



# NEWS FROM THE PLAINS

OREGON-CALIFORNIA TRAILS ASSOCIATION

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## California Trail-Pony Express Report Released

The National Park Service has recently completed its feasibility study/environmental assessment for the National Historic Trail authorization for the California and Pony Express trails. The purpose of the study was to develop recommendations for Congress on legislation to preserve designated trail locations.

The public is encouraged to review and respond to this report. OCTA president Tom Hunt recently authorized a mailing to the membership urging support for Alternative B, a plan which covers all routes, cutoffs, and changes to these trails. Public meetings will be held along the trail in April and May. Comments also should be made by mail to Manager, Denver Service Center, National Park Service, P.O. Box 25287, Denver CO 80225, attention: Dr. John Latschar-TWE.

Dates and locations of meetings are: April 8, Pony Express Museum, St. Joseph, Mo.; April 9, Peter Kiewit Conference Center, Omaha, Nebr.; April 20, Social Hall, Pioneer Trail State Park, Salt Lake City, Utah; May 4, Best Western Inn, Burley, Idaho; May 14, Western Wyoming College, Rock Springs, Wyo.; May 19, State Resources Building,



The new OCTA office in St. Louis.

## OCTA Office Moves

The national headquarters of the Oregon-California Trails Association recently moved from Gerald, Missouri, to St. Louis. The office now occupies an old, newly-rehabbed building in the historic Soulard district of St. Louis near the Mississippi riverfront.

Because of the move (and several other problems, illness among the staff, for instance), some of applications for membership, renewals and donations to the special fund have been processed very slowly. The usual OCTA efficiency should be evident soon.

OCTA's new address is 1701 S. Eighth Street, St. Louis MO 63104. The new telephone number is (314) 436-3242.

Sacramento, Calif.; May 20, Holiday Inn North, Reno, Nev.; May 21, Douglas County Museum, Roseburg, Oreg. All meetings begin at 7 P.M.

## An Old, New Publication

Because so many OCTA members have requested an informal newspaper in addition to the scholarly *Overland Journal*, *News from the Plains* is reappearing as just that. (Chuck Dodd of the California-Nevada chapter made the first formal suggestion for such a paper.) Formerly a newsletter appearing once a year, *NFP* will now appear four times a year and will contain chapter news, field notes, and other information pertaining to the organization. To emphasize its continuity with the "old" *NFP*, this issue is numbered volume 5, number 1.

"News from the Plains" was the title of hundreds of columns in newspapers from Maine to the West Coast during the mid-nineteenth century. These columns gave emigrants and those who stayed home information on conditions on the trails and news about people traveling them. The 1987 edition of *News From the Plains* will attempt to do the same thing.

A red X appears on the label of members who have not yet renewed. This means that unless the member renews, no further OCTA publications will be arriving.

## President Signs SFT Bill

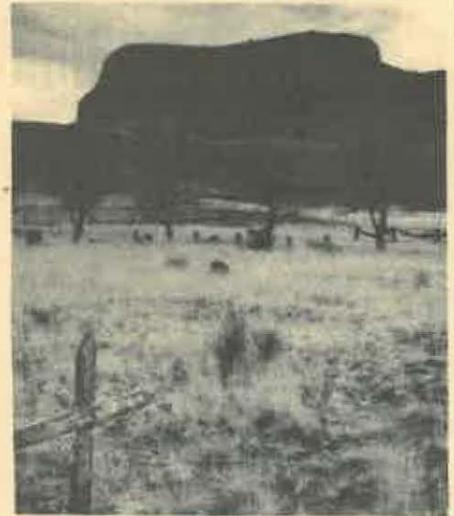
President Ronald Reagan signed OCTA's Santa Fe National Historic Trail bill into law at 1 p.m. Friday, May 8, 1987, during a ceremony in the Oval Office.

The United States Senate, in a unanimous voice vote, had passed the measure on April 23.

The bill was introduced in the House by Congressman Bill Richardson of Santa Fe one year ago and shortly thereafter in the Senate by Senator Nancy Kassebaum of Kansas. The House cleared its bill late last year, but the Senate demanded hearings, which caused a delay impossible to overcome during that session of Congress.

The issue was reintroduced early in this session. The House passed it with only three dissenting votes.

An OCTA delegation campaigned for the statute last year by visiting congressional representatives from every district through which the trail passed and the offices of all the trail-state senators. Opposition from a few ranchers was smoothed over when OCTA called for "no condemnation" language in the bill.



Joan Myers University of New Mexico Press

Wagon Mound, New Mexico, on the Santa Fe Trail.

The trails organization also campaigned intensively for a study bill which would lead to designation of the California Trail and the Pony Express route as National Historic Trails. This passed in the spring of 1984. The National Park Service is only now reporting the results of that study (see related story). OCTA soon will sponsor legislation declaring the specific routes as National Historic Trails and calling for comprehensive study and cartography of those old wagon roads by the National Park Service.

## OCTA Board Meets In Denver

OCTA's board of directors held its mid-year board meeting in Denver, Colorado, March 28. The all-day meeting resulted in several important decisions for the organization.

The most important item on the agenda was an examination of OCTA's financial condition, which, despite the generous response to the special appeal, is still very anemic. A committee consisting of Bob Berry, Don Buck, and chaired by John Latschar was appointed to investigate ways to reconcile needs with resources. Another committee, headed by Frank Tortorich, will develop a five-year plan with specific goals and objectives.

A new procedure for accepting nominations for the board was adopted. Before April 1 of any year, members may make suggestions for nominations directly to the nominating committee for review.

This date has been pushed back to May 1 for this year only. Formal nominations will be made by either of these two methods: nominations by any member with the written approval of three other members; or majority approval of the nominating committee. In this way, all nominees are assured of some support.

All directors attended the meeting, plus the following members: Betty Lee, Safford, Ariz.; Dr. Michael Bateman, Pocatello, Idaho; Roscoe Bischoff, Montpelier, Idaho; Frank and Maryann Tortorich, Jackson, Calif.; Maurice Burchfield, Stayton, Oreg.; E. E. Donnelly, Lakewood, Colo.; Trudy Ackerman, Salem, Oreg.; Bertha Rennells, La Grande, Oreg.; Lee Underbrink, Casper, Wyo.; Betty Burnett, St. Louis; and Gregory Franzwa, St. Louis. The directors and observers attended at their own expense.

## An Amateur Archaeologist Looks At the Trails

by Frank Tortorich  
President, California-Nevada  
Chapter, OCTA

Over the past several years I have become more and more concerned about the loss of historical information to enthusiastic artifact collectors.

When I first started reading about the wagon treks over the Sierra Nevada and hiking to retrace their route, I knew nothing about proper archaeological techniques or procedures. The first time I found an ox shoe and a hand-forged bolt I grabbed them and rushed to tell everyone about what a great discovery I had made. Little did I know that in my enthusiasm I could have removed a significant part of a puzzle which could have been the key to explaining that this object might have come from an improvised blacksmith shop on the trail, or marked the location of an accident or, better yet, an overnight camping area. Or perhaps it was just another lost shoe along the route.

Fortunately, unlike many people, I have had the opportunity to work with a team of professional archaeologists. After I had written the nomination report for the Emigrant Summit Trail over Carson Pass, the U.S. Forest Service hired a team of trained archaeologists to do a survey along the entire eighteen miles of that trail from Caples Lake to Maiden's Grave.

The information I received working with these ten people was practically a college education in itself. I learned that artifacts found along the trail can be much more than just mementos of the gold rush period. Through careful study of their location and interrelationship,

these artifacts can tell a story. They can provide information about emigrant experiences not often recorded by chroniclers of the day or even in diaries of emigrants, who tended to record spectacular events instead of the more mundane experiences of daily life on the trail. During this period I learned to do a site survey with proper techniques for mapping the features of a site; I also came to understand the importance of observing each detail and its relation to other details and to the whole.

It came as a great surprise to me that archaeological excavations are not done merely to collect artifacts. They are sometimes done when a site is in danger of being destroyed by a commercial, state or federal development, and they are often done to address particular questions in historical research which cannot be answered by any other means.

I also learned how exacting the collecting, recording, and cataloguing of even one artifact can be. I further learned that the removal of an article from its original location is usually done only when there is a reasonable assumption that it will be lost or destroyed by someone who doesn't know any better.

According to the 1906 Antiquities Act and the 1979 Archaeological Resources Protection Act, "no person may excavate, damage, or otherwise alter or deface any historical or prehistoric structure, site, artifact, or property; or remove any object of antiquity: arrowheads, worked stone, bone, wood, shell, beads, pottery, bottles,

tools, structures or parts of structures situated on lands owned by the United States Government. To do so without permission of the Secretary of the department who has jurisdiction over the lands, is punishable by fines or imprisonments or both."

Most professional archaeologists are concerned about items collected on sites excavated on private land because of the historical knowledge that may be lost by improper data collection.

About four years ago, when I was locating some lost portions of the trails in the Sierra and reading diaries, I thought of how interesting it would be to discover a site where a wagon had overturned on the side of a mountain. After hiking and re hiking many portions and comparing my knowledge of the area with descriptions in the diaries, I had a good idea where such a site might be. I talked with the Forest Service archaeologist about my idea. I was going to use a metal detector to locate what I hoped would be items from an overturned wagon. I knew that I couldn't dig them up, but I could locate them, survey and map the area. By this time I had taken classes and workshops on proper field techniques and was certified by the Forest Service archaeologist to do this type of work.

If I were to find such a site, a professional archaeological team would be called into the area to map it. Then they would systematically uncover, photograph, identify, and replace each item in its original location. The site that I had chosen was on

a steep sideling hill and numerous other artifacts had already been discovered in the area and on the trail itself.

All my planning and preparations took several weeks spread out over three summers. Two weeks before my actual survey date I went again to look over the site, trying to decide how to divide it into segments for mapping. It was then that I observed several holes had been dug in the trace of the trail itself. Upon closer investigation, I discovered more than sixty holes had been dug up and down the hillside at random! Someone had come into the area with a metal detector, dug up and removed everything they could find.

Through ignorance and lack of understanding, someone removed a part of historical knowledge that is irretrievable. Even if we were to get the items back, they would only give us the information about the items themselves. If each object could have been observed in relationship to the other artifacts, we might have discovered invaluable information about the accident itself, if indeed there had been one.

At OCTA's annual convention in Carson City last year a statement was adopted endorsing our intentions to respect and honor the law and, equally important, to observe proper archaeological techniques and practices.

OCTA members must not overlook the wealth of information about the trails that can and will be obtained by observing proper scientific research methods in the library, in the field, or in discussions with others.



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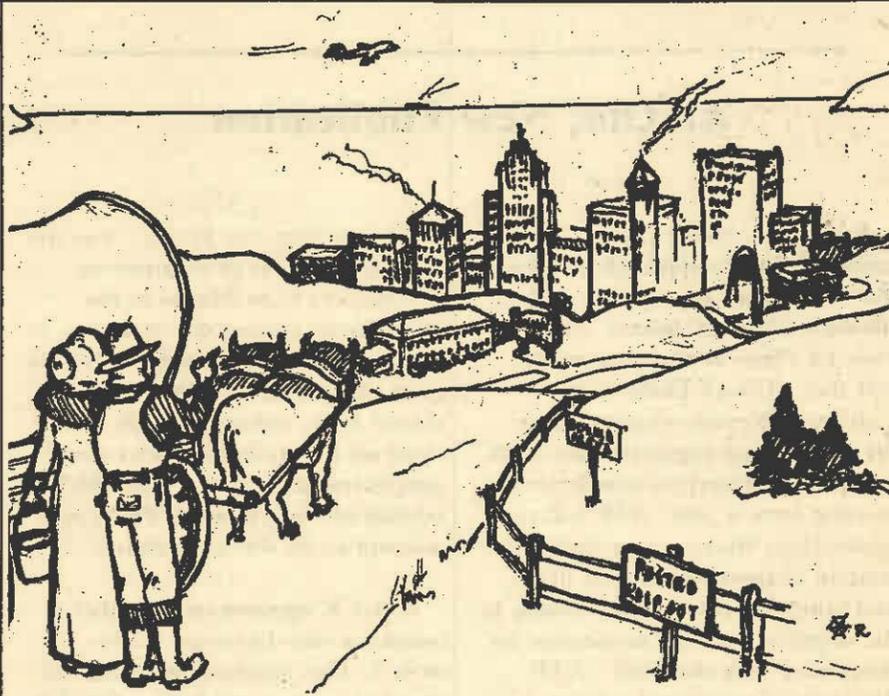
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Mebbe we spent too much time on the trail.

Cartoon by Carl Weber

## OCTA's New Archaeology Committee

The primary concern of all OCTA members is the preservation of the old pioneer trails and the information we can gain from them. It is this intense curiosity and hunger for more information that has resulted in the formation of OCTA and its fine publications which make known the research being done, research conducted not only in libraries, museums, and old diaries, but along the old trails as well, by scouting out ruts and site locations.

In doing the latter, eagerness must be guided by an awareness of the land management of that particular segment of the trail and of the laws that pertain to leaving artifacts alone. It might seem as if more information could be gained by collecting such items and this is true if the excavation is done properly.

However, proper excavation is an enormous task and takes both time and money. In addition to the archaeological skills noted by Frank Tortorich, sketches and explanations of a site must be exact enough so that the scene could be reconstructed in a museum, using not only artifacts, but also the stratigraphy of the soil, carbon streaks, fire-cracked rocks, bone fragments, or any other features which help interpret the story.

Of course it costs money to identify, clean, catalog, store, or exhibit artifacts. It would also be costly to publish the report which probably should be placed in public libraries and museums for the benefit of researchers. Clearly, a project that needs generous funding will also have goals and methods carefully analyzed by the land agency in charge.

If the OCTA committee on archaeology is to serve as liaison between members and the archaeological community, certainly part of its duty is to inform the membership on how most archaeologists think. Trained ar-

### OCTA's Revised Statement of Policy for Archaeology

At the OCTA board meeting on March 28, the following revised statement was adopted:

It is the official policy of the Oregon-California Trails Association to respect and observe all laws relating to the preservation of historic trails and the excavation of historic trail sites. It is further the policy to establish an Archaeology Committee within its membership to advise it on archaeological matters and to serve as a liaison between our organization and the archaeological community. With the permission of private landowners OCTA will continue to carry on historic trail-related preservation programs on private lands. On private property, in the interest of preservation, every effort will be made to secure professional assistance.

chaeologists cannot perceive that proper methods and eventual publication of a dig would result without the guidance of at least one professional.

The view of most archaeologists is expressed by the following analogy. Most people insist that surgery on them or on a family member be done by an individual who has both formal medical school training and years of practice under careful tutelage. A licensed surgeon might instruct a less qualified assistant in the operating room. In fact, most doctors depend heavily on these skilled assistants. But no person with only a first aid course should be encouraged to try surgery.

Knowledgeable volunteers are usually welcomed on projects — just as the U. S. Forest Service welcomed Frank Tortorich — and this is the role that OCTA members can best play. We can report endangered sites along the trails to the Bureau of Land Management, the state land office, the Forest Service or any other government agency. These agencies either have their own archaeologists on staff or will employ an outside cultural resource management team to arrange for a professional excavation.

At this point if volunteers express an interest in assisting, they will be eagerly accepted. Knowing how to use a USGS quadrangle map or being able to supply good photographs are two important advantages. An OCTA member might enhance the opportunity to do such work by attending a class on archeological techniques, which are available at community colleges, university summer programs, museums, and through archaeological associations. Certainly knowledge of the history and location of the trails is a distinct asset, as Frank Tortorich discovered.

But what if a unique historical site is located on private property?

### SITES

The U. S. Army Corps of Engineers has received an application which proposes dredging a section of the Green River in Wyoming. The designated area includes both the Upper Ferry site and the Mountain Man's (Steed Canyon) Crossing on the Sublette Cutoff. Possibly even the Names Hill area will be affected. Tom Hunt has contacted the Omaha District, Corps of Engineers, to inform them of OCTA's strong opposition to this plan. The Corps has taken the protest under advisement.

The law gives the owner complete authority over that land and I approve of this. However, I also agree with the archaeological community trying to educate private landowners to the fact that unsupervised excavation of a site can destroy it. Any site should be left undisturbed, if possible, until it can be arranged to have a qualified professional do the job. Otherwise, precious information may vanish. Again this brings up the problem of money.

Often the really interested landowner will provide enough support in the form of housing and equipment so that a professional dig can be done for comparatively little cash. Another possibility is to seek a grant from a state historical preservation office or similar agency. Seeking an "angel" to underwrite a project is sometimes successful. Occasionally a university will be interested enough to support an archaeologist or will use the site as a laboratory.

Some historical museums sponsor such digs. Earthwatch projects, which are financed by the participants who are looking for an interesting vacation, often involve archaeological digs. But all these promising possibilities take time — sometimes years — to arrange. If a good site on private property is in danger of immediate destruction, these options are not open. A salvage operation may be the only way that any information at all can be retrieved.

In this connection, the OCTA archaeological committee has sent out letters to all chapter presidents requesting that members with archaeological background or experience be identified. They will make up an emergency crew that could be activated quickly if a problem in their area arises.

Ideally, OCTA members can become convincing salespeople,

by Betty Lee, Chair

resourceful enough to persuade a landowner to stabilize a site. Or they could encourage protection of the site until qualified help can be found. It must be realized that professional archaeologists are employed in their own demanding jobs and are not often available to respond to an emergency.

There is a possibility that a session on federal and state laws regarding trail tracking will be presented at a future OCTA convention. These laws vary widely. In some states visitors must secure a permit to cross state land. Usually these are hunting permits. Those who want to follow the trails must obtain a permit or be in trespass. On federal land if a person takes a four-wheel-drive truck or an RV to a site and is found digging without authorization, the vehicles and all other equipment may be confiscated. Many such laws are on the books and OCTA members should know of them and abide by them — or work to have them changed.

It should be emphasized that there is really no conflict between OCTA's goals and those of archaeologists. All are working to recover the same information. OCTA members, in some cases, are less aware of some of the restrictions regulating the gathering of that information.

For those who are unaware, a first step toward awareness is to obtain a copy of both the Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979 and any state antiquities acts. These are usually available at museums, libraries, universities with archaeological departments, BLM offices, or from legislators.

With the great enthusiasm, research talent, and historical knowledge found among OCTA members, learning the legal aspects of following the trails should not be at all difficult.

### Bound Copies of *Overland Journal* Available

Bound copies of the *Overland Journal* are now available from OCTA headquarters. One book will contain the first six issues, from July 1983 until the end of 1984. The other will contain volumes 3 and 4, from the winter issue of 1985 through the fall issue of 1986.

The binding job itself will cost \$25 per book, provided orders are received from at least ten members. That price presumes that the magazines themselves will be supplied by the customer. If personal

sets are incomplete, replacement issues are available for \$4 each, provided the customer is a member of OCTA; \$6.25 otherwise.

The customer is asked to send the magazines to be bound directly to OCTA headquarters together with a check for the order. It will be shipped about four weeks after the tenth order is received. The volumes are also available in genuine Feora leather, hotstamped with the customer's name, for a base price of \$50 ea.

## Three Western Trails Centers Planned



Photo by Gregory M. Franzwa

*The Waggoner and Gates mill, site of the proposed new Independence Trail Center.*

A strong case for locating a Western Historic Trails Center, including a library and museum, in Council Bluffs, Iowa, was made recently by citizens and officials of that city. The Omaha *World-Herald* reported that National Park Service director William Penn Mott endorsed the city as a good location for such a center. A 400-acre site has been proposed. Iowa Congressman Jim Ross Lightfoot introduced legislation early in March authorizing NPS involvement in the center, which will probably cost almost \$20 million.

It was just across the Missouri River that Lewis and Clark held their first council with Indians in 1803. In the winter of 1846-47 the area was the headquarters for the Mormons on their way to Utah. Many forty niners left from Council Bluffs. It has been estimated that almost as many emigrants to California and Oregon used this jumping off point as all other places combined.

OCTA supports the establishment of any Historic Trails Center that will contribute to appreciation of the trails. Other centers that are currently in the planning stages in-

clude:

**Independence, Missouri:** The state has appropriated \$2.1 million and architects have been hired for a National Frontier Trails Center. The museum is to encompass 12,000 square feet and a library will house a large collection of genealogical material.

**Casper, Wyoming:** City leaders are now investigating the possibility of locating a Wyoming trails center near Fort Caspar.

**St. Joseph, Missouri:** This city is planning a major national center commemorating the California, Lewis and Clark, and Pony Express route.

The city of Oregon City beat all contenders to the punch by opening its "End of the Trail" Interpretive Center several years ago. The city funded it with its own money.

In addition to historical centers, a \$6.5 million Oregon Trail theme park has been proposed along the trail south of Flagstaff Hill, east of Baker, Oregon. It would include demonstrations of folk crafts used by the pioneers, and a wagon encampment.

### *Independence Rock — Convention Destination*



Wyoming Recreation Commission

*Independence Rock, the great "Register of the Desert," will be the destination for the field trip on Saturday, August 15, 1987, during OCTA's fifth anniversary convention.*

## CHAPTER NEWS

**Trails Head Chapter, Kansas - Missouri:** This chapter, which holds four meetings a year, is investigating landownership of nearby trail landmarks. With the help of the local Girl Scouts it is beginning to locate and sign such landmarks. It will also print a bookmark this summer for area libraries to distribute to patrons, listing important or interesting books on the western migration. President is Barbara Magerl.

**Nebraska Chapter, Omaha-Council Bluffs, Iowa:** This new chapter has recently been organized by Bob Berry and Charles W. Martin, Sr. Its first order of business has been the preservation of California Hill, which now seems safely in OCTA's hands. The chapter plans a field trip to Rock Creek June 6 and will continue its work of identifying and marking trail sites.

**Idaho Chapter:** The Idaho Chapter has been described as an "outdoors group." They plan several field trips for the year ahead. The annual meeting will be held April 25 at Glenn's Ferry. On June 26 the group will explore the

Goose Creek area and on September 12 a trip is planned to Soda Springs. Chapter members will also participate in the Bear Lake pageant and rendezvous reenactment held at the end of July. Larry Jones is president.

**Northwest Chapter, Oregon-Washington:** The Northwest Chapter is sponsoring the pilot curriculum project and also has a strong interest in genealogical research. Their spring outing (April 11 and 12) was held in Tacoma and Puyallup, Washington, where they will visit the Ezra Meeker mansion. Dick Ackerman is president.

**Gateway Chapter, St. Joseph, Missouri:** This chapter is currently being organized by Rich Nolf. It will host the 1988 convention.

**California-Nevada Chapter:** Much of this chapter's considerable resources are going into the development of COED, the Census of Overland Emigrant Documents. The annual meeting was held April 4 in Sacramento with a visit to Johnson's Ranch. Frank Tortorich is president.

## Convention News

It's already time to reserve a room for the 1987 OCTA convention in Casper, Wyoming. Very reasonably-priced room are still available at the convention headquarters, the Downtowner Motor Hotel, Box 2917, Casper WY 82602. The telephone number for reservations is (307) 235-5713. Callers must mention OCTA to obtain the special room rates.

Complete convention information will be mailed to OCTA members about June 5. Preliminary plans indicate that there will be a pre-convention trip from Fort Laramie to Glendo led by Randy Brown on August 11. Twenty-five vehicles (no motor homes) will be accepted in this tour.

The annual board meeting will start on the morning of August 12. All members are welcome to attend. The opening reception will start at five o'clock that afternoon. Mary Mueller suggests that musicians of all capabilities — amateur and professional — bring their in-

### Call For Papers:

The theme of the 1988 OCTA convention will be "St. Joe and the California Gold Rush." Presentations on this subject are currently being sought. Other topics of interest are the town of St. Joseph,

struments for an informal jam session of trail music.

The first full day of the convention, Thursday, August 13, will feature speakers, slides, and a barbeque at Fort Caspar. On Friday, August 14, a bus tour will take members east to Glenrock, Fort Fetterman, and Ayers Natural Bridge. Included will be a visit to the grave of Joel Hembree, the young boy who died during the Great Migration of 1843. On Saturday buses will head west to Devil's Backbone, Willow Springs (where a new BLM center will be dedicated), Greasewood Creek, and Independence Rock. A post-convention trip is planned to South Pass on Sunday.

Planning is now underway for the 1988 convention to be held in St. Joseph, Missouri. The 1989 convention has been set for Boise, Idaho, and the 1990 convention will take place in Omaha, Nebraska. All start the second Wednesday in August.

### 1988 Convention, St. Joseph, Missouri

the emigrant trail as it goes through St. Joseph, and the Pony Express.

Outlines of proposals should be sent by July 1, 1987, to John Latschar, 794 Urban Street, Golden CO 80401.

## The Rachel Pattison Grave

by W. W. Morrison

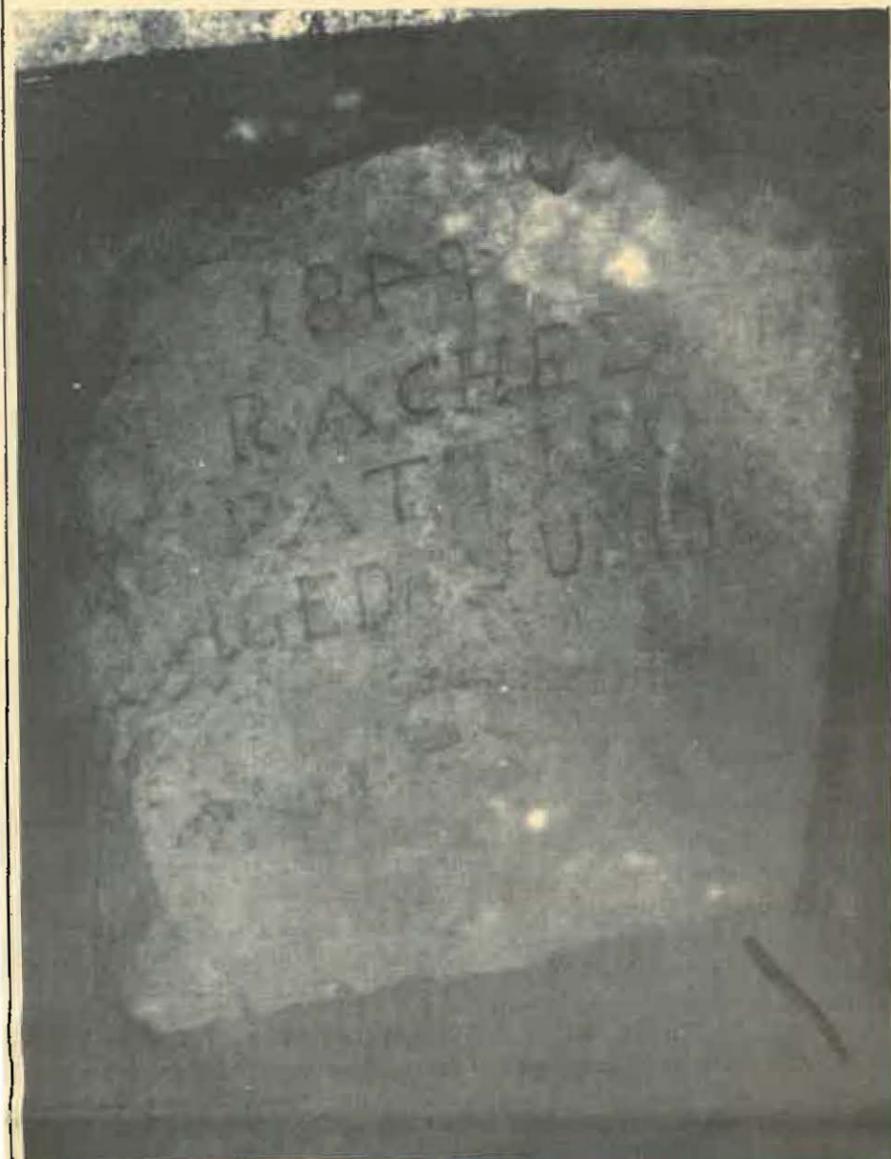


Photo by Gregory M. Franzwa

*The grave of Rachel Pattison, the first in the Ash Hollow cemetery. Note that the number 4 is reversed.*

*(W. W. Morrison is a familiar name to dedicated trail buffs. He spent many years researching grave sites along the trail. This story, submitted by Randy Brown, describes some of the detective work Morrison did to uncover the Rachel Pattison story.)*

The story of Rachel Pattison's grave could never have been written were it not for the helpful kindness of Corajeau Thornton, a descendant of the Pattison family, who lived out her years in the Northwest.

People living in the Ash Hollow vicinity had known of this pioneer grave for many years. Some writers and historians had mentioned it, but none knew who Rachel Pattison was, where she had come from, where she was going, or how she came to be buried there. For almost a century the only clue to her identity was the crude inscription on the headstone, cut there at the time of her death.

In June 1946, after five years of tireless search, the first bit of information came in giving a clue to the Pattison family. It was in a letter from Mrs. Irene Foster, living in Klamath Falls, Oregon. Irene's hobby was collecting material having to do with pioneer days and she had accumulated a considerable

amount through the years. She told me that there were some people by the name of Pattison who first settled in Washington after having crossed the plains in the late 1840s and that some years later part of the family migrated to Oregon, settling near Eugene.

Our letters began flooding the county clerks and postmasters in Washington state, dropping down in Olympia and nearby places. Then in August 1946 came a letter from Jess Leverich, postmaster at Olympia, which said in part, "have just learned a few facts which may be of interest to you in your search. A lake in this county (Thurston), about ten miles east of here called Pattison Lake, was named for the family which you mention in your letter. They settled near this lake in the early 1850s. William Foster, a retired banker, advises that his father, Albert Foster, married a sister to Jane Wyllie Pattison, wife of James Pattison, and I suggest that you write to him for further information."

He also gave me the names and addresses of two granddaughters and a daughter-in-law of James and Jane Pattison, to contact for further information, as well as Mrs. Helen Aetzel, G. H. Funk,

and the Talcott brothers, who owned a jewelry store there which the family had operated since the early 1870s.

Needless to say we wasted little time in writing to those whom Leverich mentioned. Soon afterward letters from Olympia were "snow-balling" our way. Leverich had evidently contacted several of his friends whom he thought might be of some assistance. From Mrs. Anna Foster, wife of William Foster, came a letter giving what information they had on this family. The same letter furnished the names and addresses of a daughter-in-law and also the two granddaughters of James and Jane Pattison.

The following day we received a letter from Grant N. Talcott in which he wrote: "The Pattisons, James and wife, took up a homestead about nine miles east of Olympia. At one time I knew James and his brother Nathan and met another brother, William. We were at a home on one of the homesteads. James and wife had moved into Olympia, also Nathan, but the other brother moved to Oregon."

That same day we received a letter from G. M. Funk, an attorney. He wrote, "I came here in 1890 and I became acquainted with James Pattison, who with his parents and at least one brother (Nathan) had come over the Oregon Trail in the late 1840s. The two brothers were evidently young men at the time and both were married, but Nathan lost his wife on the route."

The next day came a letter from Helen Aetzel, in which she shared a little information from her private library. William Pattison and family lived in Illinois, she said, and started for Oregon in the spring of 1849. "The party consisted of self, wife, an aunt, six sons, wives of two sons, and a baby of one. Wife of one son died on the Platte River."

When Grant Talcott mentioned that one of the Pattison brothers had moved to Oregon, we felt certain we were now on the right track. It fitted in with Irene Foster's letter. Funk's letter persuaded us all the more. And when Mrs. Aetzel's letter came, we were convinced that we had picked up the right clue.

Our letters to the daughter-in-law and the two granddaughters reached their homes almost simultaneously. And one of the granddaughters, Corajeau Thornton, living in Seattle, replied. In her first letter, dated August 12, 1946, she wrote: "Your letter received asking for information

concerning relatives of Rachel Pattison, who passed away in '49 at Ash Hollow along the Oregon Trail. We have a rather complete history of the family, but unfortunately it is only in the form of penciled notes. The notes were given to my mother by my grandmother, Jane Wyllie Pattison (sister-in-law to Rachel) so it will take a little time to edit them and put them in usable form. As soon as I have them arranged I will send them to you."

Those who dabble in history and do research must surely know the thrill that comes to one when such letters finally arrive. Those who have never been involved in research of this kind can never know how much her first letter meant to us. There was extra something in the way she wrote — that trace of warmth and friendliness — reflecting a personality full of consideration, sincerity, and kindness. We knew at once she was just the one we had been hoping to find in our search.

From Corajeau's first letter and from the many that soon followed, we learned the story of Rachel's grave, which for nearly a century had been a challenge to historians. Corajeau wrote to two Pattison relatives, Florence Pattison Hardie and Nellie Pattison Carlon, who lived in Eugene, Oregon. Both Florence and Nellie did much in unearthing information. Florence was a granddaughter of Robert Pattison and Nell was a daughter of Charles Pattison. Both Robert and Charles were among the original party which crossed the plains in '49.

The first good information we received was a copy of Nathan Pattison's brief diary of their journey westward. Corajeau had copied it from the original, which was in her possession along with a rather complete history of the Pattison family. It was written in penciled notes by her grandmother, Jane Wyllie Pattison, and handed down to her daughter, Anna Pattison Davis. Anna, in turn, had passed this material on to her daughter, Corajeau.

Nathan wasn't much for writing, it seems, being sparing with his words, and he made only seventeen entries. His diary is recorded here just as given to me by Corajeau Thornton:

May 18 Cross the Missouri into Indian Territory  
June 3 The Sabbath, lay over on the Little Blue  
June 4 Crossed the ridge between the Little Blue and the

(continued on page 6)

## TOURS, TRIPS, & EVENTS

Directed by OCTA members Leo and Bonita Oliva, a narrated tour of the *Santa Fe Trail* will begin in Topeka, Kansas, August 7, and move along the trail via air-conditioned bus through Council Grove, Lost Springs, Cimarron Crossing, and Pecos National Monument to Santa Fe and Taos. Stops at Bent's Old Fort and Fort Larned national historic sites are also included. Cost of the nine-day tour is \$395 per person. For more information contact the Olivas, c/o Heritage Tours, P. O. Box 1, Woodston KS 67675, (913) 994-6253 no later than July 1.

Dr. Stanley Kimball will lead a tour from Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville along the *Boonslick, Santa Fe, and Oregon trails* to Fort Laramie, Wyoming. The return trip will be made via the *Mormon Trail* to Nauvoo, Illinois. The trip, scheduled for August 17-26, may earn four credit hours in either history or geography. The fee without tuition is \$450, which includes transportation and lodging. For more information call (618) 692-3210.

A *Fur Trade Symposium* will be held at Fort Laramie National Historic Site, June 20-21. For more information contact John C. Burns, Fort Laramie WY 82212-0001.

The annual Founders Day Celebration at *Fort Union National Monument*, twenty-eight miles north of Las Vegas, N. Mex., will be held July 25-26. Contact the unit manager at the monument,

Watrous NM 87753, for more information.

Bent's Fort will be the scene of a commemorative family reunion and Indian powwow August 7-9. Information is available from the Bent Descendants Celebration Committee, 35110 Highway 194E, La Junta CO 81050

"*Oregon Fever*," an outdoor pageant depicting the nineteenth century journey on the Oregon Trail, will be presented in Oregon City Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday evenings in July and early August. For more information call (503)657-0988 or write Box 68, Oregon City OR 97045.

The University of Wyoming at Casper is offering a course on *Mountain Men and the Fur Trade*. The class will visit historic landmarks in Wyoming, from Fort Williams to South Pass. Class members in another course, the *Oregon Trail Revisited*, will follow the path of the Oregon-California trails from Chimney Rock in Nebraska to Fort Bridger in Wyoming. For more information call (307)261-2222. Registration deadline is May 28.

Bob Rennells reports that OCTA members may visit the grave of Catherine Butts near Tygh Valley, Oregon. Visitors must be carrying a valid OCTA membership card. Non-members may visit the site, owned by Robert P. Head of Greenville, N.Y., by being in the company of an OCTA member.

## Rancher of the Year Guidelines

OCTA is now accepting nominations for its "Rancher of the Year" awards, to be presented at the 1987 convention, August 15, in Casper, Wyoming. Nomination guidelines are as follows:

1. There will be one award winner in each of the trail states.
2. Nominations must be made by OCTA members.
3. Nominees need not be OCTA members.
4. Nominees must be contacted for permission to be nominated and to obtain the necessary information before submitting nomination to the committee.
5. Nominations must be submitted by June 1, 1987.

For nomination forms contact Karen Buck, Chair, Rancher of the Year Committee, Box 147, La Barge WY 83123.

## Achievement Award Nominations

The Awards Committee has issued a call for nominees for OCTA's annual Meritorious Achievement Awards, to be given for "outstanding contributions in bringing to all Americans a greater awareness of the identity and significance of the trails and landmarks of those pioneers who accomplished the westerning of our nation."

Two awards will be given to deserving individuals and one to an institution.

## GIFTS

OCTA members responded generously to the plea for special funds to keep the office running. Unfortunately, because of the pressure of work, many checks had to wait several weeks before being processed. The total amount contributed was \$12,534.50. A list of contributors, supplementing the partial list in the last issue of the *O/J*, appears elsewhere in this issue.

Ashton-Tate contributed its well-known software program, dBaseIII Plus, to the OCTA headquarters to help us keep track of members. The gift is valued at \$500.

Those wishing to contribute to the Ferne Gale memorial fund may send their donations to Ruth Patton, 10381 Doris Court, San Jose CA 95127. Nearly \$300 has been collected thus far. The money will be used for marking graves. (See related story elsewhere.)

OCTA encourages members to contact their employers to find out if their contributions can be matched. Many corporations match employees' contributions to the nonprofit organization of their choice.

Nominations should include the name of the proposed honoree and a short essay on why that person or organization deserves the honor. Nominations should be sent to Dr. John Latschar, 794 Urban Street, Golden CO 80401, by June 1, 1987.

Rachel Pattison (continued from page 5)

### Platte

June 5 Arrived at Ft. Kearney in the evening.

June 6 Steered our course up the Platte. We traveled several days without seeing anything of importance.

June 9 For the first time saw a small drove of buffalo

June 13 Noon. Came to the ford on the south fork of the Platte. Before crossing are our first dinner of buffalo. Then crossed over.

June 14 Continued our course up the south fork for some 6 or 7 miles then struck across to the north fork where we landed in the evening. Now our direction lies directly up the north fork.

June 16 Passed some wigwams. After we passed we were informed that the Indians were all dead, pile upon pile in the wigwams and that their cooking utensils were piled upon them. This murder is supposed to have been committed by the Pawnees as they and the Sioux are at war.

Were informed that there are 500 Sioux in our neighborhood ready to attack the Pawnees.

June 17 The Sabbath, we lay in camp as usual between noon and 12 o'clock at night. We lost three steers, died we think from eating some poisonous thing.

June 18 Reached what is generally known as Ash Hollow, so called by it's containing a quantity of ash timber. We stopped here early in the afternoon to do some repairing.

June 19 Rachel taken sick in the morning, died that night.

June 29 Came to Ft. Laramie.

June 30 Left Ft. Laramie. For a day or two had good grass, water, and wood.

July 3 Had good grass no more for two and a half days.

July 5 Afternoon came to some grass about 3 miles off the road on a small creek. Set two wagon tires.

Aug. 13 Left our friends

Thomas Ferman and Alexander Hornbrook at the Emigrant's Cutoff, they for California we for Oregon. We took the Ft. Hall road.

Corajean made a note below the diary she sent: "There are no more entries regarding their trip. Later he used it as an account book and general memorandum. There is a remedy for rheumatism which I think was TNT — either kill or cure also a method of preserving leather. In view of the present price of beef I think the following notation is interesting: 'Sold to Andrew Chambers 6 steers 5 for \$52.50 a head and 1 for \$64.50. Two belonged to Nathan, two to Charles, one to Robert and one to William Jr.' The steers were sold July 10, 1854."

Unlike many cases, the correspondence with Corajean did not cease when all available information of her pioneer family had been procured. Letters continued to wing

their way back and forth and did so until the last. We knew her only through letters, but the greatness of her life was reflected in them. And as the years passed she became our favorite pen friend.

Early one November evening in 1969, when she was preparing to retire for the night, Corajean passed beyond all letter writing. The end came suddenly and quietly. Thus it was that one of the best-liked and most reliable of all correspondents passed from the world to a fairer and brighter land.

We cannot promote a monument at Corajean's last resting place as we did for Rachel's grave. Maybe it isn't necessary, for we know of no greater memorial that can be left to anyone than to have been loved so much and respected by all who knew her.

(Another article by Morrison on the Rachel Pattison story will appear in a forthcoming *Overland Journal*.)

**IN MEMORIAM**

by Ruth Patton  
California-Nevada Chapter

Ferne V. Gale, an interesting and interested member of OCTA, died on January 3, 1987. She may be remembered from the Carson City convention as helping with the pre-registration packets at the registration booth. She also acted as one of the first aid nurses for the tours.

Ferne was born in New York and her parents apparently instilled in her an early interest in travel and history. Her mother was born in England and worked as a cook for wealthy families after arriving in the United States. Ferne often said that the Masterpiece Theater presentation of *Upstairs-Downstairs* was a true rendition of life as her mother knew it. Ferne's father traveled in the Eastern states with his job and frequently sent postcards home. Seeing them whetted Ferne's appetite for travel.

After graduating from nursing school Ferne joined the navy. During World War II she served as an evacuation flight nurse in the Pacific, flying between Guam and Travis Air Force Base. When the war ended, Ferne chose to live in California. Until her retirement in 1981 she worked in a physician's office and as an industrial nurse at Continental Can Company.

Ferne's interest in history brought her to Clyde Arbuckle's California and Western history classes. She traveled extensively with the Argonaut group and is well-remembered for her vitality, her friendliness, and her helpfulness. She took the lead in the clean-up detail after picnics and was referred to affectionately as the "bag lady." She was always willing to use her expertise as a nurse.

Ferne took notes during the tours and on her return did library research to complete her information. She shared her notes and pictures with classmates, neighbors, and shut-ins.

Ferne was always generous with her time and money. Until she was too ill to do so, she served as a member of the El Camino Hospital Auxiliary. She also worked in the emergency room every Sunday except when she joined an Argonaut tour.

Her last reunion with the Argonauts was on November 18 at the retirement party for George Cook. Her stay was brief, but it was characteristic that she made the effort to attend in spite of her illness.

Ferne is remembered with respect, admiration, and real affection.



The late Ferne V. Gale, left, and her friend, Ethel Murie.

**IN THE NEWS**

Maurice Brett's flight in a 1949 Aeronca Champion over the Oregon Trail last summer was described in the February/March issue of *Air & Space*, a magazine published by the Smithsonian. OCTA member Brett gave his own account of the flight in the Winter 1987 *O/J*.

On January 11, 1987, the *Dallas Morning News* ran a feature story about OCTA in its travel section. Since then the feature, written by Eliot Kleinberg, has been picked up by newspapers from Bridgeport, Connecticut, to Spokane, Washington. Dozens of new members have resulted. Those who clipped a copy of the article from their own newspapers are asked to send a copy to the OCTA office so its travels across the nation can be charted.

After reading the Kleinberg article in the *Arizona Republic*, Bette L. Wolfe of Scottsdale sent him copies of two postcards she picked up at a sidewalk sale. Both were written by "Grandma" Virginia Reed Murphy. One, postmarked Donner Lake, 1915, reads, "where we spent the winter at Donner Lake in 1846 — and still live to tell it."

VIA, the publication of the Oregon Department of Transportation, ran an article on marking the route of the Oregon Trail in its November 1986 issue. The article, written by Ed Schoaps, noted that the Oregon Advisory Council, the State Historic Preservation Office, and the Highway Division will work together to protect historic sites and recreational resources along the trail.

**GRAVES**

OCTA's grave-marking project has recently gotten underway in Wyoming under the direction of Randy Brown and Reg Duffin. Five markers have been designed so far; three more soon will be completed and all should be in place by midsummer.

The graves to be marked are those of Joel Hembree (d. 1843, ten miles west of Douglas, Wyo.), Quintina Snodderly (d. 1852, Natrona County, Wyo.), A. H. Unthank (d. 1850, five miles east of Glenrock, Wyo.), Elva Ingram (d. 1852, Fort Laramie area, Child's route), Mary Hurley-Kelly (d. 1864, eleven miles southeast of Glenrock, Wyo.), Ada McGill (d. 1864, Deer Creek Station), Martin

Ringo-J. P. Parker (d. 1860, two miles west of Glenrock, Wyo.), and Johnny Williams (d. 1851, one-half mile east of Fontenelle Creek). The grave of Catherine Butts in 1845 near the Deschutes River in Wasco County, Oregon, will also be marked this year.

The markers are 12" x 14" plaques photochemically etched and anodized in two colors. They will be securely mounted by OCTA volunteers at the grave site to make them as vandal-proof as possible.

Donations are being sought for this project. Each marker costs \$350; fencing for the grave site is an additional \$200. Donors names are included on the marker, which also includes a short text explaining the significance of the grave.

**Elva Ingram**

On April 15, 1852, James and Ritta Ann Ingram, with their nine children, left Salem, Henry County, Iowa, for Pleasant Valley, Oregon. The wagon train, consisting of forty people in four families, reached the Fort Laramie area June 21, 1852.

Here on the North Bank (Child's) route, on Wednesday, June 23, 1852, the youngest daughter, Elva Ingram, died. The cause of her death is unknown. She was four years old. On that day eighteen-year old James Akin, Jr., wrote: "Travel 12 miles very hilly bad roads pine and cedar bluffs — cloudy rainy weather, Elva Ingram died. Camp in good place. Plenty wood and water."

There were seven more deaths in the Richey-Ingram-Akin wagon train before they reached the Willamette Valley late in October 1852.

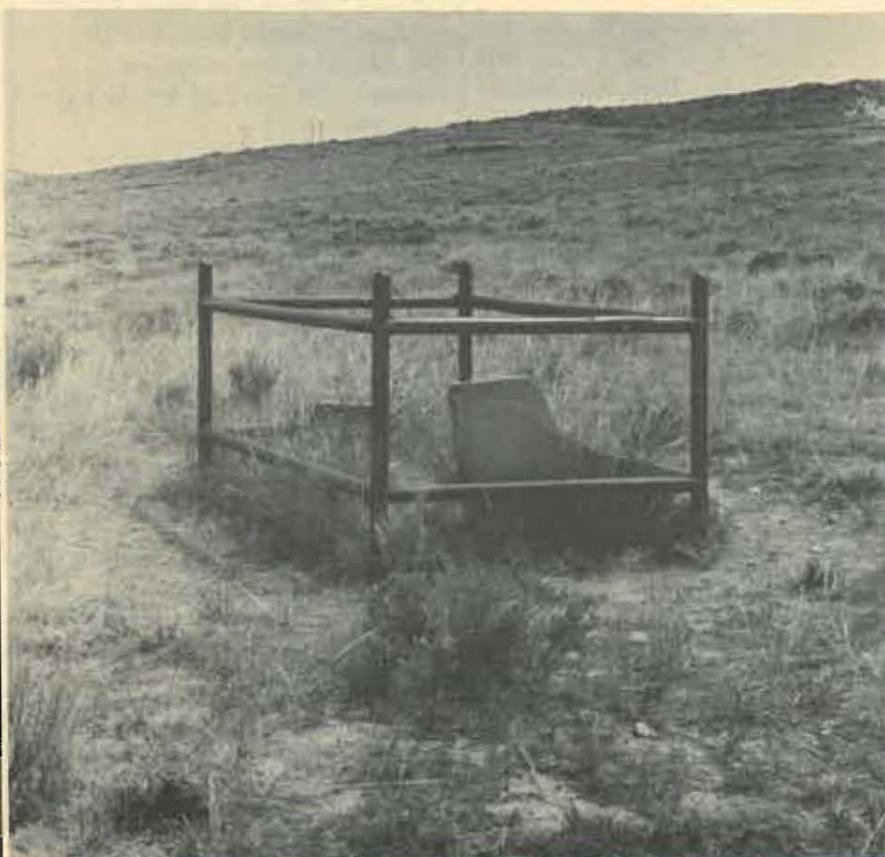


Photo by Gregory M. Franzwa

The grave of Alvah H. Unthank, east of Glenrock, Wyoming, is on private land.

## OCTA PEOPLE

**Marc Simmons** reports that he is doing well after his near-fatal automobile accident. He writes, "Among other injuries I had a broken neck, fractured skull, smashed upper face (requiring four hours of plastic surgery), paralyzed left arm, broken femur, broken left ankle, and badly smashed right foot." He hopes to be mobile again by the end of summer. Keep those cards and letters coming: 419 Monroe N.E., Apt 11; Albuquerque NM 87108.

**Gwen Moffat** writes from her home in Wales that she plans to head for the western United States soon to research her new book. It describes the ordeal of thirty-five men searching for a railway route, who were trapped in the Rocky Mountains during the terrible winter of 1848. The dramatic story will make her twentieth book.

New members from abroad include **Ilse Wersin** from Munich, West Germany, **Francesco Dona** from Italy, **M. Catherine Weber** from France, and **Karlen Urs** from Switzerland.

**Merrill Mattes'** new descriptive bibliography of eyewitness accounts of the emigration West 1812-66 will be published by the University of Illinois Press in the fall of 1987.

Over 500 pages, *Platte River Road Narratives* will be an extremely valuable resource to historians of the West. It will also give a boost to the COED project. The reference work will sell for \$95.00.

**Dr. John (Jack) Holmes** of Medford, Oreg., is heading an OCTA committee to develop a curriculum that will improve the quality of educational materials available to public schools on the great nineteenth century wagon roads to the West. The committee expects to have a preliminary report at the Casper convention.

**Harry Heil**, associate professor of art at Western State College of Colorado at Gunnison and descendent of two pioneer families, has been painting the Oregon-California trails for eleven years. He has recently assembled a portfolio "to preserve those delicate fragments of history that are in existence today for our posterity." Contact him for more information.

**Lawrence A. Nielsen**, a Northwest chapter member, is the co-author of a recently-published book, *Pioneer Roads in Central Oregon* (\$12.95 pb, \$24.95 cloth). Contact him at 3208 N.W. Lynchway, Redmond OR 97756.



Gwen Moffat aloft.

## PRAIRIE TELEGRAPH

Interested in Kincaid-Swope-Arnold families who settled in California near Santa Clara in the 1850s.

Glen W. Kincaid  
Rte. 1, Box 478  
Deer Park WA 99006

My great-great-grandparents, John and Mary Ann Woods, came across one of the trails from Chariton County, Missouri, to California. I have a little information about this and am seeking more.

The Lawson Company of 50 persons left Missouri April 20, 1848 and arrived in the Sacramento Valley October 30, 1848. Others who may have been in the Lawson Company: Silas Bennett, John F. Pinkham, Robert Sears, Jedediah Smith, ? Chambers.

I am interested in the route taken, names of anyone else in the Lawson Company, and any diaries and logs that may have been kept.

Nancy Woods Cooper  
P.O. Box 7683  
Pueblo West CO 81007

Ed. note: *The Jedediah Smith* was killed on the Santa Fe Trail in 1831.)

My grandfather James Sherman Ditmars made three trips to Santa Fe walking all the way with the covered wagons and oxen. He was born in 1825 and made his first trip when he was seventeen or eighteen. He received \$17.50 for each trip.

On one trip after leaving Independence and coming to Gardner, Kansas, his group met a mule train. My grandfather tried very hard to trade his oxen trip to Santa Fe for one with the mules to Oregon Territory! The mule train never reached Oregon. Indians killed all the men and mules.

Helen Louis Ditmars Norton  
Rte 1, Box 32  
Plattsburg MO 64477

(Ed. note: Readers are encouraged to send in their family stories, but unless authenticated by other sources, no one is required to believe them.)

I am open for any and all information I can get on the Woods family. Frank Woods and family traveled from Santa Cruz, Calif., in the late 1800s to somewhere in Oregon — I know not where. Later they returned to the Santa

Cruz area, just before the San Francisco earthquake, and stayed in California. I was hoping I could learn where they went to in Oregon.

Now I have made a new discovery. Frank's parents, John Woods, and his wife, Mary Ann Sylvey Woods, departed Missouri (place unknown) on 20 April 1848, for California, where they shortly settled in the Santa Cruz area. John was born in Georgetown, Ohio, in 1818. He migrated (with or without parents) to Missouri, where he joined in the Mexican War in the 1840s. Returning from the war to Missouri, he married Mary Ann Sylvey, and then headed out in 1848 for the West.

Their son, Frank Woods, along with wife, Fannie (Bowden) Woods and children went up to Oregon. Frank was the first white male baby born in Santa Cruz in July 1857. (First to survive I think.)

Jeanne Woods  
1281 West Shenandoah Dr.  
Pueblo West, Colo. 81007

## FAMILY LINES

Every week the OCTA office receives queries from genealogy researchers seeking information about relatives who took the trails West. The staff is unable to supply such information because it hasn't yet been compiled. Eventually the COED program will have such material available at the touch of a computer key. Meanwhile, *NFP* offers a forum for those seeking or offering information on nineteenth-century emigrants.

Addie Dyal, a librarian-genealogist with the Oregon State Library, has promised to lend her expert guidance to researchers. Send all queries to Family Lines, *NFP*, c/o OCTA, 1701 S. Eighth Street; St. Louis MO 64104.

Robert Lee of Safford, Ariz., suggests that those looking for family ties wear an identifying card at the 1987 OCTA convention. Each card would list family name, year of trek, and destination. For instance, "Lee-Woods/Oregon 1845" or "Stott-Stout/California 1851." This will allow genealogical researchers to connect with each other quickly.

## BLM Trail Markers Near Casper Vandalized

For a long time now I've been driving, crawling, and walking up and down the historic trails near Casper as a part of a summer lecture series I teach at Casper College called Historic Trails and Treks. My students either grew up here or have been in business here for a number of years but have never found the time to acquaint themselves with what I consider the best history in the United States.

Every Sunday morning during the semester my wife, Rita, and I met at the central flagpole at Casper College. In caravans we headed for the Hole In The Wall, Ayers Natural Bridge, the Bozeman Trail near Sussex, Wyoming, or took our time studying the evidence left by nearly 400,000 people who crossed the country in wagons headed for California and gold, Oregon and free farmland, or Utah and the right to practice their own religion.

My own family came out here the year Wyoming territory was created, in 1868. My grandfather was a tough half-Irish, half-English fellow who fell in love with this land. By 1890 he had finished

working on the Indian Reservation in the sutler's store and had punched cows for the famed Two Dot, owned by the illustrious Ora Haley. A wealthy old Englishman named Fred Noble took a liking to Fred Bragg and threw in with him. Before Fred Bragg died, he had 40,000 head of sheep, about 2,500 Durham fine cattle, and a string of horses used for riding and moving camp.

One summer I led a passel of folks out to Rock Avenue and found the concrete Oregon Trail marker had its topknot scalped as neatly as any Indian on the war-path might have done in those long ago days. At first I was dumbfounded, not knowing who would do such a thing. Questioning area ranchers, I found out that a pipeline crew went through that area where the trails are still nearly pristine. Everywhere they could, they had blasted off the top of the marker for the sake of a bronze cap.

Armed with this knowledge and the remarks Aubrey Haines and Gregory Franzwa had made about desecration of the names along sec-

tions of the trails, I approached the city council and the city parks and recreation folks. They listened but said, "Well, Bill, it ain't our responsibility."

So I took on the county commissioners and then the county recreation commission. They listened. Then I made arrangements to meet with the Casper division of the BLM, and together with an archaeologist, a historian, and the county people, I led a posse of about thirty folks on a day-long trip.

But first I went to the local daily paper (the largest daily in the state) and took their ace writer and photographer on a similar trip. They were impressed with the desecration being done and saw that I was just on the edge of being really mad.

The next week I took the anchorman for the local NBC-TV affiliate (also Wyoming's largest) on a tour of the beheaded concrete markers and the destruction of names carved into rock. The county road superintendent had blasted that rock for roadbed. By the time the newspaper released its articles



Author Bill Bragg and an untouched Oregon Trail marker near Rock Avenue.

and the television station ran its three, three-minute segments, the county and the BLM found their rumps in the saddle so to speak. Today we are nearly finished replacing all those headless Oregon Trail markers.

## COED: Alive & Well

The California-Nevada chapter's pilot project to locate and index trail diaries is well under way. Called COED, for Census of Emigrant Documents, the project is the creation of Tom Hunt and is being directed by Don Buck.

Determining how to computerize the index, as well as deciding what kind of hardware and software to use, took several months, many practice sessions, and the combined knowledge of Buck, Hunt, Chuck Dodd, Jim Yeaw, Jay Greene, and Doyle Reed.

Workshops held in March and April familiarized volunteers with the techniques and materials to be used. A full report on the project will be made at the 1987 convention in Casper. If judged successful, COED will be initiated as a nationwide program.

The project ultimately will include letters from emigrants on the trail to hometown newspapers, personal letters to those back home, and even reminiscent accounts by those who came over the trail in covered wagons.

COED is expected to be an invaluable tool for genealogists as well as trail scholars. It has been estimated that the project will take twenty-five years to complete.

## OCTA's 1986 Financial Report

The following balance sheet was prepared by E. E. Donnelly, accountant, and James F. Bowers, OCTA treasurer. OCTA's gross receipts increased sixty percent and expenses increased 106 percent.

Donnelly said that the increase in revenues and expenses for 1986 over 1985 required increased time and effort by Bowers.

The net excess of revenues over expenses in 1985 of \$13,468 fell to a negative (\$2,174) during 1986. This deficit for 1986 reduced the year-end fund balance of \$28,363 in 1985 to \$26,189 in 1986.

Oregon-California Trails Association Balance Sheet 12/31/86	
ASSETS	
Cash in Bank	\$10,402.75
Memorial/Life Money Market Ckg. Acct.	1,631.73
Life Membership Fund (CD's)	8,775.01
Total Funds	20,809.49
Mdse. Inventory	6,518.98
Total Assets	27,328.47
LIABILITIES & FUND BALANCE	
LIABILITIES:	
Accrued FIGA Taxes Payable	184.51
Accrued FWH Taxes Payable	183.50
Accrued Mo. W/H Taxes Payable	29.93
Accrued FUTA Taxes Payable	741.44
Total Liabilities	1,139.39
FUND BALANCE:	
Balance, 1/1/86	28,363.16
Less: Excess Expenses	
Over Revenues, year 1986	(2,174.07)
Balance, 12/31/86	26,189.09
Total Liabilities & Fund Balance	27,328.47

Oregon-California Trails Association Income Statement Year Ending 12/31/86		
REVENUES:		
Membership Dues:		
Annual	\$32,497.31	
Life	3,900.00	36,397.31
Convention:		
Registration	11,962.02	
Sales	1,998.75	
Transportation	11,178.00	
Food Services	15,794.00	
Misc.	1,553.00	42,485.77
Special Appeal Funds	9,918.11	
Projects/Proposals Income	50.00	9,968.11
Henderson Memorial	50.00	
Acquisition of California Hill	7,162.35	7,212.35
Overland Journal		
Subscriptions	5,639.53	
Advertising	1,650.00	7,289.53
Jackson Prints		800.37
Meeting Sales		76.00
Misc. Income		282.04
Interest Income		
Life Membership Fund		956.56
TOTAL REVENUES		\$105,468.04
EXPENSES:		
Convention:		
Rentals	142.75	
Catering	19,095.20	
Transportation	6,526.29	
Advertising	1,654.52	
Office Expenses	530.78	
Mdse.	2,278.60	
Postage & Shipping	889.64	
Misc. Entertainment	1,504.34	32,622.12
Publications:		
Printing (OJ)	26,254.02	
Printing (other)	3,172.22	
Supplies	264.53	29,690.77
Site Preservation	710.76	
Site Acquisition	6,620.00	7,330.76
Membership Promotion	307.22	
Projects/Proposals	891.72	
Fund-raising	3,063.44	
Consulting fees	1,700.00	
Meeting expense	4,603.15	10,565.53
Communications		3,680.27
Postage & Freight		7,221.19
Jackson Prints		147.94
Wages		11,958.71
Professional fees		284.35
Office supplies		1,116.77
Payroll taxes		1,412.00
Misc. expenses		28.95
Refunds		
Memberships	20.00	
Convention	1,493.25	
Meeting	22.00	
Other	47.50	1,582.75
TOTAL EXPENSES		107,642.11
Net Excess of Expenses over Revenues		(2,174.07)

## Platte River Trails Workshop

A *Platte River Trails Workshop* will be offered this summer by Hastings College, Hastings, Nebr., led by Will Locke, instructor at Hastings Junior High, and Bill Kloefkorn, Nebraska State Poet and professor of English at Nebraska Wesleyan University.

From July 6 to 12 participants will camp along the Platte River and the Oregon Trail, from Camp Augustine south of Grand Island to the Snowy Range west of Laramie, Wyoming. They will study literature relating to the land and

people of the Platte River trails, including works by Neihardt, Sandoz, Janovy, Kloefkorn, Franzwa, Mattes, and Johnsgard. A record of the journey will be produced with poetry, essays, photographs, and sketches.

The cost of the workshop is \$200 and includes transportation, food, all camping, entry fees, and instruction. Three hours of college credit may be earned.

For more information: (402) 462-5196.

## TRAIL TRACKING ON THE FORTY-MILE DESERT

by Jim McClain

High atop a granite ridge of the Sierra Nevada just south of Donner Peak is a steel marker inscribed: Emigrant Trail, Truckee River Route. Marker No. T.R.R. 24, Coldstream Pass, Elevation Approx. 7850 Feet.

Highest Point on Truckee River Route.

This marker is the westernmost emigrant trail marker of hundreds that extend east and north to the beginning of the California Trail at Raft River, Idaho.

Trail buffs or trail trackers who roam the Sierra Nevada passes and the eastern desert regions of the emigrant trails search for traces and debris left by thousands of passing wagons.

The two greatest challenges of the California Trail were the Forty-Mile Desert (the last desert to cross) and the Sierra Nevada. The difficulties encountered in these two areas were, in part, due to the fact they came at the end of a 2,000-mile journey. For the trail tracker, scouting these areas is seasonal — stalking the Sierra Nevada during the summer and the Forty-Mile Desert during the fall and spring. On November 9 and 10, 1986, trail trackers headed for the Forty-Mile Desert. Assigned reading for participants was a passage from the guidebook published by the Nevada Emigrant Trail Marking Committee:

"The numerous journals of the pioneers record the Forty Mile Desert as the most terrible ordeal of their entire journey. The crossing entailed pulling through heavy sand with barely drinkable or no water and no grass other than that which they carried with them from the Big Meadows. The desert took

a terrible toll of the oxen and mules, and many of the pioneers lost their lives before reaching the Carson or Truckee rivers. The desert was the scene of death and destruction described vividly as 'Dante's Inferno', or the 'route of Napoleon's Army from Moscow.'

In crossing this desert, from the Humboldt Dike, the pioneers could choose the Carson River Route to the Carson River at Ragtown (west of Fallon), or the Truckee River Route to the Truckee River, near present day Wadsworth."

The rendezvous point for this group of trail trackers was the famous Boiling Springs of the Truckee route. Due to extensive pumping the springs have not flowed as they used to since the mid-1950s. When old Highway 40 was built, they were called Brady's Hot Springs and featured a run-down gas station and bar with a few overnight shacks and bathhouses situated over the thermal vents. Along Interstate 80 today, they are simply called Hot Springs. Because of the geothermal potential of the area and the proximity to Nevada's second largest population center, Boiling Springs today is highly developed. A food dehydration plant and a geothermal station are currently undergoing construction.

Proceeding from west to east, the first stop on this trek was Trails West marker T.R.R. 3, which reads "The pass from White Plains to Hot Springs plateau." At the base of these markers on the Forty-Mile Desert is a collection of artifacts, mostly wagon iron. Experienced trail trackers often pick up wagon debris, and if they don't

(continued on page 11)

## MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Francesco Dona; C Le Bertolini No. 1/B; 30141 Murano Ve; Italy

M. Catherine Weber; 6 Rue Schoenenberger; 02220 Braine France

Ilse Wersin; Engelschalkingerstr 198; 8000 Muenchen 81; West Germany

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The recent *Overland Journal* carried a partial list of those who contributed to OCTA's special appeal. This is a continuation of that list. Forthcoming issues of *News From the Plains* will list those who have donated funds after this issue has gone to press. The board wishes to express its gratitude to all who have given so generously. The fund total at press time is \$12,534.50.

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## Trail Tracking (continued from page 10)

add it to their private collections, they drop it along the trail or leave it at the markers. From the White Plains Divide it is possible to look eastward all the way to the "dike," with the Truckee route meandering for several miles in the foreground. From this point during August or September in the late 1840s or early 1850s the entire white-topped procession of California migration could be seen rolling by.

On the Truckee route just east of the White Plains Divide is a rut that catches the eye of any trail tracker. Beyond it is a trail phenomenon that is unique for the Forty-Mile Desert. On a small playa reaching for a hundred yards or more is a line of desert growth about equal to the width of a wagon. While animal droppings are mainly responsible for the vegetational patterns farther east, here the grooving of the playa surface by wagon wheels created a water-collecting trough that promoted the desert growth.

The group's next stop was Double Wells on the Carson Route.

(Trails West marker C.R.R. 2) Taking advantage of a water table near the surface, the emigrants dug two holes in the desert floor that soon filled with water of questionable quality. The wells have been shored up with wooden collars that date from a much later period. Heading southward from the wells is a set of remarkably well-preserved trail traces.

South of Trails West marker C.R.R. 3 on the Salt Creek crossing, the Carson route divides into dry and wet weather crossings of an arm of the Carson Sink that extends west of the abandoned Par-ran section station for nearly a mile. The dry weather crossing is a trail tracker's dream — a two-mile section of emigrant trail that has had little or no modern vehicular traffic to disrupt the pristine trail traces. The area is completely devoid of vegetation. The trail traces show up as dark lanes bordered by a salt surface. This is probably due to the compaction that took place during emigrant days. The surface is never dry and

yields easily to foot pressure. While all iron debris has decomposed into mineral soil, artifacts of nonferrous metal have survived, as evidenced by the recent discovery of lead strips, which emigrants carried and converted into bullets when needed, and brass rifle butt plates. (When many emigrants were reduced to walking, even firearms were jettisoned.)

Upon emerging from the sink area, a tracker is confronted with several acres of iron debris. In this area the iron bones of abandoned wagons can be seen relatively untouched. Farther south is an area stretching for approximately one-third of a mile through heavy sand. Here, also, there is evidence of a wet and dry road — the wet weather road being through the sand. Unlike the edge of the sink, this section of trail through the sand shows recent evidence of heavy excavation, probably by coin collectors with sophisticated metal detectors. Uniformly arranged piles of sand and metal fragments attest to the use of sifting screens.

Here this trail tracking trip ended. For the moment some questions were answered and others created. This desert still resists the efforts of nature and to a lesser degree the efforts of modern civilization to alter the almost indelible marks left by the thousands of Royces and Bryerlys and Ingalls and Bryants who crossed this most dreaded of all deserts on the road to California.

### Chester L. Buck 1919-1987

Chester L. Buck, La Barge, Wyo., suffered a heart attack and died at the wheel of his truck on May 18, 1987. He was the husband of OCTA director Karen Buck.

A special memorial fund for grave marking purposes has been established in his name. Donations should be sent to OCTA's treasurer, James F. Bowers, 450 S. Otis St., Lakewood CO 80226.



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Rickey M. Stanton; Lt. Col. US Air Force; 1649 Piikea St.; Honolulu HI 96818; (808) 422-7103; Individual.

Clifton Glover; 29177 SE Hwy. 224; Eagle Creek OR 97022; (503) 637-3820; Individual.

Don & Joan Andersen; 415 Lawton Rd.; Oregon City OR 97045; Family. (Gift from Oregon City Civic Improvement Trust)

Suzanne VanOrman; 18801 Central Point Rd.; Oregon City OR 97045; Family. (Gift from Oregon City Civic Improvement Trust)

Tom & Sherry Lemons; 120 Barker Ave.; Oregon City OR 97045; Family. (Gift from Oregon City Civic Improvement Trust)

Ken & Terry Mitchell; 18930 Oaktree Ave.; Oregon City OR 97045; Family. (Gift from Oregon City Civic Improvement Trust)

Peter & Ellen Day; 15172 S. Thayer Rd.; Oregon City OR 97045; Family. (Gift from Oregon City Civic Improvement Trust)

David & Sharon Jelinek; 14665 S. Kelmsley Dr.; Oregon City OR 97045; Family. (Gift from Oregon City Civic Improvement Trust)

Loretta Rhoten; 217 Old Hwy. 99 W., # 13; Newberg OR 97132; (503) 538-0752; Individual.

Eileen G. Fitzsimons; Oregon Trail Advisory Council; 1405 SE Martins St.; Portland OR 97202; (503) 234-4589; Individual.

Steven Yost; 4619 SE 47th; Portland OR 97206; (503) 774-7239; Individual.

Lois McCarthy; 3736 SE Belmont St.; Portland OR 97214; (503) 232-3496; Family.

James & Margaret Robnett; 12305 SE Mt. Scott Blvd.; Portland OR 97236; (503) 761-6420; Family. (Gift from Donald S. Galbreath)

Mrs. Ethel Raw; 3460 Polk Ave.; Corvallis OR 97330; (503) 753-7758; Family.

Donna Mathews; 1855 Pioneer Dr.; Dallas OR 97338; (503) 623-9368; Individual. (Gift from Roy & Barbara Beck)

Jim & Carol Stroud; 615 Elwood Dr.; Eugene OR 97401; (503) 343-1875; Family. (Gift from John & Phyllis Mann)

Mary Ellen West; 76 West 36th; Eugene OR 97405; (503) 343-5492; Individual.

Paul & Sylvia Sawyer; 1575 Skyview Dr.; Medford OR 97501; (503) 779-9114; Family.

Jerry Brown; PO Box 1090; Grants Pass OR 97526; (503) 476-4015; Family.

Ernest Bobby Pruitt; 2784 S. River Road; Grants Pass OR 97527; (503) 476-2429; Individual.

Leroy & Mary Smith; 1044 SW Hill; Bend OR 97701; (503) 382-8991; Family. (Gift from Steve & Kristine Smith)

James W. Souther; 2508 - 102 NE; Bellevue WA 98004; (206) 454-0864; Individual.

Frank & Doris Kuske; 16612 SE 26th St.; Bellevue WA 98004; (206) 764-3452; Family. (Gift from Todd & Betty Berens)

George W. Culbertson Jr.; 8909 56th Place W.; Mukilteo WA 98272; (206) 353-6303; Family. (Gift from Lee & Nancy Braddock)

Ruth C. Bacon; 426 E. 61st St.; Tacoma WA 98404; (206) 475-6529; Individual.

Gary & Kathryn Stelzner; 413 Tennessee Rd.; Winlock WA 98596; (206) 785-4260; Family.

Fr. Ted Bradley; 404 E 5th Ave.; Ritzville WA 99169; (509) 659-0437; Individual.

Dick & Wana Ingram; Rt. 3, Box 72; Dayton WA 99328; (509) 382-4022; Family.