

NEWS FROM THE PLAINS

Winter 2012

VOL XXVII NO. 2

Trails, Tribes, Territories

OCTA Heads to Kansas in 2012

By Ross Marshall
Convention Chair

The 2012 OCTA Convention in Lawrence, KS, will be a multi-theme convention as shown by our convention theme of "Trails, Tribes and Territories" as shown on our logo. Our bus tours, speakers, and other events will interpret these themes, all of which occurred during trail years.

Our host hotel will be the spacious and conveniently located Lawrence Holiday Inn Hotel and Convention Center. It offers plenty of room for us, in-house food preparation, and all the usual services at the competitive room price of \$72 per night!

We will have the usual chapter meeting opportunities, an array of workshops, auction room, and other events as shown by the following tentative schedule of events (notice the word "tentative" – a few things may shift slightly).

Monday, Aug. 6. Two bus tours (#2 and #5, see descriptions below) are planned. (We have no four-wheel-drive trails here, so we will be using our fine buses for pre-convention tours!)

Tuesday, Aug. 7. Two bus tours (#1 and #3), all day Board meeting, welcome reception.

Wednesday, Aug. 8. Chapter President's breakfast, general

membership meeting, and speakers throughout the day. With chapter meetings in the afternoon followed by the awards dinner and auction.

Thursday, Aug. 9. Three bus tours (#2, #3, and #4) are planned during the day followed by author's night and entertainment in the evening.

Friday, Aug. 10. A day of speakers and workshops followed by a special dinner and program to recognize OCTA's 30th Anniversary.

Saturday, Aug. 11. Three bus tours (#1, #4, and #5) will be held

All tours start and end at the Holiday Inn

#1 Independence Route - Starts at the Upper Independence Landing in Independence and runs along the Santa Fe-Oregon-California Route to Gardner Junction Park in Gardner, KS.

#2 Westport to Lawrence. – Starts at Westport Landing (Town of Kansas) in Kansas City and runs this Santa Fe-Oregon-California Route to Westport, through Johnson County, KS to the Wakarusa crossing to Lawrence. This route was also called the California Road.

Tours #1 and #2 above will include stops at all the new trail parks, trail interpretation exhibits and preservation efforts that are new in the last decade. The Kansas City area has been a focal point by our partner, the

National Park Service, the last several years.

#3 River Run to Fort Leavenworth – Starts in



during the day with a barbecue in the evening at Haskell Indian Nations University

Tentative Bus Tour Schedule. (All tours will be on near-new commercial buses)

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News from the Plains
Published quarterly
P.O. Box 1019
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News from the Plains

Spring Issue Deadline

February 25, 2012

Send materials to
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Visit the OCTA Store

www.octa-trails.org

888-811-6282

Louis Vieux Elm Vandalized

*By Duane Iles
OCTA President*

A venerable pioneer is no longer with us. The Louis Vieux Elm has stood along the Oregon Trail since it was a sapling in about 1716. This tree provided shade to hundreds of emigrants and served scores of people as a picnic area

in more recent times. At one time it was considered to be the largest American Elm tree in the world. Age caught up with the tree. The elm lost its first branch in 1998 and the tree gradually died

Several years ago area residents and KANZA chapter of OCTA members constructed a shelter over the remaining stump. On

August 19, county workers found the smoldering ashes of the tree stump. The fire, believed to be an act of arson, is being investigated.

The point here is that preservation and loss of trail heritage takes many forms. In some cases loss can result from old age, weather, and all the vagaries of nature. Then there is the more disappointing loss due to vandalism.

Member Survey Results Now Being Reviewed

*By Patrick Surrena
Marketing Committee Chair*

Wow! We had a great response to our membership survey in the last *News From the Plains*. In fact, the response may be greater than any survey we've done so far. The majority of the responses were electronic versus the mail-in form. So a huge thanks to everyone who participated.

The Marketing and Public Relations Committee is reviewing

all the results to identify a better profile of our overall membership. Next, we want to identify any trends which may show up of which we weren't already aware.

We want to see how those results will help us better serve our members and reach out to new prospective members. We will present recommendations to the OCTA Board of Directors at the March board meeting.

We thank those members who returned their surveys.

Kansas Convention

Continued from Page 1

downtown Kansas City at newly-named Lewis and Clark Point through the new Kaw Point Park, and traveling the 1839 Military Road (which became a branch of the Santa Fe, Oregon and California Trails to Leavenworth and Fort Leavenworth.

#4 Lawrence Trails – Starts on the Santa Fe Trail at Black Jack Park, goes on the Oregon-California Trail through Lawrence, lunch and entertainment at historic LeCompton, then on the trail to sites in Topeka. Additional themes are Border War sites, John Brown, Underground Railroad, etc.

#5 Quantrill Raid. – We will follow both the attack and escape route to the Missouri Border of the infamous 1863 Quantrill Raiders, a 450-man force that sacked, massacred, and destroyed much of Lawrence in the middle of the Civil War.

Keep checking our web page for periodic updates at www.octa-trails/Chapters/TrailsHead. Registration information will be available about April 1, 2012.

Mark your calendars and plan to come share our trails and our history in Lawrence, Kansas.

Volunteer Hours, Reports Needed

**Bill and Jeanne Watson
Legislative Liaison
Co-Chairs**

We urgently need your 2011 OCTA "Volunteer Hours and Expenses" reports now for Congress and the Partnership for the National Trails System. Please e-mail your planning, travel & activity hours/expenses to BillJeanneWatson@att.net. If already sent to your chapter volunteer coordinator or to us, we thank you very much.

Congress is always very impressed with how much OCTA members and our federal agency partners accomplish each year for our trails.

Bill Martin will represent OCTA at the 2012 Partnership meeting in Washington, D. C. He, Vern and Carol Osborne, Bert Eddins, and other OCTA volunteers will join us as we coordinate our House and Senate visits for Trails Advocacy Week February 13-16.

OCTA is Preservation in Many Forms

By Duane Iles
96cruisin@embarqmail.com

When asked what OCTA is, most of us would say we are about preserving the heritage of our great westward expansion and making sure it is not forgotten. More specifically we desire to protect the legacy of the people who went west; the remnants of their trails, campsites, journals, and life stories. To accomplish this, we read journals, write about these people, preserve their campsites and remnants of their footsteps, and endeavor to preserve the trail as they saw it.

These goals often bring us into conflict with the needs of our society. We could not travel the trail without vehicles that run on fuel. We would not be willing to give up our electric lighting, climate controlled homes, communication systems, or the computers we write on and communicate with. While we are still reliant on fossil fuels, we are moving to the renewable energy sources of the wind and sun.

All these energy sources potentially conflict with our goals as a trail preservation organization. We can coexist. It is important that we work closely with developers and find ways to fulfill both our needs. It will always require compromise.

Examples of the work OCTA does to preserve trail resources are readily apparent in Western Wyoming, where OCTA and other similar organizations have worked with energy companies to gain a smaller footprint on the land

and restoration of the vegetation. In one specific instance, where destruction was unavoidable, the impact to the trails was mitigated by raising the funds to purchase the site of the New Fork Crossing. This opened to the public a trail resource not previously accessible showing that we can preserve our heritage, while allowing for energy development.

We must apply these preservation goals to OCTA itself. We cannot preserve our heritage unless we preserve OCTA. We cannot educate people about the trails and pioneers unless we educate them about the organization and what we as members are trying to do. Over the past several years, our membership has been declining. Addressing this must be one of our preservation goals

Our marketing committee is actively developing a strategy to assist the officers and board in making decisions to increase our membership and raise the public awareness of OCTA.

Recently you were asked to answer a questionnaire about yourself and your relationship to OCTA. If we do not know what and who we are, we cannot hope to sell ourselves and attract new members and supporters. While the results of the survey are still being analyzed, some of the indicators are no surprise.

Most of our members are dedicated and likely to work on a project or trail, but unlikely to serve on a committee or take an office. The great news is that most who responded think OCTA is a good

value for their money and most would recommend it to friends.

I think we all realize that we are getting older. More than 60 percent of those returning the surveys are between 60 and 80 years old.

While growing our membership is of the utmost importance in regards to accomplishing the good works we so cherish on the trail, it is also a factor in the financial health of our organization. Everything OCTA does has a dollar sign attached to it. With loss of membership, we have fewer funds at our disposal. So, we must look to other revenue streams.

We have been extremely blessed by our partners in the National Park Service. These folks have given us their time, assistance, advice, and friendship over the past years. They have also been very generous in contributing funding for our organization and our projects. But, as you all know, our country is facing fiscal difficulties. This means, that we should do all we can to develop other ways to fund our projects and organization in the event that we lose some of that federal funding.

We have annual fund drives and many of you are extremely generous. We have a legacy fund where you can remember us in your estates and leave a permanent legacy to yourselves. I am not a fundraiser, and I am not good at asking people to give of their assets, but we need you to consider OCTA in your donations and estate plans. You have my pledge that the funds you donate will never be wasted.

Continued on Page 14

Trail Scout T-Shirts Now Available

By John Krizek
OCTA Vice President

For \$10 and an e-mail address, any teenager can acquire "Trail Scout" status, a T-shirt with the Trail Scout logo, and be connected via "new media" to the network of young historic trail fans that has grown out of the production of the *In Pursuit of a Dream* (IPD) film project. OCTA members everywhere are encouraged to sign up sons, daughters, grandchildren, neighbors, even school classes, for inclusion in the new affiliation.

The youngsters will receive the *Trail Scout* newsletter, and be connected with other teens

through the Facebook page created by the IPD alumni.

Contact Kathy Conway at OCTA headquarters, 888-811-6282 or kconway@indepmo.org for sign-up details. (And please remember to include a T-shirt size.)



Wyoming Youth Conservation Corps Improves Trail Site

By Candy Moulton
NFP Editor

Eight young adults from the Wyoming Conservation Corps (WCC) helped with site work at the new Lander Trail-New Fork River Crossing Historical Park last summer. The crew removed old fencing and built new boardwalks and a bridge.

The University of Wyoming organized the work crew through WCC, a program that gives young adults hands-on experience in the area of natural resources and environmental management. Working on the crew were college-age youth from Wyoming, Colorado, Pennsylvania, and Georgia.

The 82-acre Lander Trail-New Fork River Crossing Historical Park was created in August 2010 through a land purchase by Shell Western Exploration & Production, Ultra Resources, and PacificCorp as mitigation for impacts to the setting of the Lander Trail due to the companies' activities on federal land. OCTA assisted in the effort to acquire the historic site.

The property is owned and managed by the Sublette County Historical Society, which is undertaking other work including conducting archaeological surveys, constructing trails and interpretive signs, and creating of parking areas and access roads. The society also will develop management plans and educational programs.

IPD Well Received at Social Studies Conference

By Travis Boley
Association Manager

On Dec. 2-3, I attended the National Conference on Social Studies (NCSS) in Washington, D.C., with Landmark Media, the distributor of *In Pursuit of a Dream*. There were approximately 6,700 teachers and administrators from all around the country in attendance.

Hundreds of educators from Washington to Maryland to Georgia to California to Wyoming to Florida, and all points in between, sought out our joint booth with Landmark Media in search of new Oregon Trail-related materials. The materials we had on hand directed teachers and administrators to the educational materials available at www.octa-trails.org, the extra film information available at www.inpursuitofadream.org, and

ordering information for *In Pursuit of a Dream* on Landmark's Web site.

In speaking with our distributor a week after the conference, I learned that there was a spike in orders for *In Pursuit of a Dream*. It is grassroots marketing such as this that will help us achieve increased sales of the movie and will allow us to extend our name recognition well beyond where we are now. This was a goal early in the planning for the movie and we're now positioned to make this happen.

You can help by forwarding information about the movie and OCTA's Web site to any teachers you know. Please send OCTA headquarters the names and addresses of any teachers or schools who you feel would like to receive more information from us about the movie and our other educational resources.

FROM THE HQ MANAGER

Annual Fund Drive Underway, Member News

By Kathy Conway
Kconway@indepmo.org

Happy New Year 2012 OCTA Members! We appreciate all of your past support and your continuing interest in the preservation of our emigrant trails.

As you turn the pages of this issue you will find a full-color insert showcasing our newest books added to the OCTA store. We know you will find an item or two that you will want to order. If you haven't purchased your copy of *Bruff's Wake* written by Harold James and published by OCTA, you can do so by using the order form included with the insert.

By now, you should have received our annual appeal letter. We hope, that if you haven't had a chance to contribute to this drive, you will do so very soon. This year our goal is \$20,000. Donations

may be sent addressed to OCTA, P.O. Box 1019, Independence, MO 64050 or made online by visiting www.octa-trails.org. Donor names will be listed in the next printing of the *NFP*.

Recent members who have recruited new members and thus joined the "I Got Mine" club are John Winner, Dick Nelson, Shannon Perry, and T. Michael Smith.

New Life memberships have been purchased by Ben Scherbel, Kay, Milt and Rylene Coffman, James Nici, B. Lee Black, Doug and Kathryn Jenson, George, Isted, and Dr. William Trogon.

New Members

These individuals have recently joined OCTA.

Lois Bertram, Wapakoneta, OH
Denise Alexander Bittner, Eagle, ID
Christian Borgaard, Cheyenne, WY
Bill Butterfield, Napa, CA
Ann Christensen, Shelley, ID
Virgil Culler, Prescott, AZ
Lee and Patricia Dummel, Magalia, CA
Vernona Gomez, Southport, CT
London Homer-Wambeam, Laramie, WY
Ken Jutzi, Camarillo, CA
Audrey Krizek, Alta Loma, CA
Sandor Lau, Eugene, OR
Sue Lemm, Williams, MN
Jean Murray, Cedar Rapids, IA
Todd Nelson, Kansas City, MO
Karla Niedan-Streeks, Gering, NE
Louis Pavlina, Sunnyvale, CA
Gordon Pedrow, Longmont, CO
Carlyle Jones Raine, Liberty, MO
Rebecca Rainey, Alexandria, VA
Steven Sguordos, Loveland, CO
Joel Spandler, Kirkland, WA
Nancy Stayton, Lenexa, KS

TRAIL OF THE 49ERS
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WELLS, NEVADA

*An interpretive center
dedicated to the northeastern Nevada
section of the California Trail.*

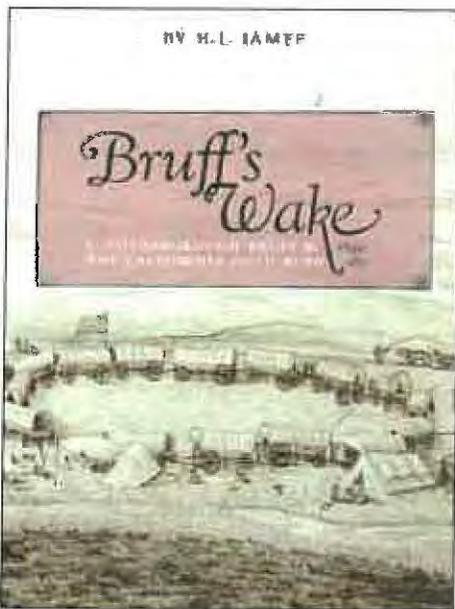
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2012 New Selections and Popular Titles



OREGON-CALIFORNIA
TRAILS ASSOCIATION

City of Rocks, Photo courtesy of Jim and Denise Moorman



BRUFF'S WAKE
Author: Harold James
8.5" x 11", 64 images
\$34.95 Soft cover

OCTA's Newest
Publication

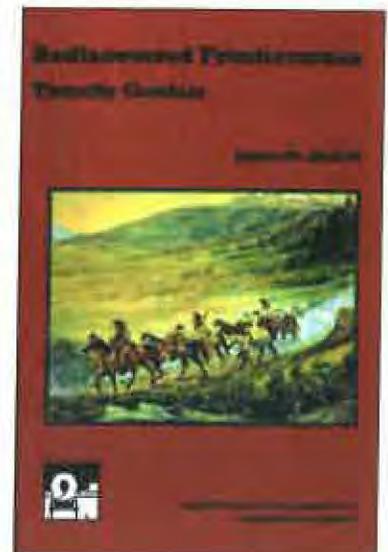
The story of J. Goldsborough Bruff's overland journey to the California Gold Rush, his experiences in California, and his return trip to New York via Panama. It includes entries from Bruff's journal and couples a number of the drawings that Bruff made while on the trail with photos that James made recently at the sites of the drawings. Bruff's drawings are a primary source for historians and trail buffs, allowing visualization of what the emigrants encountered on the overland trail.

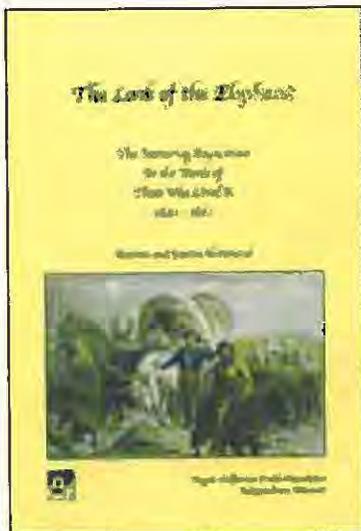
The published versions of Bruff's journal and drawings have, however, been out of print for more than 50 years. James' book makes this material available for a general audience.

REDISCOVERED FRONTIERSMAN: TIMOTHY GOODALE

Author: James W. McGill
\$24.95 Soft cover

Comprehensive account of a remarkable western frontiersman, his Indian wife, and the trail he pioneered. Goodale left his home at age 19 and began fur trapping and trading in the West. He associated with Kit Carson, John C. Fremont, Frederick Lander, and other notable westerners. The opening of the Goodale Cutoff in 1862, a mining trail to the goldfields in the mountains of Eastern Oregon and the Boise Basin in Idaho is recounted in detail. Detailed maps illuminate that story.





THE LOOK OF THE ELEPHANT, The Westering Experience In the Words of Those Who Lived It 1841-1861.

Authors: Andrew and Joanne Hammond

Soft cover \$18.95
Cloth cover \$34.95

Collection of diary quotes is a must-have for any student of the overland experience. Keynoted by maps, overviews of the trails and jumping off places, and thumbnail biographies of the diarists, puts the reader at the side of the men and women who surrendered comforts of the known in the middle of the 19th Century for the unknown promises of a future in an untamed wilderness.

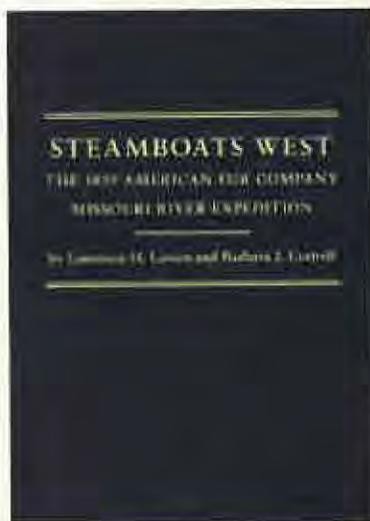


CALIFORNIA ODYSSEY, An Overland Journey on the Southern Trails, 1849.

Author: William R. Goulding, Edited by Patricia A. Etter.

\$45.00
Cloth cover
360 pages

Goulding's gold rush journal details his adventures on a seven-month overland trek with the Knickerbocker Exploring Company of New York. The handwritten journal, part of the collection of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Yale University, contains daily entries between February 18 and September 18, 1849.



STEAMBOATS WEST, The 1850 American Fur Company Missouri River Expedition

Authors: Lawrence H. Larsen and Barbara J. Cottrell.

\$34.95.

Cloth cover, 256 pages, illustrations and map.

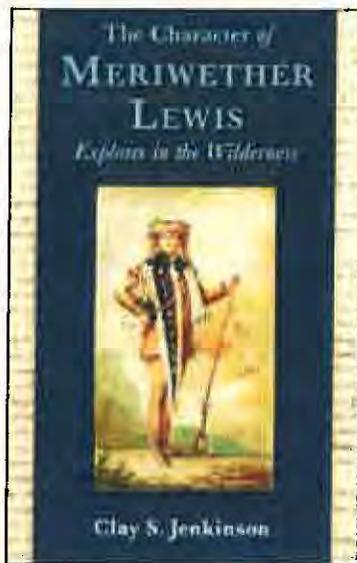
An adventure story that navigates the rocky rapids of the upper Missouri to offer a fascinating account of travel to the raw frontier past the pale of settlement. Larsen and Cottrell's depiction of this one celebrated ride brings steamboat transport back to life as modern, fast, and imposing--an apt symbol of the westward expansion that spawned it.



OSBORNE RUSSELL, Encounters with Hostile Indians, A Documented Trip to A Eutaw Indian Village, A Month With "Want A Sheep," 1834-1841

Author: Dr. Fred Gowans.
\$5.00 Booklet

Presented at the 2011 OCTA convention in Rock Springs, Wyoming, this book summarizes mountain man Osborne Russell's seven years in the Inter-Mountain West amongst various Native American tribes, from his birth in Maine in 1814 to his joining the Columbia River Fishing & Trading Company in 1834, where he departed Independence, Missouri through his last stop at Fort Hall in 1841. This book draws heavily upon Russell's journal and includes numerous maps detailing the sites of his various hostile encounters with myriad tribes



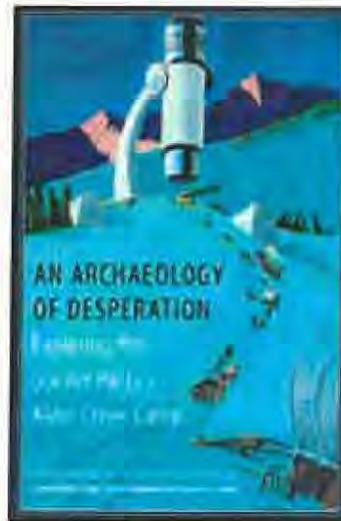
*THE CHARACTER OF
MERIWETHER
LEWIS, Explorer in
the Wilderness.*

Author:
Clay S. Jenkinson.

\$19.95 Soft cover
250 pages

Meriwether Lewis
commanded the
most important
exploration mission
in the early history of
the United States.

Clay S. Jenkinson takes a fresh look at Lewis, not to offer a paper cutout hero but to describe and explain a hyperserious young man of great complexity who found the wilderness of Upper Louisiana as exacting as it was exhilarating.



*AN ARCHAEOLOGY
OF DESPERATION,
Exploring the
Donner Party's
Alder Creek Camp*

Edited By: Kelly J.
Dixon, Julie M.
Schablitsky,
Shannon A. Novak

\$34.95, Cloth
cover, 384 pages

The Donner Party is almost inextricably linked with cannibalism. In truth, we know remarkably little about what actually happened to the starving travelers stranded in the Sierra Nevada in the winter of 1846-47. The contributors reassess old data with new analytic techniques and, by examining both physical evidence and oral testimony from observers and survivors, add new dimensions to the historical narrative.

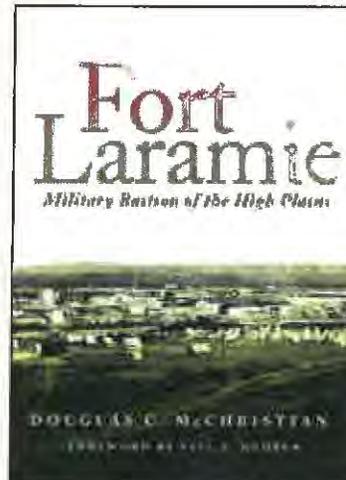


*FORGING A FUR
EMPIRE,
Expeditions in the
Snake River
Country,
1800-1824*

Author:
John Phillip Reid

\$29.95 Cloth cover
240 pages

Alexander Ross, the pioneer recorder of the early fur trade in the far northern West, led a beaver trapping expedition in 1824 into the vast, unfamiliar territory east of trading posts in the Pacific Northwest. In this narrative, based on the accounts left by Ross and others, historian and legal scholar John Phillip Reid describes the experiences of the earliest Hudson's Bay Company fur-trapping expeditions—ventures usually overlooked by historians—and explores the interaction between the diverse cultures of the Pacific Northwest.



*FORT LARAMIE,
Military Bastion of
the High Plains.*

Author: Douglas
C. McChristian.

\$45.00. Cloth cover
448 pages

Of all the U.S. Army posts in the West, none witnessed more history than Fort Laramie, positioned where the northern Great Plains join the Rocky Mountains. From its beginnings as a trading post in 1834 to its abandonment by the army in 1890, it was involved in the buffalo hide trade, overland migrations, Indian wars and treaties, the Utah War, Confederate maneuvering, and the coming of the telegraph and first transcontinental railroad. Meticulously researched and gracefully told, this is a long-overdue military history of one of the American West's most venerable historic places.

*SCENERY, CURIOSITIES, AND STUPENDOUS ROCKS,
William Quosenbury's Overland Sketches, 1850-1851*

Author: David Royce Murphy (with contributions by Michael Tate and Michael Farrell)

\$45.00 Cloth cover, 336 pages

Long before Hollywood brought the landscapes of the American West to movie screens, clever impresarios invented ways of simulating the experience of western travel and selling it to mass audiences. In 1851, entrepreneur John Wesley Jones, hired artist William Quosenbury to join such an venture.

Quosenbury and other artist traveled the overland trails through Nebraska Territory to sketch the "scenery, curiosities, and stupendous rocks" they encountered. *Scenery, Curiosities, and Rocks* gathers 71 of Quosenbury's sketches from the Jones expedition illuminated by eyewitness accounts from the period, modern maps, contemporary photographs, and descriptive notes.

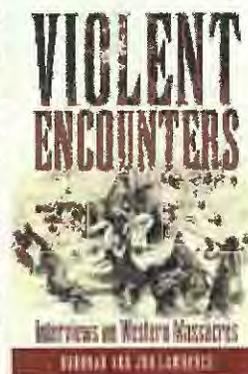


VIOLENT ENCOUNTERS

Authors: Deborah and Jon Lawrence

\$34.95 Cloth cover, 336 pages

Merciless killing in the nineteenth-century American West, as this unusual book shows, was not as simple as depicted in dime novels and movie Westerns. The scholars interviewed here, experts on violence in the West, embrace a wide range of approaches and perspectives and challenge both traditional views of western expansion and politically correct ideologies. The Battle of the Little Big Horn, the Sand Creek Massacre, the Battle of the Washita, and the Mountain Meadows Massacre are iconic events that have been repeatedly described and analyzed, but the interviews included in this volume offer new points of view and the readers will gain new information and many fresh insights.



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Checks and credit cards (Visa, Mastercard, Discover) accepted

Mail Orders, Return this form in an envelope to: Oregon-California Trails Association, P.O. Box 1019, 524 S. Osage Street, Independence, MO 64051-0519 or Fax Orders: Fax to 816-836-0989, or Phone Orders: Call 1-888-811-6282 or order online at www.OCTA-Trails.org/store, where you can also see a full catalog.

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Shipping & Handling First Item \$6.00 Each add \$2.00 International Rates will be higher *Discounts: 5%: Emigrant, Pioneer, Pathfinder, Student, Educator 10%: Trail Patron 15%: MMS, Inst., Life, Corp.			Total \$ of items _____ Less Membership discount * _____ Subtotal _____ Shipping and Handling (see chart) _____ Total _____		

Award Nominations Sought by June 1 Deadline

*By Dick Nelson
Awards Committee Chair*

The OCTA Awards Committee seeks nominations for deserving candidates to receive recognition at OCTA's 2012 Convention in Lawrence, KS. Please be aware that recognition comes from the general membership and not from the Awards Committee. **If there are no nominations forthcoming from the membership, no awards will be granted.**

Nominations should be submitted on the Awards forms available on the OCTA web site. To find the form go to www.octa-trails.org. At the bottom of the left hand column, click on Member Resources. Then click on "OCTA Award Nominations" in the list of forms. Scroll through all the forms to find the appropriate one(s). Complete the form(s), print, and email to Dick Nelson, Awards Chair, at kenelson42@sbcglobal.net.

Alternatively, the forms may be sent via postal mail to Dick Nelson, 12812 W. 100th Terrace, Lenexa, KS. 66215-1704. If you do not have access to the Internet and need a form, contact OCTA Headquarters at 888-811-6282. Be sure to provide sufficient justification and qualifications so that the committee can make informed decisions. The forms direct you to contact the nominees before nomination and the end of the forms mentions follow-up publicity. This is not necessary in order to submit the nomination, especially if it discourages you from submitting a deserving nomination. You may ignore these steps if you wish. **Deadline for completed nominations is June 1.**

Please use the form best fitting the qualifications of the candidate. The award categories are:

Meritorious Achievement Award—OCTA's highest award granted for long-term significant contributions to OCTA. Only members qualify.

Elaine McNabney Distinguished Volunteer

Award—Awarded to OCTA members who contribute significantly to achieving OCTA shorter term goals and objectives not rising to the level of length of service or breadth of involvement of Meritorious Achievement recipients.

Distinguished Service Award—Recognition of organizations, businesses, or individuals who contribute, participate, or share interest in furthering OCTA's programs directly or provide substantial support in a non-affiliated way to trail preservation and education. Non-members may qualify for this recognition.

Friend of the Trail Award—Presented to groups, individuals, or organizations that have direct ties to lands over which historic trails pass. Neither property ownership nor current residence on trail property is required, but emphasis is placed on preservation of trail remnants, education of the public about their historic resources, and allowing responsible public access to the historic resources.

National Certificates of Appreciation—Given to individuals and organizations that have made a particular effort in achieving a short-term OCTA goal. These certificates are for efforts of national scope.

Young OCTAN Award—Presented to youth 6-21 years of age who have demonstrated particular interest in OCTA and the history and/or preservation of historic emigrant trails. An entire class or group of school-aged children may qualify as one aggregated nominee. OCTA membership is not required.

If you have any questions about the awards program, please contact Dick Nelson at the e-mail and postal addresses provided above. Again, these are awards to recognize your friends and OCTA co-workers; if there are no nominations, there will be no awards! Don't let that happen. There are many deserving individuals in OCTA, but it is up to you to inform the committee who they are.

**Visit the OCTA Store
www.octa-trails.org**

Board to Consider Revisions to Strategic Plan at March Meeting

By Travis Boley
tboley@indepmo.org

The OCTA Board will revise the organization's strategic plan in conjunction with the Mid-Year Board meeting March 2-3, in Independence, MO. The strategic plan was adopted in March 2007. During the past five years many of the objectives and action items were met, however, membership development, fundraising, and marketing are ongoing challenges.

The revision to the strategic plan will take place in a one-day session prior to the board meeting. President Duane Iles, Vice President John Krizek, and board member/PR committee chair Pat Surrena are already working to develop strategies the full board can consider.

The existing strategic plan appears on OCTA's Web site, www.octa-trails.org (in the "Members" section). Please take a moment to look over the plan and e-mail your thoughts for possible additions to OCTA's leadership at octa@octa-trails.org. We want to hear from the membership with regard to the issues OCTA will confront in the coming years.

OCTA held its latest regional symposium in Fayetteville, AR, Oct. 29-30. OCTA partnered with the Arkansas Chapter of the Trail of Tears Association as well as a Fayetteville-area trail consortium known as Heritage Trails, Inc. and local Butterfield Trail enthusiasts to put on this symposium.

Kicking off the Saturday

morning session was John McLarty, president of the Arkansas Chapter of the Trail of Tears Association. He spoke about both the work being done by Heritage Trails, Inc. to build hiking and biking trails in the corridors of historic trails in the region before discussing the Trail of Tears and related sites in Arkansas.

Jack Fletcher, a past OCTA board member, and Pat Fletcher, a current OCTA board member, shared dozens of images of the Cherokee Trail from its beginnings in Northwest Arkansas and Northeast Oklahoma, across Kansas and Colorado, and finally into Fort Bridger in Southwest Wyoming. Most of the non-OCTA members in the crowd knew little about this trail, which is being considered for inclusion in the National Trails System as a branch of the California Trail.

Marilyn Heifner and Susan Young spoke about the Butterfield Trail across Arkansas, covering both the St. Louis route and the Memphis route. National Park Service Superintendent Aaron Mahr followed their talk with a short speech about the importance of partnerships, which was a main theme of this symposium.

Finally, OCTA's Bert Eddins spoke about OCTA's Congressional initiative for recognition of the Southern Trails from Arkansas to California, which is attempting to gain National Historic Trail status for the southern complex of trails to

California

A tour took in sites on multiple trails in the area including Pea Ridge National Military Park, a Civil War Battlefield site that features well-preserved remnants of both the Trail of Tears and the Butterfield Overland Mail Trail. Other tour stops included Butterfield Stage Coach sites such as Callaghan's Station in Rogers, Fitzgerald's Station in Springdale, the Old Courthouse in Fayetteville, and Parks Station, south of Hogeeye. Trail of Tears sites included the Elkhorn Tavern, Cross Hollows, the Springdale trail marker, and the Fayetteville trail marker.

David Miller wrapped up the first day of the symposium with a speech entitled "The 1849 Marcy-Simpson Trek to California on the Old Fort Smith to Santa Fe Trail."

On Sunday, symposium participants took an all-day tour to sites related to the end of the Trail of Tears, the beginning of the Cherokee Trail, and portions of the Butterfield Trail.

Our goal is to help establish a new OCTA chapter in Northwest Arkansas/Northeast Oklahoma to assist on the new Southern Trails initiative.

April 20-22, 2012, we're also planning a symposium in Austin, TX, in partnership with the El Camino Real de los Tejas Association to help establish an OCTA chapter in Texas to also aid the Southern Trails initiative. Make plans now to attend!

Get Involved Now!

Submit OCTA Education Award Nominations

By Bill Hill

Chair, Education Awards
& Publications Committee

The first few months of the New Year bring some very important deadlines for the Education Committee projects. These projects, including the Outstanding Educator, have different and earlier due dates than most of OCTA's other programs and awards, which are in May or June. Materials have already been sent out to a number of elementary and secondary schools, universities, parks, and museums.

Our activity book raffle has proven to be very successful over the past few years. When notified of their selection teachers have expressed both their excitement at winning and appreciation for the helpful resources. We are looking forward to even greater participation. The raffle selection includes a class set of *Reading, Writing and Riding along the Oregon-California Trails, Finding the Right Place, Following Lewis and Clarks' Track, or Here Comes the Pony*. Teachers or schools may submit a postcard with information about their class and the activity book they would like to receive. The winning recipient of the class set of the activity book of their choice is drawn from all cards received by **February 1**. If your child's teacher or local school has not sent in a postcard to OCTA, please ask them to do so. All schools and teachers should avail themselves of this opportunity to take a chance on receiving educational resources at no cost.

Our Outstanding Teacher Awards are presented at our an-

nual convention in August. However, the applications/nominations are due by **March 31**. OCTA is dedicated to recognizing educators and the important work they do in passing on our history and the important story of westward migration.

This past summer Mark Trotter of Camp Floyd State Park, UT, and Dr. Phil Roberts of the University of Wyoming in Laramie were honored for their outstanding programs and teaching. If you know of a teacher or program that fits any of our five categories, please see that information about our recognition program is made available to them. Awards may be given in the following levels: elementary; middle school/junior high; high school; college/university/adult education; and parks/museums. The recipients receive a certificate and a check for \$250.

In past years we have recognized teachers and programs that without our program might have gone unnoticed. By highlighting the work and programs of the recipients we encourage others to improve their own programs, and this benefits not only our students, but also all of us. Help us recognize our outstanding educators.

Our third project is the calendar contest for 2013, which is open to elementary school aged children. It is well underway. The theme is "Emigrant and Indian Clothing and Equipment." Students are asked to submit original artwork depicting the theme.

Twelve to fourteen submissions are selected for the calendar. Not only do the student recipients have their work displayed, they also

receive a copy of the calendar and a check for \$50. Their school also receives one copy of the calendar. Each year we have received increased submissions as more schools see the value of incorporating art and history into their programs. In fact, some schools have made it an integral part of their study about the West and their students have participated in every contest. The deadline for submissions is **April 15**. Individual students may submit a drawing even if their school does not participate in the project.

Information and requirements related to all our three projects can be found on OCTA's website by clicking on **Teachers & Students** under the Learn selections and then on **Opportunities for Teachers & Students**. Related forms may be downloaded from the Web site.

New Book Chronicles 1848 Wagon Trains

The 1848 overland migration is the subject of a new history by Michael E. LaSalle. *Emigrants on the Overland Trail: The Wagon Trains of 1848* was recently released by Truman State University Press and is available through the OCTA store, www.octa-trails.org.

Much of the text is derived from the accounts written by seven men and women who traveled with different wagon train companies. The book, therefore, gives first-hand details of the migration to Oregon and California.

Congratulations to Award Winners; Fall Events Planned

By A. Oscar Olson

On September 17, we had our fall field trip on the Hensleys Salt Lake Cut-off where we had a one day trip to City of Rocks in Idaho. We began our trip by our usual coffee and donut social at Snowville, Utah. We had nearly 30 people and headed west to follow this important but somewhat forgotten trail to City of Rocks. During the 1840-50s, many travelers did not like to follow the Hasting Cut-off across the salt desert, including Samuel Hensley, and found this route north around the lake to join the California Trail at City of Rocks. We saw stage stations, ruts, a grave, and had lunch at Pilot Spring in northern Utah. Our long time member, Gar Elison, led the group as our normal leader Roy Tea, had taken a fall while getting ranch permissions for the field trip. Gar stepped in and did a splendid job, providing one of our better field trips by directing us around the Raft River mountains, Raft River, and into City of Rocks, Idaho. We were also glad to have Marv and Doreen Burke from Colorado join with us as well as some folks from the Idaho Chapter (Doug Jensen and other guests). The weather started out a little scary, as the rain come over night, but the day cleared and was perfect. Roy Tea prepared the trail guides, Drew Wanosik handled the registration, and Oscar Olson brought the coffee, milk and donuts.

We moved our regular January meeting to November due to the unpredictable winter weather here in Salt Lake City in January. For the winter meeting we had a brief election of our officers. Agreeing to serve one more year are T. Michael Smith, president; Leo Lyman, vice president; Craig Fuller, recording secretary; and Drew Wanosik, treasurer. Past President Linda Turner updated everyone on the progress of our 2011 Rail Marker Project (Roy Tea and committee), which is moving forward "one step at a time." T. Michael Smith discussed updates on the transmission line concerns, the Transwest Express and UNEV. We then presented two recognition awards for work in 2011. Victor Heath was awarded the Special Achievement Award Distinguished VIP Volunteer for going the extra mile on the T-Marker Project and Gar Elison received the Special Achievement Award Fall Field Trip Leader. Dr. Leo Lyman received a belated award for his work in 2011.

Lee Kruetzer announced the retirement of Chuck Millikan from the NPS SLC Office, and a social that was planned for December 8. At the meeting Past President John Eldredge gave a talk and presentation about the James Simpson road between Fort Bridger and Camp Floyd. He mentioned he's doing an article on the "Died 1814 Roy" rock. We look forward to reading the article. We had a great evening as usual with about 22 in attendance.

We will have a leadership meeting in January with the next membership meeting planned for April 2012. We will be looking for a newsletter editor this winter, as our editor, Bryce Billings has decided it is time to retire. It will be a huge loss to us as his talent in photography, doing GPS work and putting together a spectacular newsletter will be sorely missed.

Preserve the Trails and Support OCTA

Continued from Page 4

Our three trusts are valued at just under one million dollars, which sounds like a lot of money. It is, but we can only spend the earnings. To fund the operations of our organization at the current level without NPS assistance would require investments in the neighborhood of eight million dollars. I want to try and start working to attain as much of that amount as possible. In addition to the annual fund drive and donations through estate planning, another fund raising possibility is to gain corporate memberships.

As I sit writing this on the eve of Thanksgiving, I am so very thankful for all I have been given and the opportunity to serve as your president. I will work to see that OCTA continues to be the greatest trail and history organization in America and a force in the preservation of our heritage.

April 1 Is Deadline for Board Nominations

*By Bill Martin
Nominations & Leadership
Committee Chair*

If you want to make sure that OCTA is setting the right priorities for historic trails preservation, one of the best ways to do that is to serve in a national leadership position, where you can be sure that your voice is heard.

Four positions are filled each year on the 12-member National Board of Directors, with successful candidates serving three-year terms. Board members serve at large, so chapter membership/af-

filiation or where you live is not a consideration.

Board meetings are held twice a year, once in conjunction with the national convention and a mid-year meeting at a location to be determined. Funds are available to assist with travel and lodging at the mid-year meeting.

If you are interested in becoming a candidate, the deadline is April 1. Candidates should submit a brief statement about your experience and background, including information about what you would like to see OCTA accomplish; a written endorsement from three

OCTA members; and a statement of your willingness to serve.

If you have any questions about serving on the Board, feel free to contact any current Board member or officer, whose names and contact information can be found on page 2 of this issue of *News From The Plains*.

You may also contact members of the Nominations & Leadership Committee: Past President Bill Martin, bmartinocta@gmail.com; Lethene Parks, lethene@comcast.net; or John Winner, swinner@dataentree.com.

Virtual Trail Ready to Explore

*By Marley Shurtleff
Internet Committee Chair*

Virtual Trails www.octa-trails.org/learn/virtual_trail/index.php on the OCTA web site is again functional.

The Virtual Trail—an online encyclopedia of key trail sites and one of the most important features of OCTA's web site—is, according to our Association Manager Travis Boley, already “one of the most visited destinations on the OCTA web site.” Of the 93 names points on the map, 62 have full or partial information, while 31 as yet have no information, pictures or diary quotes.

Sites are enlivened by pictures and commentary as well as diary quotes. Log in, click on the map, choose either “Oregon Points”

or “California Trails,” and select your state or chapter region to see some locations of particular trail importance there. As you examine the site, you may conclude that there are important trail locations or information still missing in your region.

The Virtual Trail (VT) has not been established just to entertain us as members, although it does that quite well. The site also has vital roles to play for OCTA now, and in coming years. It supports our OCTA educational goal by offering pertinent trail facts and images to students and scholars world-wide. It encourages tourism by non-member, modern-day trail explorers and enthusiasts by providing awareness about points of interest they can visit. Both of these efforts have the important

benefit of helping keep OCTA membership stable.

Since VT is now working well, it is time to fill in some of the “thin spots” on the site. That is where our member's trail location knowledge, pictures, and awareness of diary entries become important.

It is not necessary for members to know how to add information to the site. If you have something specific (information, pictures, or diary quotes) you would like to see considered for VT, email a note about it to OCTA headquarters (octa@indepmo.org) with the words “Virtual Trails” in the subject line. I'll get the message, and will contact you.

OCTA Web site: www.octa-trails.org



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