

the Colorado River. The road was used by emigrants, miners, and cattlemen to travel westward, many of them having come off the Santa Fe Trail.

Using a very thorough booklet of maps and diaries compiled by Rose Ann, and expertly guided by Jack, we visited several sites, including Walnut Creek Campground, Indian prehistoric ruins with petroglyphs, a mail station, and saw deep swales up long draws as well as rock work done by the road builders. The trail extends 365 miles across Arizona. Jack has traveled all of the trail, and marked much of it.

At one point, near Turkey Tanks and Cosnino Caves, we happened upon

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Outing participants seem well guarded by Union Soldiers at Turkey Tanks near Flagstaff, Arizona.

photo by Nathan Smith





## JULY TREK ON CALIFORNIA TRAIL

by Janece Thornton

The Idaho Chapter of OCTA met at the Almo store for a tour of a section of the California Trail from the City of Rocks to Wells, Nevada.

Tom Hunt, OCTA Preservation Officer, was our tour guide for the trip. We enjoyed his information on the area.

There were about fourteen rigs that went, and there were members from Utah, California, Nevada, Oregon and Idaho. Some members went for just the first day, while others camped out and continued until about noon the following day.

Our first stop was at Pinnacle Pass, east of the Twin Sisters, where sections of the trail can be seen. There are cuts in a section of rocks where freight wagons were lowered on cables or chains in a little later time period. There are also names and initials of emigrants. From the pass the Immigrant Canyon and junction with the trail from Salt Lake City are very visible. The trails from Fort Hall, Hudspeth Cutoff, and Salt Lake become one.

A member of our group, Alene Litson Judd was raised in Junction Valley. Her brother and sister attended the Moultron School in the valley. She gave us some information on the area she had heard from her mother, and her personal knowledge. Her mother came

to the area as a girl of 12. She said that there were 2000 people in the valley at the time of the 1920 census. It has very scattered ranches now.

We then went up and over Granite Pass to the Idaho Utah border. We looked down at the area of the trail into Birch Creek and then Goose Creek. There are some good ruts here. The valley is very pretty. I'm sure that the emigrants appreciated it. The first emigrants of the year would be coming through about mid-July (the same time we visited it).

Earl Dayley, grandson of Newell Dayley who came to the area in 1877, gave us some information on where the wagons descended into Birch Creek. His grandfather had taken him out and showed him the trail in that area. He has been over it many times since then.

We then went to see a very good register rock, and a mask carved in the rock. The mask looks like an aboriginal carving, but is the work of an unknown pioneer. The names here are disappearing quite rapidly. The wind, weather and people are wearing them away. A Mr. Bedke gave us permission to go on his land to see the area and to spend the night. The area has good water, grass, and at that time, game. It would have been a good stop for the emigrants.

The next day we stopped at the trail going back into Little Goose Creek. There are some very good ruts worn into the lava rock along this part of the trail. The trail is very visible here. I heard a rattlesnake rattle beside me as I

investigated this part of the trail. I'm sure that the emigrants must have heard several through some of this area.

We left the Goose Creek drainage and moved into the Great Basin drainage.

Next, we stopped at Rock Springs, where the water comes out of a rock cave. Then on to Mud Springs, and then a stop at Chicken Springs. It appeared to be a very hot, dry section of the trail, but it was surprising to see the number of springs along here.

We saw the Mammoth Ruts. There is a question as to whether this is actually California Trail ruts, or a flash flooding that caused the 5 to 6 foot deep channel.

Our last stop was at Warm Springs or 1000 Springs.

We had a very informative and fun trip. It was bumpy, dusty and hot, but I'm sure that it was much harder for the emigrants. It was an area where I got the feeling that I would see the wagons coming over the crest of the hill at any moment. It hasn't changed much since the emigrants came through here another lifetime ago.

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two Civil War Union soldiers encamped along the San Francisco Wash! Proving friendlies, we were treated to a Civil War uniform fashion show, and a shooting demonstration. (Jack had arranged all this as a surprise.)

That evening, after a business meeting and dinner, we were entertained and enlightened with a very professional two projector audio and slide show presented by Dr. James Byrkit of Northern Arizona University. The sub-

ject was the Palatkwapi Trail from the Hopi Mesas to Jerome. Jim has several other shows which we intend to prevail upon him to show at another time. He has also done extensive research on an Overland Road from Flagstaff to Prescott. Apparently we convinced him that OCTA is a somewhat credible organization and, we are delighted to say, the professor has joined OCTA.

The next morning, after a night of rain, we awoke to fog as thick as pea

soup. Jack advised us that our intended trails for the day would be nearly impassible, so we adjourned for a visit to the Museum of Northern Arizona where we viewed the "Trails through Time" display and also saw many Indian artifacts. After a visit to the museum bookstore and gift shop, we all went our separate ways feeling we had experienced a fun and informative weekend.

# OCTOBER TREK VISITS SELDOM SEEN AREAS

story & photos  
by Lee Underbrink

Randy Brown was the leader of the October trek attended by 26 members of the Wyoming chapter. The trek started at Glendo, WY and went 4 wheeling along the trail to Bed Tick Pony Express Station. Many of our members had been down the trail from both ends but few had gone all the way through.

This trek was primarily over private land which took permission of ten landowners. The first stop was the Wilson ranch where the owners graciously let us tour their old railroad car which contained a collection of many years of artifacts picked up on

their ranch which is on the trail.

As the group followed the trail, a sight to take us all back 140 years unfolded. Below us on the trail was a wagon pulled by a team of four oxen with four outriders. When Randy got permission from Fred Nance to cross his land, Mr. Nance decided to surprise us with his authentic Oregon Trail outfit in a real to life dramatization. Needless to say our group was pleasantly surprised.

Further along on the trail, Mr. Brown showed us four 1862 telegraph pole stubs still in the ground. Lunch was under the cottonwoods at Elkhorn Creek.

After lunch we replanted the Barrel Hoop monument of the Heck Reel Fight that the cattle had knocked over while Lee Underbrink told the story of the fight.

Art Randall presented a talk at LaBonte crossing. All of the trekkers were impressed with Randy Brown's work at marking this entire stretch with OCTA trail markers. They were likewise impressed with how much pristine trail there is left on this little seen portion of the trail.

*Top photo: This swale is quite evident to the chapter members on the trek.*

*Bottom photo: Randy Brown stands next to an OCTA trail marker while he talks to the group.*



## ROSE ANN'S TWO TRACK

This issue is devoted primarily to the happenings of the chapters. Reading about them shows you some of what they are doing, and as you see, there is a lot going on out there!

It was great to get the information about what your chapter is doing and I appreciate those who sent me material and pictures. Keep it coming!

The next issues will have more about the upcoming convention, but feel free to send other ideas and articles. I hope you enjoyed reading about John Lynn's trip on the trail. It shows that not all trail activities are group orientated.

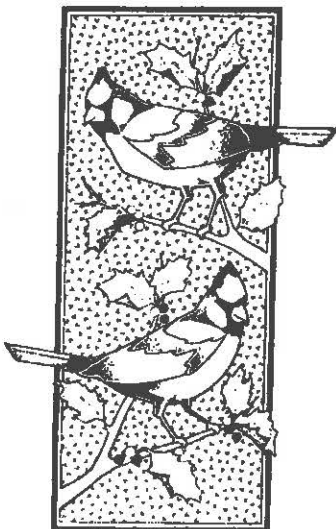
The next two deadlines are:

**Feb. 15 for the March issue**  
**May 15 for the June issue**

Rose Ann Tompkins  
1125 W. Mission Dr.  
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(602) 963-3565

TO EVERYONE I SEND ---

*Season's  
Greetings*



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*Dear Aunt Hattie,*

*We just had a 'nother one of thos meetin' with that nice Mr Mahach. (He just tol us to call him "Tom", can you imagine!) The mor I'm around him the mor and mor I likes him.*

*And, Aunt Hattie, their was mor and mor folks there to leart along with me just hows we 'n goin' to have your campsite ready an help your wagon train to enjoy you all's stay out her in California.*

*There were committees formed ('tis just a fancy word fer a small group of folks aimed at wantin' to do the same job, but together!). I'ma hopin' to work on a few 'cause some jobs need doin' before your wagon train gits here an some after your wagon train gits her.*

*Some of the jobs (or committees) ar gittin' folks to make you first days ones of findin' things a might easier an learnin' 'bout this her Sutter's Fort area, formin' small wagon trains to lead you to out of the way places you might'n never to find by yourselves, gettin' viddles prepared til you can git along on your own an thers even a "committee" to start makin' up letters to let you know how to prepar for you'n journey out her to hel that poor Tom Mahach, you'n poor overwoken trail boss.*

*Aunt Hattie, that man jus keeps us busy al busy an makes the busy fun by al the other folks he has hep'n him an us'un.*

*Well, best better git to gittin' 'cause I sur want to git this to be taken on the next mail wagon. Give my love to ya'll.*

*Sur lookin' to see you in '91.*

*Your neice, Anna Mae, from California*

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