

NEWS FROM THE PLAINS



THE OREGON-CALIFORNIA TRAILS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

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

September 1988

OCTA Members Gather "Across the Wide Missouri"

The "Mighty Mo" set the tone for the sixth annual convention—it was mighty well organized and mighty well enjoyed!

From the pre-convention tour to the closing workshops, those in St. Joseph August 9-14 found much to learn and to enjoy.

Traditionally the minutes of the Annual Board Meeting and the Annual Business Meeting have appeared in the *Overland Journal*. Under the new editorial policy, these belong in the *News from the Plains*. In lieu of the minutes and extensive photographs, reports and articles on subsequent pages are intended to give members a detailed overview of the annual gathering.

The Opening Reception on Wednesday evening led off the good times, with a bountiful buffet beautifully arranged, City Councilman Gary Wilkinson and the Ambassadors of the St. Joseph Chamber of Commerce on hand to welcome us, and tokens of hospitality for our farthest traveling members.

Music was presented by String Art (Esther Kreek and Charlie Pinzino) with Harry Faier. The Missouri Town Dancers, under the direction of Dr. Diane Burton, traveled from the Kansas City area to demonstrate historic social dance. They even drafted OCTA members to join in the pioneer style fun.

The evening closed with an old fashioned jam session and sing-along of folk music, but many members—eager to renew old friendships or begin new ones—lingered around the pool till the wee hours.

Papers

Who could have been more appropriate to lead off the presentation of papers than Merrill Mattes? It was a casual remark several years ago by Merrill that led to the eventual selection of St. Joseph as a convention site. Even with his excellent paper, "Joseph Roubidoux's Family: Fur Traders and Trail Blazers," we're not sure members have the ubiquitous Roubidoux clan straightened out!

Other papers given Thursday morning provided background for the day's journey: "Riverfront Rivalries" by Dr. Harmon Motherhead, "The Pony Express and the Trail through Kansas" by Jackie Lewin, and "Lucky John Patee" by Gary Chilcote.

Filled with new knowledge of the territory, members joined in the dedication of a monument on

the bank of the Missouri. A new triangular landmark, it contains three plaques. These salute Joseph Roubidoux, founder of the city of St. Joseph; the Pony Express; and—as inscribed on the plaque—the California-Oregon Trail. (This designation brought big smiles from the Golden State members present!) The last plaque was unveiled by the Missouri Secretary of State Roy Blunt and Dick Ackerman. Creation of the Riverfront Park and placement of the monument is a show of pride by the city in its role in history.

Imbued with the 'Spirit of St. Joseph,' members set off on the riverboat with the same name. While their numbers may have been akin to an early wagon train waiting at the Missouri, their water travel was much swifter and safer.

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Dick Ackerman leads the Annual Business Meeting Sunday at the convention. Board members in background: Don Buck, Tom Hunt, Larry Jones, and Mary Mueller, who has now retired from the board. Dick was elected to a second term as president of OCTA.

From the President's Desk

What can I say about the St. Joseph convention? Rich Nolf and his crew outdid themselves.

Everything was planned to perfection, but there was something more. That was the warmth—not of the outside temperature, but of the local hospitality. It was much warmer than the heat of the weather.

Local landowners made everyone feel at home while on their property and local citizens seemed sincerely glad to have us in their community.

The local Chamber of Commerce had members there to meet and greet us at our opening reception.

Tours were well organized with trained tour guides and a fine selection of papers was given, many of them pertinent to that area.

The minor flaw of the air conditioning problem on the riverboat ride was quickly forgotten when the boat company donated \$250 to OCTA's General Fund.

This report would not be complete without mentioning the Stetson Hat Company, which many of the men visited. As one member confided, before he arrived in St. Joe he never owned a Stetson. Now he owns seven! I noticed one Stetson walking around and thought the owner had leased an apartment. When asked if he had room to take it home, I was assured he did but he needed to empty the trunk of his car to do so.

I look forward to working with the new members (and returned members) of the board and the new officers, and reluctantly say farewell to those leaving: Mary Mueller, who has put her heart and soul into the Membership Committee and will continue with that; Chuck Dodd who has resigned, feeling he can be more useful in other capacities off the board; and Charlie Martin. For the first time since OCTA was formed,

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Introducing

The New Board

The 1988-89 board will have a few new faces among the seasoned ones. Unless indicated otherwise, all will serve three years.



Don Buck

Don Buck has returned for a second three-year term. He has served as secretary for the last eight months, has guided the reorganization plan and the financial plan. He implemented the COED project and has seen it through its initial phase.

Don has taught history at DeAnza College in Cupertino, Cal. for over 20 years. Since 1985 he has been mapping emigrant trails and wagon roads in Nevada and California for the National Park Service.



Greg Franzwa

Greg Franzwa is another familiar face since Greg was one of OCTA's 'founding fathers,' its first president and executive director. He has been editor of the *Overland Journal* and the *News from the Plains*.

The author of *Oregon Trail Revisited* and *Maps of the Oregon*

Trail, Greg has just produced his first photographic book, *Images of the Santa Fe Trail*. He was part of the survey team for the National Park Service on both the Oregon and Santa Fe trails.



Jackie Lewin

Jackie Lewin has been Curator of History at the St. Joseph and Pony Express Museums for the past 15 years. Prior to that she taught high school history and government. She holds a masters degree in history. Jackie has helped to organize the Gateway Chapter of OCTA in St. Joseph, serves on committees, and as vice-president of the chapter.

"I am honored to have the opportunity to serve on the board," Jackie says. "The goals of the organization and its part in preserving and interpreting the trails are extremely important—both now as an aid to students of the trails and for future generations."



Bill Watson

Bill Watson is a Charter and

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New Board

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Life member of OCTA and has attended every convention. He and wife, Jeanne, have chaired the OCTA Legislative Committee the past year. For the past 20 years the Watson family has served with the U.S. Forest Service as summer volunteers in the Carson Emigrant Road area of the Sierras.

Bill has been elected by his board peers as vice-president/president-elect. "I look forward to working with the officers and board while placing special emphasis on the leadership and long range planning activities assigned to me," Bill says. He will also assist with the Convention and Awards Committees.



Larry Jones

Larry Jones has been appointed to fill the two year term left vacant by Chuck Dodd. Larry was the next highest candidate in votes received. Larry is staff historian for the Idaho State Historical Society, has been active in trail studies in Idaho, including being co-author of "Oregon Trail Cultural Resource Study," a massive survey of the trail from Casper to Fort Boise.

"I think the pop song of a few years ago, 'We Are Family,' goes a long way in describing OCTA," Larry says. "A supporting and actively involved membership has enabled us to accomplish a great deal in a short time. As a board, we must continue to encourage this participation." As official host of the 1989 convention, Larry hopes

all members will attend the event in Boise.



Susan Doyle

Susan Doyle was selected by the board as secretary for the next year. Susan has been active in OCTA through presentation of a paper at the Casper convention and as secretary of the Arizona Chapter. Currently she is enrolled in the doctorate program of American Studies at the University of New Mexico. Her dissertation will be based on some aspect of western trails. She has participated in the Black Rock Expedition and the Mojave Trail Rendezvous earlier this year.



Jim Bowers

Jim Bowers returns again as Treasurer. While no longer holding a Director's position, since he did not choose to run for re-election this year, he will remain as an officer. Jim is the only person to hold the Treasurer's post and he wants to continue until the transition to full computerized record keeping is made at the Headquarters in Independence.

Charles Martin, Sr., Honored

On October 8th Charles Martin, Sr. will be given the Addison E. Sheldon Award by the Nebraska State Historical Society. The honor will be presented at the Annual Meeting of the Society. The award is bestowed upon an individual who "has made significant contributions to the preservation of Nebraska history."

President's Desk

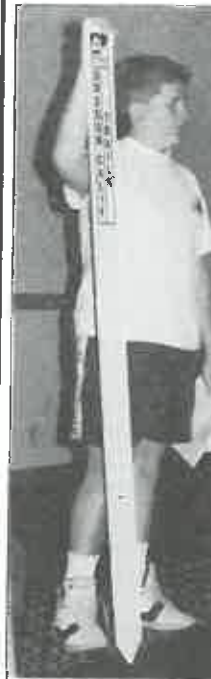
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he will not be listed in an official capacity. He had such a delightful way of passing on his advice. All three deserve many thanks.

To conclude, thank you to all who worked on the convention and to those who were unable to be there, you missed a good one!

Your president,
Dick Ackerman

Young OCTAn Carries Big Stick



When Tom Hunt asked for a volunteer to solicit donations at the convention for the Carsonite trail signs, board member Bill Hill volunteered. He 'volunteered' his son, Will, that is. Will, a personable 13-year old from Center each, New York, brought in over \$400 for the project

at \$10 per sign. Not bad for such a short time. Maybe he can become an honorary member of the Fundraising committee.

Make your plans now: 1989 Boise Convention August 8-13

Chapter Reports

Arizona

The Arizona Chapter summer meeting was held July 16th at the Chandler home of Harland and Rose Ann Tompkins. A series of field trips is planned for the ensuing year, beginning in November and bi-monthly thereafter.

After a swim and a pot-luck supper, J.D. Root showed his slides taken on an RV caravan over the Oregon Trail from Independence to Oregon City. Aubrey Haines later related some of his experiences in researching emigrant wagons. It was an interesting and productive gathering which could have been improved only by a larger attendance. Anyone, member or not, is welcome to join our meetings.

We were pleased to see a good number of Chapter members at the St. Joseph Convention.

J.D. Root, Pres.

Gateway

Since the formation of our Chapter in June 1987, our efforts have been devoted primarily to organization and planning. One of our first tasks was to write and adopt a set of By-Laws. The Chapter has been organized into three committees—Research, Program and Hospitality.

The research committee has been active in the collection and research of 120 diaries of emigrants who left from St. Joseph, as well as river crossings and the "St. Joe" road. Field trips up the Missouri River to Rulo, Nebraska to locate crossings, together with other trips on the Kansas side, were taken to trace feeder roads into the main road from St. Joseph. The junction of these elements is in Marysville, Kansas.

Programs and speakers for the bi-monthly meetings from May 1987 to July 1988 were provided by the program committee. Each speaker covered a different aspect of river and overland travel.

Local arrangements and refreshments for the meetings were provided by the hospitality committee.

As a result of these activities, the chapter has experienced a steady growth in membership. From the first meeting, the membership has doubled to a total of 88.

A mailing is planned to invite non-members to join in chapter activities.

James Mehl, Pres.

Idaho

The Idaho Chapter and volunteers from the co-sponsoring agencies are busily engaged in planning next year's convention. All concerned are dedicated to providing a memorable experience.

On September 24, Chapter members and volunteers will meet in Glenn's Ferry and hike some of the segments selected for convention participants.

Lake Hazel Middle School has become the second school to adopt a rut. School sponsors are enthused about the project and plan to involve more than one discipline in the program.

Chapter members have helped the school select a segment and will meet with teachers and students both in the classroom and in the field in the coming months.

Start collecting your state pins now. We hope to see a spirited exchange of pins at next year's convention, and we will be sure to select a suitable prize for the member who exhibits the best skills of horse (pin) trading.

Larry Jones, Pres.

Northwest

The chapter sponsored a raffle at the St. Joseph convention, with ten contributors providing Jackson prints, books, a video, needlework, and even a mosaic with a design of the winner's choice—by Past President Tom Hunt! One of the needlework prizes was made by Trudy Ackerman. Prizes were given out at the awards banquet. Proceeds of \$561 went to OCTA with 10 percent, or \$56, going to the chapter.

The chapter has planned an outing for eastern Oregon and Washington for October 1-2. With

Dick and Jerry Waller as wagon masters, a guided tour of old Fort Walla Walla museum complex will take place Saturday morning. This will include an authentic pioneer village and a unique burial ground dating back to the Nez Perce war period. The Whitman Mission will be the picnic lunch setting, followed by a guided tour in the afternoon.

Saturday a no-host dinner will be held at the Whitman Inn.

Sunday morning will feature a caravan from Pendleton to Wells Springs, then return over the Barlow Road to Oregon City.

Reservations are not required. To join in, contact the Wallers (503-437-4491) or Ackermans (503-581-0328).

Dick Ackerman, Pres.

Trails Head

Trail Trek II of Trails Head Chapter is scheduled for September 10th. Wagonmaster Tom Rockwood selected the Kansas Museum of History on the outskirts of Topeka as our rendezvous point. A brief tour of the old Baptist School for the Potawatomie Indians on the museum grounds is the first point of interest. A visit to the ghost town of Uniontown over the Union Ferry route of the Oregon Trail follows. From Rossville through St. Marys and on to the Red Vermillion Crossing the Trek will ride on top of the old trail. Today, it is adorned with blacktop.

The St. Joseph Convention? Trails Head was there. Six tour guides were our members. Jana and Ross Marshall and Darlene and Francis Peniston belong to both Trails Head and Gateway Chapters so they get double Brownie points. Penny Kolling and Jim Budde (and his wife Judy), were the other guides.

We had sixteen members in the Sunday workshops.

Our meetings are open to interested persons from the Kansas-Missouri area, members or not.

John Leamon, Vice-Pres.

A Newcomer's View

Because the 1988 Annual Meeting was my introduction to OCTA, the Editor asked me to write a newcomer's impressions of the activities. Here goes.

I became an OCTA member in a roundabout way. My husband and I have long had an interest in emigrant trails, but had not visited them in person until a year ago.

After attending a meeting in San Francisco in 1987, we spent a few days near Donner Lake, exploring historic railroad and trail sites.

One day we ventured off on foot in a desolate place in the Forty Mile Desert. A marker informed us we were indeed on the California Trail. This fired our imagination. We decided right then to explore more of the trail in the future.

We hoped to be at Independence Rock this 4th of July. Too hot to be out on the plains, we opted instead to try Independence or St. Joseph, gathering information for future trips.

After a series of frustrating phone calls, we were referred to the St. Joseph Museum. They gladly told us of the OCTA meeting and sent convention materials. It was the first we heard of OCTA.

Both my husband and I are veterans of many professional meetings and conventions. The materials showed us that OCTA takes its meetings seriously and that we would miss something by not attending.

Unable to attend the full week, we decided to be there for the big field trip and Saturday programs.

The trip to Marysville was extraordinarily well organized, packing into a single day an enormous amount of information, sites, and stories. I especially liked the way guides read from emigrant diaries to help us see with emigrants' eyes the country through which we passed.

Also memorable were the mochila exchange at Hollenberg Station and Mrs. Bell's scrapbooks and photographs at Shibley Ford.

OCTA Support Recognized

A full evening of awards highlighted the Annual Banquet. Among those given honors for their support of OCTA goals are:

LIFE MEMBERS: Thirty two certificates were prepared for these very special members. Many were on hand to accept their certificates.

CERTIFICATES OF APPRECIATION: To retiring board members—Jim Bowers, John Latschar, Charles Martin, Sr., and Mary Mueller; to Elaine McNabney for serving as volunteer Office Manager during the transition to the Independence Headquarters; and to Richard Nolf for producing a very successful convention.

RANCHER OF THE YEAR: Mr. and Mrs. Donald Willsey, owners of Lone Elm Campground in Kansas; the Chester and Bill Frederick families, owners of ranches with multiple historic sites, including Register Cliff of Wyoming; and Mr. and Mrs. Clint Krebs, resident managers of Krebs Ranches with the Willow Creek

The high point for this Donner Party aficionado was Alcove Spring with J.F. Reed's initials. I was lucky to be on the bus with Ray Ellenbecker who told of his work in locating the grave of Mrs. Keyes.

Saturday was a congenial day of soaking up information through the talks and displays in the book room. Learning new and unexpected facts is the hallmark of a good conference, especially when these facts are more interesting than old stereotypes.

OCTA offers the chance to explore trails with knowledgeable and dedicated people who infect you with their enthusiasm. But be careful about talking to editors.

Even though we were strangers, we were made to feel welcome. We're glad we went to St. Joseph and look forward to Boise next year.

Patricia Grambsch

(Patricia is a Statistician with the Department of Biostatistics, Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota)

Campsite in Oregon. The Willseys and Krebses were present for the award.



Clint and Maureen Krebs with Dick Ackerman.

CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION—Institution: Kansas Department of Transportation for outstanding efforts in marking the Oregon Trail in Kansas and for their cooperation on Trails Head projects. Jim Jones, Director of Operations, accepted the award for KDOT.



Jim Jones of KDOT with Barbara Magerl.

MEDIA AWARD: *Examiner* newspapers of Independence, Mo. Donna McGuire accepted the award.

MERITORIOUS ACHIEVEMENT AWARD: Tom Hunt, past president and first National Preservation Officer. Tom also received the first Preservation Pin.

Without these people our achievements would not be as measurable.

Committee Reports Measure Progress

The following major points are taken from reports made at the board meeting.

Archaeology: An Archaeology Fund has been established within OCTA to support such activities on private sites (donations welcomed); articles have been/will be provided for *News from the Plains* to help members understand the committee's methods and ethics; a guidebook has been compiled outlining antiquities laws related to trail sites, and pertinent federal and state agencies; a roster is being prepared of members in each state who would volunteer to help

professional archaeologists work on private lands; presentation of the first archaeology workshop.

COED: 45 members of the Cal-Nev Chapter are now surveying documents, and those trained at the convention workshop will become the backbone of the project at local levels.

Education: 14 members serve on the committee but more are welcome; a primary goal is an assessment of current materials and a list of speakers.

Headquarters: Support has been provided for the transition to the Independence office; worked on

budgets for office operations and the move to new facilities in the National Frontier Trails Center; will work with the City of Independence and architects.

Historian: A final draft of OCTA's history is underway with the expectation of publishing it; systematic organizing of OCTA records and convention memorabilia is continuing.

Membership: There are now over 1,500 members (pre-convention); the Arthur Clark Company, (book publishers) list will be used to so-

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1988 Convention

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Tours

On Friday most members rolled out for a 7 A.M. departure on the day-long "Trails West" tour. Others slept in, ate and visited leisurely, or headed for the Stetson factory, before leaving on the "River Crossings" trip in the early afternoon. Coming together at the Iowa-Sac-Fox Presbyterian Mission to compare notes over a wonderful barbecue meal reminded some of stories of wagon train rendezvous. One primary difference is the earlier travelers didn't have the marvelous truffles we were served!

Saturday featured another round of great papers: "Still They Came: Wagon Wheels on Paddle Wheels to the Heads of the Oregon Trail" by Dr. James Pope; "The Sabbath on the Oregon-California Trails" by Winton Solberg; and "United We Stand: OCTA and Archaeology" by Betty Graham Lee (and the Archaeology Committee); and "We Were '49ers, Too!" by JoAnn Levy.

The Program Committee was chaired by John Latschar with the following members' assistance: Greg Franzwa, Ross Marshall, Merrill Mattes, and Rich Nolf.

Awards Banquet

Close to 300 people jammed the ballroom Saturday night for

the Awards Banquet. Background music for the dinner was provided by a trio from Booneville, Missouri (Kathy Barton, Dave Para, and Bob Dyer). Without our usual master of ceremonies, John Latschar, Dr. George Watkins filled the role well. His sense of humor was in great shape, especially as he read the seemingly endless award to Richard Nolf for the fine convention. Richard set a new precedent by jogging around the perimeter of the ballroom until George had finished reading!

Business Meeting

The Sunday morning business meeting was very well attended, with a healthy participation by members. When the board completed its report on business conducted during the also seemingly endless board sessions, the outgoing members—Chuck Dodd, Charlie Martin, and Mary Mueller—yielded their chairs to the new board members. After a very brief session, the annual business meeting adjourned.

Workshops

The only activities left were workshops, another sign of OCTA's growth. We have reached the point where more members want to be active in projects, and where board members and committee chairpersons want to train volunteers. It was a successful beginning for furthering our goals.

Throughout the convention, other intermittent actions took place: sales of raffle tickets, videos, and T shirts; a brisk book business, with a number of authors autographing their works; and chapter meetings for some groups.

Summary

Overall 266 people attended all or part of the convention, with 185 paid registrations, some representing families, plus others who attended on a daily basis. When we gathered at local historic sites on the tours, often we were joined by people from that community. More than once an assertive OCTA member was seen twisting bystanders' arms. We expect to see a few new members from outlying areas around St. Joe!

Rich Nolf estimates that over 100 people took part in planning the annual event. Primarily these include: Local Arrangements and Total Coordinator-Rich Nolf; Research Chairpersons-Jackie Lewin and Marilyn Taylor of the St. Joseph Museum, and Heidi Hornaday, Research Chairperson for Gateway Chapter; and Registration Coordinators-Linn Hoyt and Rich Nolf.

As members headed home they took with them not only some excellent Trails Guide booklets prepared by the Museum staff, but a warm feeling for one of the most famous jumping off places.

First Media Award Presented

Last year the board authorized creation of a Media Award to recognize outstanding support of OCTA's goals through print or electronic communications.

The Examiner of Independence, Missouri becomes the first recipient of that honor. Donna McGuire, author of an extended series on the Oregon Trail, accepted the award at the Awards Banquet.

Donna spent three weeks on the trail, at the newspaper's expense. She was provided with a list of OCTA contacts along the trail. Some of these are directors while many are long-time dedicated members or friends and working partners, such as staff members of state agencies or the BLM.

OCTA's name appeared continuously in the series, as did the names of many OCTA individuals. Our efforts at preservation and protection were acknowledged.

The result was a month-long daily series of articles which were placed on the front page of *The Examiner*. The series ran 860 inches long, often with massive photographs of sites OCTA people are very familiar with.

The series concluded with a wonderful editorial about the Ore-



(Examiner Photo)

gon Trail itself, the need for preservation, and the reasons more people should travel the historic trace of our nation's past. It also encouraged readers to join OCTA!

The Examiner intends to publish the series in booklet form with some minor revisions. If interested, please write to the *News from the Plains* for more information.

Board Notes

From the requested \$71,205, Don Buck and Bill Hill whittled off 18% of estimated expenditures. The final budget for Fiscal Year '89 is \$58,700.

An increase in membership would permit restoring funds to some areas that were cut. Priorities were set for using possible unanticipated revenues and for donations.

A computer accounting/budget system will be installed at Headquarters Dec. 1, 1988. Chuck Dodd is working on the project.

Tighter restrictions on spending by officers, board members, and committees have been enacted; a new requisition procedure will become effective Dec. 1, also.

The board approved a change in election procedures. Only one ballot will be sent to each membership, regardless of the number of persons represented by the membership.

Voting on board matters will be limited to those people who have been directly elected by members.

A Fond Adieu

For the past three issues I have been editor of the *News from the Plains*. It has been a stimulating challenge to select and edit articles that will give you insight into how the organization deliberates and makes decisions, how members can become a more viable part of those processes, and to make sure you know the latest decisions or problems of the board.

It has been fun helping members see what colleagues are doing across the country through personal tidbits and chapter news, and how our distant counterparts keep in touch.

The time has come, however, when personal plans force me to yield this volunteer activity. I will miss this role to which I think I brought special knowledge, based on my Charter membership, first convention planning, and three year board term during our initial growth.

I would be remiss if I did not give a 'thank you' in print to my staunch co-editor, Pauline Fowler of Independence. Without her time and talents these issues would not have been possible, or as attractive. The Christmas design on the membership blank in this issue is her work.

As you can see, this issue has been a collaboration of many members across the country. To those who accepted assignments gladly, submitting articles or photographs, I express my gratitude. Covering convention festivities alone would not have been humanly possible. Except where noted, all photographs are by Susan Doyle.

While a new editor is being selected, you can help. Simply write us a note or postcard or tell us what you have or have not enjoyed in the last three NFPs, or what you wish you could find in it. Send this to my home: 6801 W. 72 Terrace, Overland Park, KS 66204.

Thanks for your past support and kind words.

Barbara Magerl

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Barbara Magerl, Editor
Pauline Fowler, Asst. Editor

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St. Joseph Scrapbook



Missouri Town Dancers



Jammin'—String Art Plus Friends



**Ceremony at the Hollenberg Pony Express Station
(Magerl)**



**Dr. Warren Chelline presents Samplers to Kawaharas
(Hawaii) and Bretts (England)**



Tea Time—E.W. Puckett (Magerl)



**Patricia Grambsch and Ray
Ellenbecker (Magerl)**



**Mrs. Bell and grandson at
Shibley's (Magerl)**



Marilyn Taylor at Keyes Marker-Alcove Spring



Sunbeck Family at Nemaha



Unveiling River Marker



All Aboard—But Where's the Wagons?



Signing Books: Tom Hunt, Merrill Mattes, Bill Hill . . .



Greg Franzwa and Jeanne Watson



Dr. James Pope



Mr. and Mrs. Don Willsey



Thanks, Elaine!



Darlene Peniston



Betty Lee



Mary Mueller and Jim Bowers



Dr. Winton Solberg



Good Job, Rich Nolf

Variety of Trail Treks Were Offered Pre-convention Tour

Three busloads of enthusiastic trail buffs headed out from convention headquarters on Tuesday, August 9, on the pre-convention tour. Before dividing into smaller groups, we shared an orientation at Fort Leavenworth.

Established as a cantonment (without walls), the fort was founded in 1827. Instructed to locate on the left side of the Missouri River, Colonel Henry Leavenworth found that land low and marshy, and he put the fort on the higher right side. Branches of the Oregon and Santa Fe trails passed through here and we later saw nice swales left as a reminder. We walked down these swales which were three days trail travel from Independence.

Classes were in session as we toured the Army's James Franklin Bell Hall. A fine display of trail artifacts and a special library exhibit of books on trail history made us feel welcome.

Bell Hall contains beautiful stained glass windows, with those in the Hall of Fame depicting famous regiments. In 1881 the U.S. Command and General Staff College was established at the post. The list of names and photographs in Bell Hall is a Who's Who of the most famous men in our military history.

Objects in the museum pertained not only to the military side but also to the personal lives of men who served there. Among these are early wagons, an emigrant prairie schooner, and freight wagons. There is a sleigh owned by General George Custer and a carriage used by Abraham Lincoln in an 1859 visit to Leavenworth. The Memorial Chapel, considered an architectural gem, has plaques honoring the fallen who served this post. These included General Custer and his brother, Capt. Tom Custer, both killed at Little Bighorn. Another honors John Grattan of Grattan Massacre fame.

We paused at The Rookery where Gen. Douglas MacArthur



Members walk down the Ft. Leavenworth swale toward the Missouri River.

lived in the early 1900's, the National Cemetery, and U.S. Disciplinary Barracks, a military prison since 1874. (This is not the same as the Federal Penitentiary in Leavenworth, a mile or so away.)

A block away from the Ramada Inn where the full group shared lunch is the office site of Russell, Majors, and Waddell (1855-1861).

McCormick Distillery in Weston, Missouri was our next stop. The oldest continuously operated distillery in the nation, it was founded by Benjamin Holladay of overland freight and stage fame. The natural limestone springs, just what was needed to make good whiskey, are still there. One is located in an ancient cave, once the aging room. We toured the plant, watched some bottling—and enjoyed some samples!

Weston Bend State Park, a new and developing park overlooking the Missouri, was the next stop. Here we heard a quote, from an emigrant diary, I believe: "The Missouri is alright to drink, if you just close your eyes."

Lewis and Clark came through here, a very heavily wooded area, which is still that way. We looked

across to Ft. Leavenworth where Chief Joseph and the Nez Perce Indians camped.

In Weston we passed dozens of ante-bellum homes and stores. Mr. Jesse Pepper greeted us at the Weston Burley House. Since this year's tobacco is still in the fields, we saw last year's crop, learned about tobacco allotments and the tobacco industry. We had a little time to shop and sightsee on our own.

Pirtle's Winery, the next point of interest, is housed in the 1867 German Evangelical Lutheran Church. The building was also a brewery bottling plant in the 1880's and for 50 years was a Baptist Church. Pirtle's, which started in 1980, has vineyards a few miles away.

By dinner time the OCTA troops were hungry. Charles Pirtle served a wonderful buffet in the McCormick Cave, the former aging room.

It was a perfect end to a very busy day, full of historic places of interest, with interesting people and well informed, helpful guides.

*Beverly Hesse
Cal-Nev Chapter*

Cruising the Wide Missouri

Whether praised in song, cursed by riverboat captains, or viewed as the first obstacle in the westward trek, the Mighty Mo has attracted the attention of generations, including OCTA members who chose to spend an afternoon on the river during the convention. An upriver journey of 18 miles was ahead of us.

After participating in the dedication of the Riverfront Monument, we boarded the "Spirit of St. Joseph" riverboat, hoping to recapture some of the feeling of moving upriver to jumping-off places.

Little did we know the hardship that was ahead—a trauma of the modern world: broken air-conditioning! This was a problem for those inside trying to escape the sun. An alert crew worked diligently to open windows, turned on fans, and even opened doors and posted guards! Movement of the boat created a nice breeze for those topside, and we turned our attention to sights and sites along the river.

Diary excerpts were read by OCTA members Kathy and Larry Bunse who were period-costumed and already had put in a hard day's work on their farm.



Kathy Bunce, in dark dress, visits with passengers.

Tying up at Nodaway Island, our stop was hosted by Jack Fennel of the Missouri Department of Conservation. A plentiful buffet was served on-board and many took the opportunity to debark and picnic on the island.

The return trip went fast, thanks to the down river current up to 12 miles an hour. The setting

sun, now merely a warm glow, reflected off the river as it always has. As the heat faded, we were rejuvenated with the memory of the day, thoughts of days long gone, and the lights of St. Joseph welcoming us back.

Elaine McNabney

River Crossings Give New Perspective

The River Crossings field trip was great! It offered an entirely new perspective that had never been presented before. Enhancing that experience were knowledgeable tour guides Heidi Hornaday, Kathy Bunse, and Herb Woodbury.

Wyeth Hill, overlooking the Missouri flood plain, was the first stop. It was clearly evident how the unstable Missouri has had a propensity to change its channel from time to time. Thanks to the U.S. Corps of Engineers, the river pretty much stays put today.

Ferry crossings at St. Joseph and the Parrot-Duncan sites could be discerned with some tutoring and a little imagination.

The tour paused briefly at Amazonia, a crossing in emigrant travel. A stop was made at the

Banks House, built of limestone near a spring at the foot of the bluffs in 1848. Builder William Banks operated a ferry at Iowa Point four miles away.

After crossing the Missouri at Rulo, Nebraska, we proceeded to the Kansas-Nebraska state line where a six foot cast iron survey marker was placed high on the bluff in 1855. From this point, all land in Kansas and Nebraska and much of Colorado and Wyoming was surveyed. Mrs. Guy Surman of Rulo organized the clearing of trees so it was visible from the road. A path leading to the marker was cleared and steps cut into the path, making our ascent easier. Many thanks to Mrs. Surman. Thanks go also to OCTA's Paul Scherbel who recommended this stop, although he couldn't join this

convention.

The caravan slowed at Iowa Point to give tour guides a chance to tell about that ferry. Originally located in Missouri, it later was shifted to the Kansas side. The White Cloud and Wolf River Crossings were also seen.

Three miles south of the Iowa-Sac-Fox Mission was Wolf River Cemetery. Here Captain Peter Burnett's wagon train buried the first white woman in Doniphan County, Ks. Wolf Creek Crossing could be seen across a field to the southeast.

The barbecue dinner at the mission, where we joined the Trails West Group, concluded a great outing.

John Leamon

Trails West Took St. Joe Road

At 7:00 A.M. on Friday, August 12, about 160 OCTA members boarded the modern-day equivalent of covered wagons for a trip along the St. Joe Road.

There were numerous stops along the way to inspect Pony Express stations, river crossings, and campsites the "Forty-Niners" stayed at during their hectic rush to gold diggings.

After ferrying the Missouri, the Forty-Niners had to cross three main rivers: the Wolf River, south fork of the Nemaha, and the Big Blue at Marysville.

Jim and Betty Sudbeck, dressed in period clothing, graciously permitted OCTA members to view firsthand the site of the Nemaha crossing on their land.

Mrs. Woodrow Bell of Marysville (the granddaughter-in-law of Robert Shibley) provided a personal narration and several ageless photographs of the family at Shibley Knoll along the former path of the Big Blue River.

A visit to Alcove Spring and the Keyes gravesite highlighted the Trails West journey. Further west we viewed the isolated location of the junction of the St. Joe and Independence Roads.



Lunch at the Koester House.

(Photo: Barbara Magerl)

Four Pony Express stations/sites were visited: Seneca, Guitard, Marysville, and Hollenberg. At the Hollenberg Station, members were treated to a re-enactment of the mochila exchange by members of the National Pony Express Association and were served refreshments by area women in pioneer era clothing. Various officials were introduced,

including representatives of the Kansas State Historical Society who administer the station.

The Trails West group joined the River Crossings group for the barbecue supper at the Iowa-Sac-Fox Mission, another Kansas State Historical Society property.

Jim Budde
Tour Guide

Committee Reports

(continued from page 6)

licit members; a letter has been drafted to welcome new members; many members have arranged for distribution of OCTA membership brochures at museums, historic sites, and bookstores.

Preservation: Mapping workshop at the convention is the springboard for a massive project, including a register of land owners along the trails, and work on nominations to the National Register of Historic Places; a pilot marking program is underway in Wyoming and Nebraska with Carsonite markers; Pacific Power & Light Co. of Wyoming has donated cash and materials for marking and fencing; PP&L is re-studying routes of power lines in the Sweet-water area; Boise District BLM is

placing Carsonite markers in Idaho; Idaho Chapter is working on City of Rocks legislation; a Preservation Committee member will work with Sierra Pacific Power Co. of Nevada on the Thousand Springs Ranch site development; documentation is being gathered on the Tule Lake/Bloody Point Massacre site; OCTA actively opposed a competitive mountain bike ride on the Mormon-Carson Pass Trail near Tragedy Springs in California; OCTA and the Cal-Nev Chapter gave \$200 toward signing and fencing in High Rock Canyon by the BLM; OCTA has gone on record in support of the Oregon Trail National Monument in Oregon at Flagstaff Hill.

Public Relations: Copies of articles from *The Examiner* series were sent to 40 people who assisted or were named in the articles, along with a thank you letter;

public relations packets will soon be sent to a P.R. contact in each chapter; articles have been sent to papers across the country on board members and activities; the exhibit for the 1988 convention is the largest to date—over 1,300 inches of print publicity has been sent to the P.R. office at headquarters. The states ranked in order of publicity provided by chapters: Nebraska, Wyoming, Missouri, California, Idaho, Kansas, Colorado, Oregon and Arizona, which was represented for the first time.

Ranchers: Nominations were approved for Rancher of the Year awards from these states: Kansas, Wyoming, and Oregon; a plan to allow OCTA members to visit trails on private land by showing an OCTA card is being studied; this plan has been started in Oregon.

First Workshops Prove Popular

After several years of board consideration, for the first time the convention offered in-depth workshops on ways to advance OCTA's goals. Attendance at these was rated very worthwhile by the participants who seemed eager to carry their new information back to their chapters or area.

Archaeology

For two intense hours, eighteen students with six instructors concentrated on learning better ways to be archaeologically helpful to OCTA. What an ideal pupil/teacher ratio!

Six participants at each table pored over maps and forms, and entered into discussions before advancing to another section where they would again have two knowledgeable leaders to assist them.

Our guest instructor was among the most eloquent... Hugh Davidson from the Missouri Department of Natural Resources at Jefferson City. He is a specialist in nominations to the National Register of Historic Places, and many clues and criteria were exposed to us in filling out and understanding the forms. Hugh's exceptional vocabulary and ability to clearly answer questions made great fans and good students of us all. Frank Tortorich added his expertise. They both deserve very special thanks from OCTA for presenting this extremely welcomed information.

The dynamic team of Sharon and Hal Manhart presented some deep and thought-provoking ethical concepts, and inspired listeners to get out along the trails, work with OCTA, join amateur archaeological associations to learn research design and excavation techniques.

Jude Carino's enthusiasm and rapid-fire talk pulled his students into an understanding of maps which would have taken most instructors until sunset to explain. He was ably assisted by the experi-



Jude Carino (front right) of the Casper BLM office instructs OCTA volunteer archaeologists.

enced Craig Bromley. One participant exclaimed, "Whoopee! At last I know just what townships, ranges, and sections mean, and know how to locate them on a map!"

It proved to be a noisy, tiring, energetic, and wonderfully successful experiment.

**Betty Graham Lee, Chairman
Archaeology Committee**

COED

The enthusiasm that COED volunteers brought into the workshop was fanned into great anticipation by the time the session ended.

Don Buck gave an overview of the program, informing participants that it would be a long range project. The results may not be available for fifteen to twenty years.

Undaunted, the entire group listened to details on how the project will be handled in three phases: training and organizing; visiting local libraries and repositories to explore holdings; and entering data from diaries (including privately owned ones where possible), journals, and publications of the trail era.

Lynne Sinclair, COED co-

chairman, gave a brief explanation on what information should be entered on a survey sheet by COED researchers and how that must be tightly monitored. She used an example from an already completed diary survey.

The participants then broke into two groups with Chuck Dodd leading the computer session while Lynne gave a more in-depth instruction to the researchers.

A nine page bibliography was distributed as part of a full workbook of instructions. This list will be used primarily during the initial stage. Lynne stated that it is a goal to have one COED Chapter Coordinator (CCC) from each chapter and outlined those duties.

(continued on page 14)

**Do you do research?
Do you need research?
Consider an ad in the
News from the Plains**

Volunteers on the Trail

Information on how OCTA volunteers can help preserve overland trails was shared by four speakers and program coordinators Bill and Jeanne Watson.

Hillary Oden, Wyoming BLM Director, related that he oversees 300 miles of trails and cut-offs in his state, assisted by an active volunteer program. Next spring the Wyoming Recreation Commission will publish a brochure listing public access areas on the trails, as well as privately owned land. Oden's office will "identify a project for you" if interested in the volunteer project there. He also gave advice on trail sign programs and told of a gift catalogue through which people may donate land or signs, or pay for restoration projects.

The new U.S. Forest Service Adopt-A-Trail program was presented by Charles Lowrie, resource officer for Amador Ranger District of the Eldorado (California) National Forest. He described examples of a volunteer partnership where work is done on the Tahoe Rim Trail and the Appalachian Trail, with volunteers now covered by federal liability insurance.

Trails Mapping

Tom Hunt, National Preservation Officer, conducted the Trail Mapping workshop. The purpose of the Mapping Emigrant Trails (MET) program is to record uniformly all historic routes, graves, sites and markers which are trail related. Tom emphasized that mapping coordination at the local level will be the responsibility of the Chapter Preservation Officer.

Trail mapping begins with reading diaries, studying original and period surveys, on-site field study, and the mapping itself. This will be done on USGS 7.5 minute topographical survey quads. Because there is a discount for large quantities, Tom will purchase the quads.

As with any worthwhile project, there are rules and regulations to follow. Workshop attendees

Recommendations about how concerned citizens can check on the trails and historic sites were outlined by Tom Gilbert, regional coordinator of the National Trails System for the National Park Service. For those who are displeased with a situation Gilbert suggested a "tactful" call should be made to the local site superintendent; next, contact Ruth Anderson at the Pacific Northwest office. She is the Coordinator of Trails and needs to know what trail related projects are planned by others.

Private land owners were represented by Robert W. Budd, Executive Director of the Wyoming Stock Growers Association. He pointed out that condemnation for utilities, railroads, pipelines, and mineral development, as well as public access efforts, cause problems for ranchers. "It often cuts a ranch literally in half," Budd pointed out. This makes cattle grazing especially difficult. The greatest threat, he pointed out, is a different one. "If ranchers go out of business, the buyers (often) don't care about the trails or our heritage." Even trail-appreciative ranchers can have a problem with

the lack of trail identification.

Budd specified a list of guidelines for trail enthusiasts who seek access to privately held land. (These will be published later in the *NFP*). He summarized them by saying, "You catch more bees with honey than salt. There must be a spirit of cooperation between you and the landowner."

The essence of the workshop is reflected in Oden's statement on behalf of the Wyoming BLM: "We would like to participate with you so we can all exchange information and ideas."

*Judith Budd
Jeanne & Bill Watson*

COED

(continued from page 13)

Several pages of sample diaries were distributed with volunteers free to select one of three for practice. The seriousness was sometimes lightened with whispered questions such as, "Is Willie the child or the animal?"

Duplication of efforts (several volunteers working on the same publication) will be minimized by close coordination between first the volunteers and the CCC, and then through the CCCs and Lynne. There will be some assignment of materials on a geographic basis in the future, perhaps.

Computer users had hands-on experience in entering information from survey forms. Volunteers for this section of COED must have an IBM compatible system. They will be provided with hard disks or two floppy disks.

So far over fifty people have entered the COED project, not counting those in the California pilot program. The workshop had thirty five present.

Anyone interested in the survey work should contact Lynne Sinclair at 460 Laurel St., Menlo Park, CA 94025, (415)322-0242.

Those willing to work on computer entry should contact Chuck Dodd, P.O. Box 6598, Tahoe City, CA 95730, (916)581-3141.

Barbara Magerl

In Respectful Memory

Friends of Jim and Florence Bowlby were stunned to learn from Florence at the St. Joseph Convention that Jim had passed away last summer from a heart attack. Jim and Florence were Charter members and had attended every convention except the one in Casper. A very belated message of sympathy and support is extended to Florence. We hope she will keep coming to OCTA gatherings.

Marion Boley, sister of Merrill Mattes, passed away unexpectedly in July. She had planned to be at the St. Joseph Convention. Merrill dedicated his presentation in her honor. Our sympathy goes to Merrill and his family.

One of our newest members, W.J. Brink of Lawrence, Kansas passed away recently. He had joined OCTA following publicity about a Trails Head Chapter outing near his farm. The Oregon Trail runs through his land, a fact he was highly proud of. We extend our sympathy to his family.

Pioneer Woman Statue Drive

The City of Independence, Missouri is raising funds for a statue of a Pioneer Woman to be placed in the Sculpture Garden at the National Frontier Trails Center. OCTA Headquarters will be part of the Trails Center complex.

A donation of \$25 to \$1,999 will register either your pioneer ancestor's name or a living relative or friend's name in a permanent register. Donations of \$2,000 or more will put your ancestor's name at the base of the statue.

Send donations to:

Pioneer Woman Fund
c/o Jane Mallinson
Box 8604
Sugar Creek, MO 64054

Genealogy Ads

Information wanted on Baptist LaBelle and wife Harriet VanDorn LaBelle. Left St. Joseph in late spring/summer 1860 for Oregon. Marsha Tate, 415-1/2 Iowa Avenue, Muscatine, IA 52761.

Genealogy Ad Policy

We will assist your search by allowing a maximum of ten lines per ad (370 characters) for \$10 or five lines (185 characters) for \$5. Please type clearly and proof before sending. Mail to: News from the Plains, c/o OCTA Headquarters.



Call for Papers

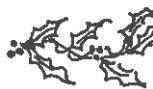
Larry Jones has issued a Call for Papers for the Boise Convention. Please send to Judith Austin, Idaho Historical Society, 610 N. Julia Davis Drive, Boise, ID 83702.

RENT THIS SPACE

Sell your trail related business, service, motel, or product. Ideal audience, great rates. Write NFP Ads, c/o OCTA headquarters.



Christmas is a Comin'!



For a surprise or very special gift, how about an OCTA membership? Just clip and mail to headquarters with your check. We'll send a gift notice to the recipient.

New Membership Application

OREGON-CALIFORNIA TRAILS ASSOCIATION

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

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Membership is from date of enrollment

Payments to OCTA are tax-deductible to the full extent of the law under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

Membership Categories (check one)

- | | |
|--|----------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student* | \$10/year |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual | \$25/year |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family | \$30/year |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Supporting | \$50/year |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Patron | \$100/year |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Corporate | \$100/year |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Institutional | \$100/year |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Life | \$750 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor | \$1,000 and up |

Amount Enclosed \$ _____

*Student memberships are available for full-time students in elementary schools, high schools, or accredited colleges and universities.



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