



July
1994

NEWS FROM THE PLAINS

THE OREGON-CALIFORNIA TRAILS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

P.O. Box 1019, Independence, MO 64051-0519 Phone and FAX 816-252-2276

THOSE WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE QUESTIONS ABOUT EMIGRANTS AND EMIGRANT TRAILS

From
Don Buck's
talk, given at the
CA-NV-HI chapter
conference at Placerville,
California on Feb. 5, 1994.

**Who were the emigrants?
What is an emigrant trail?
When did they exist?
Where were they?**

At first glance you may think these are easy questions to answer. After all, we read and listen to talks about emigrants and emigrant trails all the time. Surely there are ready answers. But are there?

Only recently I realized that I had no clear and definite answers. In my mapping of the California Trails in Nevada and California for the National Park Service, I have had to make some tough decisions on what I am calling an emigrant trail. Then from time to time, as a member of the Editorial Advisory Board for the *Overland Journal*, I have had to comment on the appropriateness of an article submitted to the journal: Was

the article really about emigrants or the emigrant trail? More recently while assisting Bob Berry in producing the second edition of OCTA's *Western Emigrant Trails* map, I ran up against these same four questions. Bob had to make some very tough decisions on what trails to include and exclude, which gave me a greater appreciation for the problem. The clincher came just a short while ago when I worked out what constitutes the complex of emigrant trails in the south and southwest, for the purposes of designating them National Historic Trails.

So bear with me as I try to get you as confused as I am about answers to these four fundamental questions. My intent is not to give answers but show you how difficult it is to find answers. (It will be helpful to follow trail and site references on the second edition of the WET map.) Let's begin by defining the term *emigrant* as opposed to *immigrant*. An *emigrant* is a person who is leaving his or her country enroute to settle in another place or country; while an *immigrant* is one who has settled in that place or country. Notice that both emigrants and immigrants are considered

"settlers." So far that fits our overlanders. In jumping-off along the Missouri River, our emigrants saw themselves as leaving their homeland and traveling overland to another place; but whether always as settlers we'll have to see.

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Next NFP deadline September 1, 1994

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With this in mind, we're ready for the first fundamental question, *Who were the emigrants?*

We like to believe they were the people who came overland to settle the trans-Mississippi west, the people we honor in our journal, conventions, and preservation efforts. Now let me muddy the waters a bit. What about the missionaries, like the Methodist Jason Lee who came overland with a fur trading party in 1834 to convert American Indians and opened a mission in the Willamette Valley of the Oregon Territory. Are missionaries emigrants? Jumping ahead to the Gold Rush, should miners be construed as emigrants? If emigrants must be settlers, then we would have to exclude great numbers of overlanders during the gold rush years. What of the many who never settled in California and returned to their homes from whence they came, usually disenchanted with El Dorado? Perhaps an exaggeration, but one returning gold-rusher reported, in the *Arkansas Gazette* on Jan. 24, 1851, "an immense reaction in the emigration to California, there being five on their return to one going out."

California was only the first to experience a gold rush, for eventually most other western states had a gold rush of varying magnitudes. What of the varied types of people and occupations, some not so savory, who came in the wake of these gold rushes? Must they be emigrants too? The bullwhackers, gamblers, bartenders, dance hall women, claim jumpers, desperadoes? Then keep in mind that many of the post-1849 overlanders were racing eastward from the far west to reach the riches in the diggings, be they in Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Arizona. Do they fit the image we hold of emigrants? Were they traveling on emigrant trails? So this carries me to my second fundamental question, *what is an emigrant trail?*

We can fall back on those old favorites and call them with confidence, emigrant trails: the Oregon Trail, the California Trail, the Sublette Cutoff, the Hastings Cutoff, the Applegate Trail—you've heard of them all. But

notice that these trails were opened in the pre-gold rush period when we had genuine emigrants—families settling down—using these overland routes to reach the Willamette Valley, Sutter's Fort, or Salt Lake Valley. After 1849, however, things get murky. Very quickly in the 1850s, the proliferation of trails occurred, especially near the heavily used routes into California. Though gold was discovered first near Coloma, in early 1848, other gold fields were discovered in quick succession all up and down northern California from Mariposa to Yreka. Gold rush camps and towns sprung up near or at the diggings with a network of access roads connecting them with the diggings and the closest emigrant trails.

Let me give you an example of what I'm trying to convey. The first emigrant wagon route into California was opened in 1844 by way of the Truckee River and Donner Pass to Johnson's Ranch, the first settlement reached by the emigrants. From the ranch, emigrants continued on the existing road to Sutter's Fort. Then came the Gold Rush and subsequent discovery of gold along Deer Creek in September of 1849. Nevada City soon sprung up near the Deer Creek diggings and, as Jack Steed has brought to our attention, quickly a road was punched to what will become Nevada City from Johnson's Ranch, via the mining town of Rough and Ready. Then early the next year the Nevada City Road was built to take emigrant traffic from Bear Valley directly west to the diggings near Nevada City. This route now eclipsed the older, original California Trail from Bear Valley via Steep Hollow to Johnson's Ranch. At this point you may ask, what's so troubling about that? Well, to begin with, we are seeing a new pattern emerge in wagon roads opening from west to east, not east to west, as was the earlier pattern. Secondly, though these west to east roads did take emigrants—or are they miners—to new gold fields, were they primarily for emigrant use or supplying the miners and mining activities? What do you call that road from Johnson's Ranch to Nevada City (via Rough and Ready) opened in the late

summer of 1849, an emigrant trail or mining road?

Perhaps a better question to ask is where do emigrant trails end and local roads begin? Up to the discovery of gold in 1848, the Truckee-Donner route terminated at Johnson's Ranch, that first outpost of civilization. By late 1849 "civilization"—if that's what you want to call the rough and tumble mining camps in the Mother Load country—had migrated east a considerable distance into the Sierra Nevada. In the case just cited, it was at least to Nevada City. A similar problem of determining what makes an emigrant trail occurs in the way the Beckwourth Trail was opened up. In their research, Andy and Joanne Hammond have had to sort out where this trail ended as far as it was an emigrant trail—at Marysville, Bidwell's Bar, or American Ranch (modern Quincy). Traditionally historians have terminated the trail at Marysville or Bidwell's Bar. However, the Hammonds discovered that local interests had built, from west to east, a wagon road to Bidwell's Bar and from there a pack trail to American Valley by the time Jim Beckwourth had worked out his end of the trail in 1851 from Truckee Meadows (modern Reno), northwest over Beckwourth Pass, to American Ranch.

A related problem in determining what makes up an emigrant trail concerns some trails in the southwest that emerged in the late 1850s. In the south and southwest the origins of emigrant trails is quite different when compared to the northern trails like the Oregon and California Trails. In the complex of trails comprising the Southern Route to California, most were opened up to emigrant traffic by the efforts of the U.S. Government, first during the war with Mexico in 1846 and later on with surveys conducted for the purpose of finding more direct intercontinental routes to the Pacific Coast. Despite their military origins, we can call the routes opened by General Kearny's Army of the West, especially that of Lt. Col. Cooke and his Mormon Battalion, authentic emigrant trails, largely because they were used by gold seekers in the

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early gold rush years. The same reasoning applies to the routes from Ft. Smith to Santa Fe and Fort Smith to El Paso opened to emigrant travel by another military expedition under Captain Marcy in 1849.

However, what can we call the road opened by a government survey under Edward Beale in 1857-58 from Albuquerque to the Colorado River. Its name, of course, is the Beale Wagon Road and its extension to Los Angeles is the Mojave Road of 1859. In both cases they carried a few emigrants to California but their main function, as it turned out, was to supply the military and miners involved in the gold discovery near Prescott in 1863 and the gradual settlement of the Arizona Territory. So what is the Beale Road and the Mojave Road, an emigrant trail or a freighting road? Trying to answer this question really takes me to my third fundamental question: *When did emigrant trails exist? When did they begin and when did they end?*

If we take OCTA's *Western Emigrant Trails* map for the period of emigrant trail activity, the years are 1830 to 1870. Merrill Mattes, in *Platte River Road Narratives*, terminates his listing of emigrant diaries with 1866, "the last significant year of transcontinental wagon travel before completion of the connecting Union Pacific and Central Pacific railroads" along the Platte River. John Unruh, in the subtitle to *The Plains Across*, brackets the overland emigrant migration with the years 1840 to 1860. George Stewart in *The California Trail* brings the emigrant "story to a kind of conventional ending" with

1859, when a one time trail had become a road. Kenneth Holmes, in his multi-volume *Covered Wagon Women*, has the time period spanning 1840 to 1890. Holmes' *Covered Wagon Women* series, notwithstanding, there is an implied assumption in much of the historical literature that the westward migration—as a wagon trail phenomenon—came to a close with the completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869. As we know, however, wagon bound emigrants continued using emigrant trails long after the completion of the transcontinental railroad, either due to financial necessity or lack of railroad links to the more remote settlements in the west. The last four volumes in Holmes' eleven volume series contain overland emigrant diaries and letters dating from 1862 to 1888. Keith Arnold told me that his mother came overland as a child in a wagon bound for California from Salt Lake Valley in 1910; she got as far as Reno, Nevada,

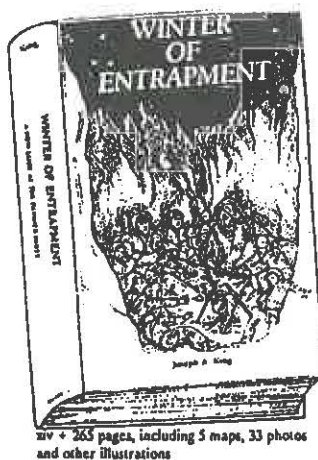
where her family completed the journey on a train. We have an unsubstantiated sighting in Wyoming of emigrants traveling west in wagons as late as 1912. Where does this leave us?

Looking for the origins of emigrant trails, the date 1841 is customarily advanced as the year overland emigrants—as a migrating party of settlers jumping-off at Independence—first made it to Oregon and California. (Dale Morgan has argued that "the first avowed homeseeker" to the Pacific was Joel Walker with his family who accompanied a missionary party to Oregon in 1840 and reached California the next year.) If we view those early missionaries to the Oregon Territory as settlers of sorts, then we would have to begin the overland emigrant period with 1834. But there are other historical data suggesting much earlier beginnings.

Unrecognized in this dating scheme, interestingly, is the Spaniard (more accurately a *criollo*) Juan

Bautista de Anza who led the first overland emigrating party (193 were settlers to California in the winter of 1775-76. With our Anglo-American blinders, we have managed to overlook that Hispanic historical first. Anza's colonization of California, over an 1800 mile trek from northern Mexico, is not the only uncomfortable historical fact for OCTA. If we think broadly, in terms of the settlement of the trans-Mississippi west, then we need to consider emigrant trails in the very early settlement of the area comprising the future states of Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona. Conquistadors and padres trudged north in 1598 through the Chihuahuan Desert and along the Rio Grande to establish the

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DONNER PARTY

At last, the true story of the Donner Party. Major focus on the Irish family of Breens, all nine of whom survived the winter ordeal in the High Sierras.

Paperback - \$14.95
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WINTER OF ENTRAPMENT: A NEW LOOK AT THE DONNER PARTY by Joseph A. King

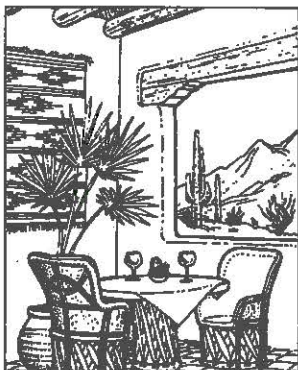
--"King's work is so exciting, so original, and so revealing that we have selected it for the cover story of *The Californians*" (Jul/Aug '92) - Michael Sherrell, Editor.

--"...the definitive work on the Donner Party" - historian Robert Ryal Miller.

--"...the first attempt in a generation to review the story of the doomed wagon train's 5-month, 2,000 mile journey" - Lynn Ludlow, *San Francisco Examiner*.

--"The author not only packs a punch, telling the story with much vigor, but also retains the authenticity of his research" - Michael McCone, Exec. Dir., California Historical Society.

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From the Editor

By the time you read this, summer will be in full swing. Have you been out on the trail yet?

In April, I had the opportunity to see the rugged country near the Gila River in Arizona. It was called the "Devil's Turnpike" by Lt. Emory in his 1846 travel with Kearney's "Army of the West". Wagons never traversed this particular trail, but some packers of the gold rush era did make their way to California through this region.

**Next
NFP deadline:**

**September 1
for the October issue**

As our group of Southwest Chapter members bounced our 4WD vehicles over one of the few jeep roads of the area, we could well imagine the struggle of men and animals to cover this rock-strewn, waterless landscape. We found no evidence of that early route, but with several diaries, early maps and present day quads, we attempted to puzzle out the probable route, while enjoying the spectacular scenery and early desert bloom. What a trail day!

Send all newsletter items to:

Rose Ann Tompkins
1125 W. Mission Dr.
Chandler, AZ 85224
(602) 963-3565

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NEWS FROM HEADQUARTERS

Jeanne Miller, Headquarters Manager

The Aubrey Haines book, *Historic Sites Along the Oregon Trail*, has now been reissued and is again being offered for sale. The new edition gives information on almost all sites of historic importance along the Oregon Trail, from Independence to Oregon City. Three hundred ninety four sites are located and the distance from Independence is given.

453 pages, 104 photos, 24 maps, bibliography, index.

paperback	\$16.95
P&H	3.00

Trailing the Pioneers, a new book sponsored by the OCTA Crossroads Chapter and published with the Utah State University Press, is a new guidebook to Utah's five emigrant trails: Spanish Trail, Bidwell-Bartleson Trail, Pioneer (Mormon-Donner) Trail, Hastings Cutoff, and Henley's Salt Lake Cutoff. Written by chapter members, it includes maps and is dedicated to Utah's early trails historians: Charles Kelly, J. Roderic Korn, David E. Miller and Dale L. Morgan.

paperback	\$9.95
P&H	3.00

The four-part video, *Story of the Oregon Trail*, includes commentaries by several OCTA historians. Boettcher/Trinklein, television producers of the video, have notified us that their video won a Telly award - the video equivalent of the Oscar or Emmy. Although there were 8,000 entrants in the Telly Awards competition, their video took top prize in the historical video competition. Other winners in the past have included National Geographic Society, Ford Motor Co., AT&T, and NASA. We congratulate OCTA's member, Mike Trinklein and his co-producer, Steve Boettcher.

The video is listed in the 1994 OCTA Catalog, page 12.

	\$49.95
P&H	5.00

The book, *Treasurers in the Trunk: Quilts of the Oregon Trail*, by Mary Bywater Cross, honors courageous pioneer women and their quilts. Beautifully illustrated with more than 100 color and 50 black and white photos, it recounts the stories of the women whose quilts are featured and their reasons for traveling west and the conditions they encountered.

paper back	\$19.95
P&H	3.00

Order from: OCTA, P.O. Box 1019, Independence, MO 64051-0519

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER

David Bigler

From our friend, Mike Duwe, Regional Long Distance Trails Coordinator, National Park Service, comes official confirmation that funding of \$27,970 has been approved for eight important OCTA projects under the NPS's Challenge Cost Share Program. This word follows an alert to affected chapters from Bill Watson some weeks ago that such action was expected.

Now approved is funding for these California Trail projects: Mapping Nevada Segment (\$700); Aerial Surveying (\$3,200); Mapping and Marking Alternates (\$3,000); Mapping Yreka Trail (\$1,800); and Donner Spring Project (\$5,000). Also approved are funds for the following Oregon Trail undertakings: Marking (\$11,750); Mapping/Inventory (\$1,320); and Emigrant Diaries (\$1,200).

While these projects have been approved, they are not yet ready to

go forward. Mike informs us that his Denver office and Washington are currently drafting a cooperative agreement between NPS and OCTA and working out the procedural details. We should know more about this by our Annual Board Meeting on August 9 at Salt Lake City. But we expect the agreement will allow ample time after that to get these jobs done.

When that time comes, I know that the responsible chapters will treat the expenditure and accounting of these public funds as a special trust and will carry out these projects in a manner that reflects credit on our association.

On another front, I'd like to stress to all members the importance of casting your ballot in our current election for the Board of Directors. The nonprofit corporation laws of Colorado, under which OCTA is in-

corporated, require more than 50 percent of eligible members to cast their ballots in elections conducted by mail for directors.

This means your ballot is important, not just to elect new Board members, but also to make the election itself valid.

If the reason you haven't voted yet is that you don't know the candidates well enough, read the biographical information you received with your ballot and make your best judgment from the information available. The truth is that every nominee on the ballot would make an outstanding Board member so you can't go too wrong.

The deadline — July 18 — is upon us. So mark your ballot and get it in the mail before midnight this date. We'll report the results at our annual convention in August.

See you then — at the Crossroads of the West — Salt Lake City.

REVENUE ENHANCEMENT PLAN (REP) UPDATE II

In the last issue of the NFP (April) I reported on the results of OCTA's First Annual fund raising drive. Since then we have received eleven new contributions. The results to date are as follows:

Endowment Fund	\$1870.00
Annual Fund	2950.00
Designated Funds:	
Preservation	465.00
Archaeology	162.50
Trail Marking, G & S	867.50
Trail Mapping	275.00
COED	200.00
Education	-0-
Special Publications	<u>6355.00</u>
Total Designated Funds	8325.00
As of May 29, 1994	<u>\$13,145.00</u>

We are very pleased with this response. Work on the Howell diary is progressing and this should be a banner year for trail marking. Special thanks to the 155 members and Chapters that have contributed.

Jim Budde

1995 OCTA CONVENTION CALL FOR PAPERS

TRAVEL ON THE NEBRASKA TRAILS

Charles Martin, Program Chairman, has issued a call for papers for presentation before the 1995 convention which will convene on August 9-13 at the Midtown Holiday Inn in Grand Island, Nebraska. Merrill Mattes will give the keynote address. Next year's gathering will concentrate on travel on the Nebraska prairie along the Platte River valley and the contribution of the Mormon emigration to Nebraska trail history, as a follow-up to the Salt Lake City convention. The program committee prefers that papers be limited to subjects related to those two topics. Communications should be directed to:

**Charles Martin
202 So. 71 St. Suite E
Omaha, NE 68132**

PRESERVATION REPORTS

OCTA RECEIVES NATIONAL AWARD

At the California-Nevada-Hawaii Chapter's tenth anniversary dinner in San Jose, CA, OCTA was presented with the BLM's "Volunteers for the Public Lands" national award. This award is for "outstanding contributions to the management of natural resources of the Nation's Public Lands." It is the BLM's most prestigious award for private organizations.

The nomination for the award came from the Susanville, California District BLM Office, and it was presented to OCTA by Hugh Bunten, BLM Archaeologist. Hugh congratulated OCTA on its history of cooperation with the BLM and for its many contributions to the preservation of this nation's cultural resources.

Tom Hunt accepted the award on behalf of OCTA, and expressed OCTA's thanks to the BLM for their efforts to preserve and protect the overland emigrant trails heritage. He pointed out that this task cannot be achieved without the close cooperation of private organizations, such as OCTA, working with those government agen-

cies which have responsibility for the management of this nation's public lands.

This award is for every member of OCTA. It is recognition that we are getting the work of historic trails preservation done.

The award has been sent to national headquarters in Independence where it will be permanently displayed.

(Letter below accompanied award)

Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Hunt:

We are pleased to present to the Oregon-California Trails Association the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) "Volunteers for the Public Lands" national award for its outstanding contributions to the management of natural resources of the Nation's Public Lands.

This award acknowledges, with our great appreciation, your contributions to the BLM's Surprise Resource Area. Your association has been an important partner in the research and efforts to protect and preserve the last visible remnants of the Applegate Lassen Emigrant Trail in northwestern Nevada and northeastern California.

Your dedication to trail preservation resulted in special legislation recognizing the trail and its place in the history of the United States and California. They also have shared this knowledge with the public by placing trail markers and instilling an understanding of the need to protect this important piece of our past.

On behalf of all of us at the BLM, thank you for your association's volunteer service and for making a difference in advancing our mission to ensure that the Nation's Public Lands and their resources remain a treasured heritage for all of our citizens.

Sincerely
Jim Baca, Director

NATIONAL OVERLAND TRAILS MARKER SURVEY TO BEGIN

Tom Hunt, National Trails Preservation Officer, announces that OCTA is undertaking to survey all of the existing overland trails markers in a joint project with the National Park Service. This survey will be of all markers which bear a text whether national, state, local, public, or private in origin. It will include all of our own OCTA markers with texts. We need this information to determine what has been done in the way of trail marking and what yet remains to be done. There is no national survey at present. This project was initiated two years ago along the Oregon Trail. It is now being expanded to include all overland emigrant trails.

This survey will be undertaken as a chapter project, and it will be compiled on a state-by-state basis. The national office has sent materials to all

chapter presidents and trails preservation officers detailing what will be required in these surveys.

Basically, the survey includes a description of the location of the marker, a township reference, the full text of the marker, and the approximate location of the marker on a map. In addition, two slides must be taken of each marker—a slide showing the marker in its environment and a readable close-up of the text. Two sets of slides must be taken of each marker. One set of slides will go with the survey sheet into our OCTA files; the other will go to the NPS.

This is a wonderful opportunity for OCTA members to participate in a very necessary and meaningful project. It is something that can be done at your own pace while you are out following

the trails. It will require investigating in towns along the way to locate markers, and it will require filling in the survey sheets and photographing the markers. The project is to be completed by the end of 1994.

The Trailhead and Gateway Chapters (Missouri and Kansas) have already completed their surveys, and they have worked out the process. OCTA is very appreciative of this effort on their parts, and we want to recognize this contribution. This is volunteerism at its best, and OCTA depends on volunteerism to get its work done.

Anyone interested in participating in this project should contact their chapter president or trails preservation officer for details. If you don't live in a

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Which Century Is This, Anyway?

The day before three wagons of the Applegate Wagon Train passed through "the narrows" section of High Rock Canyon, in northwestern Nevada, a helicopter landed a high-ranking official of the BLM on a trip to familiarize her with the area. It wasn't quite the past meeting the present, but it gave Chuck Dodd a unique photo opportunity. The narrows is in the background of both pictures; the route through the High Rock Canyon is part of the Applegate-Lassen Trail.



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state with a chapter, this work is still open to you. You merely need to sign up and get instructions from the officials of the chapter which has jurisdiction over the section of trail you wish to survey. You must clear your participation through the chapter so that we don't end up with needless duplications. Assignment of the surveys will be on a first-come, first-serve basis. You must

be willing to follow the guidelines set down for the survey. The results must be uniform to avoid confusion.

It should be pointed out that these surveys could easily be done on the way to and from the Salt Lake City convention in August. It is an interesting project, and it gives the participant a chance to learn a great deal about the trail and the history of localities along the trails.

List of Preservation Officers:

California-Nevada, Tom Hunt
 Colorado, James Bowers
 Idaho-Montana, William Wilson
 Nebraska, Mr. Kim Naden
 Northwest, Roy Schapler;
 Southwest, Sheri Lee (President)
 Crossroads (Utah), Jeff Carlstrom
 Wyoming, Eugene Potter

Addresses may be obtained from the OCTA Membership Roster.

SALT LAKE CITY CONVENTION UPDATE



Five Utah Authors Present Overland Trail Book

In separate presentation ceremonies at the state capital, Thursday, June 2nd, Governor Michael Leavitt, and Lt. Governor Olene Walker, received copies of the just-released, *Trailing the Pioneers*. *Trailing the Pioneers*, was commissioned by the Utah Crossroads Chapter of the Oregon California Trails Association to commemorate the 1994 OCTA National Convention in Salt Lake City. Five Utah authors, all OCTA members, contributed individual sections dealing with one of the major emigrant trails in Utah. The work, conceived and edited by Peter H. DeLafosse, was written by: OCTA Director, Will Bagley, "Hensley's Salt Lake Cutoff"; Steven K. Madsen, "The Spanish Trail"; Rush Spedden, "The Hasting's Cutoff"; Roy Tea, "The Bidwell-Bartleson Trail"; and Jack Tykal, "The Pioneer Trail"; with an introduction by Peter H. DeLafosse, and a special bibliography by Harold Schindler.

The 128-page book with 17 maps and 9 photographs will be available at the convention or by order from the OCTA Bookstore, P.O. Box 1019, Independence, MO 64051-0519; \$9.95 ppr. The authors will be present for autographs at Author's Night, during the convention.



Left: Crossroads Chapter president, Al Mulder, left, presents Utah Governor Michael Leavitt his copy of Trailing the Pioneers, one of two special editions commissioned by the Crossroads Chapter in conjunction with the '94 National Convention. It is the combined work of five Utah authors.

Saturday Barbecue Is Most Popular Convention Event

Early registration indicates the Chuck Wagon Barbecue on Saturday, August, 13 at Pioneer State Park will be the most popular single event of the 1994 convention. An outstanding evening has been planned featuring an all-you-can-eat Dutch Oven Chicken and Ribs entre' with a host of other activities.

Guests arriving by shuttle bus will be transported from the parking lot to the Bowery by covered wagons. Covered Wagon Rides will continue through the evening bearing passengers to the This Is The Place Monument and Old Deseret Village. Scenic Pioneer Park is in a delightful setting at the eastern base of Emigration Canyon and marks the site where the view of Salt Lake Valley was first opened to Brigham Young and prompted the famous words, "This is The Place".

During dinner guests will be entertained by the old time fiddle music of the Cottonwood Gang playing foot stamping Trail and Blue Grass refrains. The Utah Division of the National Pony Express Association will demonstrate the horse changing maneuver which involves the famous pony express mount.

The evening will end with a raffle featuring a multitude of Trail related items.

Trial Runs To Iron-Out Tour Bugs

A series of trial runs have been scheduled to uncover any tour bugs. A great deal of attention is being given to assure smooth and enjoyable tours, the adequacy of rest stops, timing, refreshments, printed tour information, tour-guide orientation and more.

Convention news items provided by Jack Shapiro, Convention Publicity Chair; Will Bagley and Harold Schindler.

Lienhard's Great-Great-Granddaughter Will Attend Convention

On the afternoon of the 19th of August, 1846, Johann Heinrich Lienhard, a 24-year-old Swiss emigrant, who had taken the Hastings Cutoff across the brutal and scorching salt desert of Utah, reached the fresh water pool now known as Donner Spring on the eastern slope of Pilot Peak.

Through the efforts of the Utah Crossroads Chapter of the Oregon-California Trails Association, a three-rail cedar fence has been constructed around Donner Spring along with an information kiosk detailing its history.

On the afternoon of Sunday, the 14th of August, 1994, nearly 148 years to the day of the Lienhard party's successful crossing, the Donner Spring monument will be dedicated to the memory of all the intrepid emigrant companies who conquered the salt desert portion of Hastings Cutoff and found relief at that small oasis.

Adding an emotional and dramatic impact to the ceremonies conducted by Utah Crossroads Chapter, will be the presence of Marta Lienhard Vincent, great-great-granddaughter of that '46 pioneer.

Mrs. Vincent, who makes her home in New Orleans, La., is a member of OCTA and the Utah Crossroads Chapter. She also is pipe major for the Pipes and Drums of New Orleans, and as an accomplished bagpiper has offered to

play "Amazing Grace" at the dedicatory ceremonies.

That haunting melody echoing on the periphery of the desert that challenged so many lives, creates a breathtaking mental picture that every OCTA member attending the national convention will want to experience.

Marta and her husband, Jim Vincent, are parents of two boys, John, 9, and Jacob, 7. A native of California, she learned of her great-great-grandfather (who preferred being called by his middle name, "Heinrich"), from her own father and grandfather. As a sixth-grader she was assigned to write about a famous Californian, and she chose, naturally, Heinrich Lienhard.

She visited Sutter's Fort where Heinrich had been employed, and in the 1960s bought a copy of *From St. Louis to Sutter's Fort, 1846*, edited by Erwin G. and Elisabeth K. Gudde, the English version of a portion of Heinrich Lienhard's diary. And from this book she learned of *West From Fort Bridger*, which J. Roderic Korn and Dale L. Morgan, wrote and edited in 1951.

To this day, she has not been able to obtain a copy of that trails classic. "There are few trail buffs in Louisiana," she said. "That's why I joined Utah Crossroads."

In correspondence with Al Mulder, chapter president, she mentioned the



Above: Utah Crossroads member, Marta Lienhard Vincent, great-great-granddaughter of emigrant Johann Heinrich Lienhard will play the pipes at opening and dedicatory ceremonies of the 12th Annual Convention.

Raffle To Feature Old Transcontinental Railroad Spikes

At the beginning of World War II, the U.S. Government began a massive effort to salvage and stockpile important strategic materials. High on the list was scrap iron and steel. The long abandoned 120 miles of transcontinental railway ranging from Promontory, Utah, with its tons of rusting rails did not long escape attention. Before the end of 1942 the last rail had been ripped from its ties and shipped to the salvage yards. The ghostly roadbed remained as the only monument to one of the epic efforts of the Western Expansion. But hidden in the dust and weeds were a few remaining pieces of history ... the spikes ... rusty twisted spikes that had escaped the salvagers.

In mid-1960, Nathan Gallenson a Salt Lake City businessman and his friend, the late Dr. Richard Kappsa, embarked on a spike hunt in anticipation of the 1975 Centennial of the driving of the Golden Spike. Two small buckets-full were found and now, nearly 30 years later, two dozen remain. Mounted on old, weathered wood plaques, with certificates of authenticity, these will be among the scores of items at the Saturday night raffle.

bagpipes and Mulder agreed the performance would be perfect for the occasion; and further, he asked if she would consider accompanying the Mormon Battalion color guard during opening ceremonies of the convention Wednesday morning Aug. 10 at the Salt Lake Hilton.

Mrs. Lienhard (Vincent) said she would be pleased to do so. The music? She suggested the first song Heinrich sang on arriving in California: it was "Hail, Columbia."

"Fortunately, it's possible to transpose it to the Highland Bagpipe, so I think it would be fitting for the occasion."

Record attendance expected, see next page.

Record '94 Convention Turnout Expected

Early sign-ups show as many as 700 to 800 OCTA members will pack up their wagons and head to Salt Lake City this summer for the 12th Annual Convention. Utah Crossroads Chapter will stage the event on August 9 - 14 at the Salt Lake Hilton.

Including daily registrations, the final number could easily surpass the record set last year when some 730 turned out for the Oregon convention at Baker City. The 1993 total was swollen by interest in last year's Oregon Trail Sesquicentennial.

Easily the most popular of convention events is the Pioneer State Park Dutch-oven dinner on Saturday, August 13, with the Tabernacle Choir Rehearsal and the Awards Dinner not far behind, early numbers show. The three events will attract from 60 to 90 percent of those who will attend.

Virtually booked up are four pre- and post-convention field trips, mainly by four-wheel-drive vehicles, on the Mormon, Hastings Cutoff and Pony Express Trails. Early registration also promises a big turnout at the Genealogical Workshop and the Donner Spring Monument Dedication.



*See you in
Salt Lake City
in August!!*

Letters

***Merrill Mattes thought the following might
be of interest to OCTA members.***

Merrill Mattes
Littleton, CO
April 14, 1994
Dear Sir:

I am quite confused by a statement in your article in the April, 1994, issue of *News from the Plains*. You state that an "Oregon Trail" out of Council Bluffs never existed as such. I realize that I probably don't understand the rationale behind assigning trail names. The Jacob Ebey family passed through Council Bluffs in 1854 on their way to Washington Territory, following the Oregon Trail to near Pendleton. At Council Bluffs, they met the "Vermillion" train of Judson and company, and joined with them near Fort Laramie. The Ebeys joined with Headly, Whitesell, and Burr near Gibbon, Nebraska, which would indicate that these people also came through Council Bluffs.

Inasmuch as these people (and probably many others) passed through Council Bluffs on their way to Oregon, I don't understand why this route cannot be considered as a variation of the Oregon Trail.

Yours truly,
Fred W. Dykes
Pocatello, ID

April 17, 1994
Dear Mr. Dykes:

This acknowledges your letter raising a legitimate question, to wit: Why can't we call the routes along the north side of the Platte "the Oregon Trail" since there is evidence that during the 50's and 60's some people bound for Oregon Territory jumped off at Council Bluffs (and later Omaha). Your question seems reasonable enough. Americans have "freedom of speech" and can call a given trail anything they want—and can even publish books on that basis without being jailed. However, the bottom line is that the U. S. Government itself has recognized the wisdom of designating certain major transcontinental historic routes as "National Historic Trails," based on the theory of overall preponderant use plus emphasis on a trail's earlier years. Also, the primary source of information about these trails is the testimony of overland emigrants themselves, as revealed in diaries, letters and in recollections.

National Historic Trails to date, west of the Mississippi River are, in order of designation: Lewis and Clark Trail, Mormon Pioneer Trail, Oregon Trail, Santa Fe Trail, and California Trail/Pony Express Trail. These officially designated routes are based on research and recommendation of recognized authorities. Determination of the geography of each trail is based on contemporary descriptions plus knowledge of evidence on the ground.

Now what about the Oregon-bound folks later who found it convenient to jump off at Council Bluffs or later Omaha? Ditto those bound for California? In my PRRNs I summarize the diaries of over 600 non-Mormons going west along the north side of the Platte, mainly to California. That reflects something like 150,000 or more heading for places other than Utah, and for that reason the newly recognized California NHT follows both sides of the Platte. Significantly, none of these non-Mormons called their trail "the Mormon Trail" despite Mormon historian claims to the contrary. They called it most often "the northern route" or "the Council Bluffs Road." Henceforward however, maps will show "Mormon

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Trail/California Trail" along the north side of the Platte, and "Oregon Trail/California Trail" along the south side.

Of the 150,000 non-Mormons along the north side of the Platte I would estimate 100,000 to California, the balance of 50,000 distributed among those going to Oregon, Idaho, Montana and Nevada. That's another reason why we can have a California Trail, but not an Oregon Trail, along both sides of the Platte.

No Oregonians of record ever called the north side the Oregon Trail.

Sincerely,

Merrill J. Mattes

OCTA

Independence, MO

March 26, 1994

A friend and I drove from Bozeman, MT to the Oregon Coast and stopped at a lot of the Oregon Trail sites and exhibitions [last year]. We were so very impressed with Flagstaff Hill area - and spent over 2 hours in the museum. However, since we are older and have knee problems, we were unable to take the trek down to the actual wagon ruts, which was a disappointment for us - I want to include some of those pictures in my album and mementos of our trip.

My big question to you is --- would anyone care to share a couple of their photographs of the wagon ruts etc. around the Baker City area, any place else they might have occurred (Idaho and Oregon) -- river crossings, Barlow Road etc.? I would certainly be willing to pay for the prints (regular size) and any postage.

Hope to be hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Janet S. Herwig

1412 S. Fifth Ave.

Bozeman, MT 59715-5522

Editor, NFP

April 12, 1994

Dear Rose Ann,

I am gathering information for a history of early livestock use in and around City of Rocks National Reserve for the National Park Service. I am trying to locate information on sheep and cattle drives to California that passed through, or near, the City of Rocks on the California Trail or Salt Lake Alternate.

With the discovery of gold in California, and the rapid influx of migrants, there was a sharp demand for beef. At first the need was met by driving herds from Sutter's Ranch and the Spanish ranches in southern California. However, by 1849, beef was so scarce that prices in Sacramento ranged from \$300 to \$500 per head. This triggered large trail drives from Mexico and Texas. In 1852, the Los Angeles Star reported 90,340 cattle had passed Ft. Kearney by July, headed for California. In 1854, the Star reported 60,000 cattle had been driven to the state from Mexico.

By 1852, the number of cattle in California was estimated at 104,000, increasing to 3,000,000 in 1860 and declining to 630,000 by 1870. The boom lasted only 7 years. By 1856, the market was glutted and prices fell to \$15 per head. Few cattle were trailed to California after 1856.

If any OCTA member has information on these early stock drives, please write me.

Sincerely,

Bill Little

3313 Oregon Trail Dr.

Kimberly, ID 83341

ALCOVE SPRING PRESERVED

Another part of the Oregon Trail has now been preserved. Alcove Spring has been purchased by the Alcove Spring Historical Trust. As you know, it is a site along the Big Blue River near Blue Rapids, Kansas. The Donner Reed Party left a lasting impression here when J.F. Reed carved his name on the rocks and Sarah Keyes died and was buried nearby.

It has been a working farm for many years with Stella Hammett being the last owner. Efforts have been made by many individuals and groups to preserve or obtain the site many times beginning in 1895. More recently, the Blue Rapids chamber of Commerce obtained a lease to five acres in March 1993. Mrs. Hammett passed away a month later. The organization has been successful in purchasing about 220 acres around the site. The spring and waterfall will be kept as it now appears, much as it was in the 1800s. The tract also contains a pasture that has a number of prominent wagon swales. The surrounding pasture land will be returned to the original prairie land as much as possible. We are currently working with the Kansas State Historical Society and Kansas State University as technical advisors.

We would like to welcome everyone to visit this piece of the past. If anyone has any information remotely related to Alcove Spring or people who have passed this way, we would be grateful if you would share it with us.

Duane A. Iles

P.O. Box 98

Blue Springs, KS 66411

Gateway Chapter of OCTA has scheduled a field trip to Alcove Spring for June 25th. A representative of the Alcove Spring Historic Trust will be their guide at the site and will update them on plans for the site.

Stephens-Townsend-Murphy Party of 1844

An Update of the Sesquicentennial Celebration

by
Jim Rose

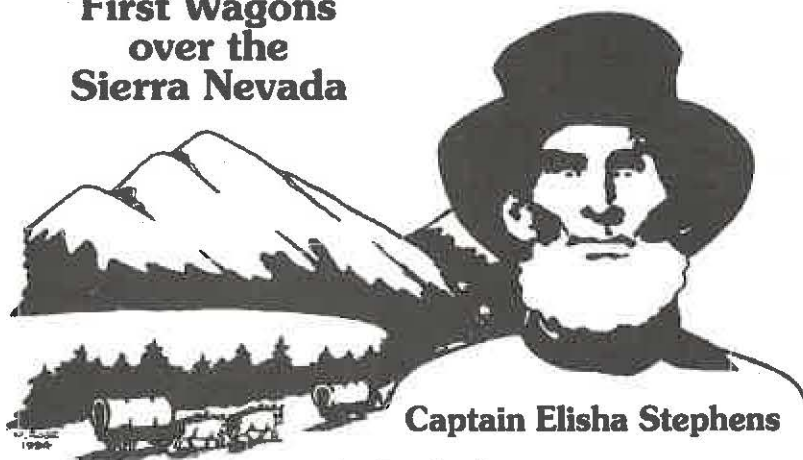
In the last issue of *News from the Plains*, I wrote a brief history of the Stephens-Townsend-Murphy party of 1844. I told of their adventurous journey west and of their opening of the Truckee Route of the California Trail. I tried to point out how very important it was to recognize this courageous group of pioneers in this the sesquicentennial year of their historic journey to California.

Well, fellow OCTA members, do I have news for you. First and foremost, our application to name a mountain peak in honor of Elisha Stephens at the Sierra Nevada pass he helped to open 150 years ago was officially approved by the USGS on May 10, 1994. At long last Elisha Stephens will get the just recognition that has eluded him for far too many years. This marks the first geographic feature along the entire portion of emigrant trail he helped to pioneer which will carry his name - Mount Stephens.

The other piece of good news is that our application for federal funding for a monument dedicated to the Stephens-Townsend-Murphy party has also been approved. The funding is currently going through the bureaucratic process, but we should have the necessary money to cast the plaque in the very near future. The construction of

STEPHENS - TOWNSEND - MURPHY

First Wagons over the Sierra Nevada



Marilyn Rose designed the above logo especially for the September 24 dedication of Mount Stephens.

the rock monument unfortunately will have to wait. A major construction project, which will make much needed repairs to the old arch bridge at Donner Summit is currently under way, and all traffic over the old pass road will be shut down for the next two years. But we can still have our dedication ceremony celebrating the sesquicentennial of the Stephens-Townsend-Murphy party and their historic achievements, and the naming of Mount Stephens as well. I am currently working on getting the needed money from the grant funds, to have the plaque cast as soon as possible, so as to have it on display for all to see at the dedication ceremony on Saturday, September 24, 1994, 1:00 to 3:00 PM.

The dedication location is the "China Wall" turnout, which is just below the Donner Lake Overlook at the pass. There will be the usual speeches and such, and I am trying to get a few local people who own covered wagons to bring their outfits to

add a little pioneer spirit to the festivities. Of course the main event of the day will be the sesquicentennial celebration of the opening of the Truckee Route of the California Trail by the Stephens-Townsend-Murphy party.

Because of the closure of the old pass road over Donner Summit, it is very important that anyone attending the ceremony please drive up from the Donner Park side of the pass, from Truckee. Also, please try to carpool up the hill to the ceremony site; the space where we will be holding the ceremony is very limited. If we all work together on this, I know it will be a moment to remember.

If you have any questions about anything to do with the dedication ceremony, please call me at (916) 265-3754 or Mary Mueller at (408) 268-7389. We will be more than happy to answer any questions you may have. I hope to see you at the summit on Saturday, September 24, 1994.

NEWS FROM THE PLAINS

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Rose Ann Tompkins, Editor

CHAPTER NEWS

GATEWAY

The Oregon-California Trail and the emigration of the mid-1800s was the topic of a graduate course for 20 teachers of the St. Joseph area. The St. Joseph Museum, Pony Express National Memorial and the Missouri State Teachers Association offered the class through Northwest Missouri State University. Marilyn Taylor and Jackie Lewin taught the class with special aid from Dr. Francis Peniston and Richard Nolf. All are chapter members..

Class sessions were held in the community room of the Pony Express National Memorial in mid-April. That date was chosen to coincide with the time of year that wagon trains departed from St. Joseph. Marilyn Taylor and Jackie Lewin gave an overview of the trail - why the route was chosen, history of early travelers, the purpose of the migration, who the emigrants were and what it was to travel the trail. Francis Peniston gave an in-depth look at illnesses along the trail. A later ses-

sion dealt with how the trail has been marked and commemorated—beginning with Ezra Meeker and the American Pioneer Trails Association and up to the Oregon-California Trails Association. National Historic Trails were also discussed and the addition of the California and Pony Express Trails to that system.

The highlight of the class was a 12 hour bus trip along the St. Joe Road. The teachers crossed the Missouri River, climbed the bluffs and rode out into the Kansas prairie. The first pause was at Mosquito Creek which was also usually the first campsite for the emigrants. Next, the tour went on to the Wolf River crossing. At the Iowa-Sac and Fox Mission, the teachers stopped for a tour of the site. Other points of interest visited were Prairie Spring Campground, the Nemaha River crossing, Alcove Spring and the Big Blue Crossing, Hollenberg Station, the junction of the Independence Road and the

St. Joe Road and the historical marker at the Kansas and Nebraska border. The focus for emigrant quotes during the tour was the 1844 migration since this year marks the 150 anniversary of the first emigrants to jump-off from the St. Joseph area.

One of the goals of the class was that by acquainting the teachers with some of the really interesting details of the migration and its significance to St. Joseph they could see possibilities for passing the information on to their students. The nearness of the St. Joe Road and the sites are an area that Gateway members believe those teaching history of the area should be aware of.

During the last session, the teachers wrote a journal entry for their day on the trail and also worked in groups in making a mind map of the St. Joe Road.

The first time of offering the class was a successful one and there were requests to offer it again next spring.



Above: During their all day trip on the trail, teachers from the St. Joseph, Missouri, schools gather around the marker for the junction of the St. Joe Road and the Independence Road.

SOUTHWEST

Symposium Weekend a Winner

The chapter's Fourth Sometimes Annual Trails Symposium was held March 19 in Las Cruces, NM. Forty-plus attendees from at least four states and Canada, heard a good mixture of presentations.

Local arrangements chairman, Jim Carter, worked with the Dona Ana County Historical Society to find the well appointed auditorium. Program Chairman, Harland Tompkins, put together nine speakers for the event, seven of the them being chapter members.

Presentations were:

Don Couchman, Las Cruces, - "A Road of Many Names: Development of the Southern Emigrant Route." He has done extensive research on the trails history of southeastern New Mexico, especially the Cooke's Spring area.

Lynda Hatch, Flagstaff, AZ - "Shar- ing the Love of Trails with Children." As an educator, she was able to give us ideas about how to interest children in the trails.

Charles Townley, Las Cruces, - "Records of the Archdioceses of Durango, Mexico from 1612 through the 1860s." He told of a recent project to microfilm the Spanish records of a time period that often includes items impacting U.S. history.

Gordon Owen, Las Cruces, - "The Meaning of the New Mexico Mystery Stone." This large, inscribed stone has been researched and interpreted, and he

gave us the theory of it being one evidence of early visitors to the Americas.

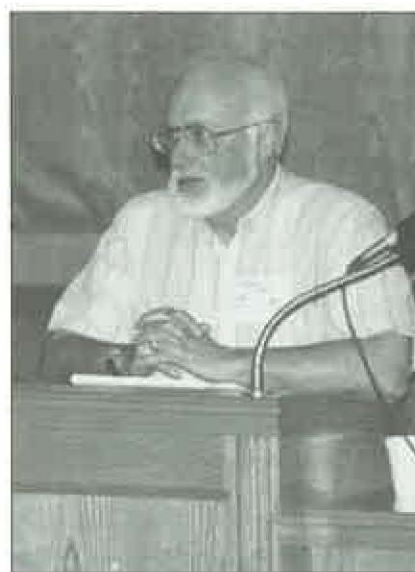
Harland Tompkins, Chandler, AZ, - "A Little Road of our Own" the result of continuing personal research. This original wagon road, used in and out of Strawberry, AZ, has been traced using oral tradition, early maps, a GPS (Global Positioning System,) and ground and air search to pinpoint its location.

Jack Root, Tucson, AZ, - "Search for Tres Alamos" related results of his original research. An area on the San Pedro River north of Benson, AZ was the location of a burial that a present day relative was trying to find. Again through various types of sleuthing, Jack thinks he has found the burial site.

Susan Badger Doyle, Albuquerque, NM - "Emigrants and Soldiers on the Northern Plains, 1860s." The interaction of the emigrants and soldiers on the Bozeman Trail and that impact on the native population is of continuing interest to Susan.

Sheri Lee, Tucson, - "Tales of a Frontier Town: Las Vegas, NM." This book, a collection of writings, will keep anyone interested in this western town on the Santa Fe Trail.

Jim Byrkit, Flagstaff, - "The Trav- els of Pauline Weaver in the American Southwest." Weaver spent many years in the southwest as it was gradually settled by anglos. Jim gave us results



Above: Charles Townley of Las Cruces, NM was one of the speakers at the chapter symposium.

of his research on this man, disproving many earlier stories about Weaver. Following his talk, he offered for sale his recent booklet about his research and donated the days' proceeds to the chap- ter.

There are plans to publish a pro- ceedings to include many of these pre- sentations.

On Sunday morning, a bonus of the weekend was a morning spent in a car caravan led by Don Couchman. We visited various historical Rio Grande River crossings used in the 1800s, trav- eling from a location south of Las Cruces north as far as Hatch before heading for home. This viewing of crossing locations helped put a variety of readings into perspective.

Rose Ann Tompkins



Left: General Stephen Watts Kearny's Army of the West camped at this Gila River location on October 26 & 27, 1846. In the foreground, Deadman's Wash leads to the river, while across the river the actual camping area at the mouth of Bonita Creek (called the San Carlos on Emory's map) is visible. It is felt by researchers that the trail led out of the so-called "Devil's Turnpike", down Deadman's Wash and to easier travel. The Southwest Chapter visited this area during an April outing.

CALIFORNIA-NEVADA-HAWAII TENTH ANNIVERSARY

THE FOUNDING OF THE CHAPTER by Mary Mueller

As we celebrated the Tenth anniversary of the Chapter, we honored the founders of our prestigious chapter.

On April 14, 1984, Thomas H. (Himself) Hunt called together members of OCTA in Palo Alto to form a Chapter. The program which followed included a display of artifacts, and slide presentations on the Carson Trail, Truckee Emigrant Trail and the California Trail from Independence Rock to Central Nevada.

In the business portion of the meeting, the members voted on seven goals for chapter achievement, including the first tour of the Black Rock Desert and the proposal to host a convention in 1986. Ten years later, two National Conventions have been hosted successfully to accolades: Carson City in 1986 and Sacramento in 1991, with plans for Elko in 1996 gaining momentum. The frequent outings have become highly effective tools for education, trail mapping, marking, maintenance and fellowship for participants. We have become the largest chapter and perhaps the busiest.

CELEBRATION AND CONFERENCE

by Mary Lou Lyon

On April 16 & 17, the chapter met in San Jose for a delightful two day conference. The day began with brunch, followed by three speakers.

Jack Douglas, the first speaker, appeared in full dress Civil War Uniform complete with sword and gun. Assuming the role of General Henry M. Naglee, he regaled the audience with comments on many of the "Overlanders" who came to the area in the 1840s. The General had come to California on the Susan Drew in 1847 with a troop of "randy soldiers." He could describe those who were present when he arrived as well as later arrivals in the time period up to the Civil War.

The second speaker was Jim Rose from Nevada City. He gave a very carefully researched narrative with slides to illustrate the trek west and the fearful ascent of the impassable summit by the Stephens-Murphy-Townsend Party. (See the April 1994, *News From The Plains*). He has led the Nevada County and OCTA sponsored quest to name a peak after Elisha Stephens. (See page 13 for more on the dedication of Mt. Stephens.)

Tours after a wonderful luncheon spread were divided into two groups, so as not to overwhelm the Fallon House and the Peralta Adobe with all 136 participants.

The Peralta Adobe dates back to the 1790s and is the oldest building in San Jose. It was built by Manuel Gonzalez, an Apache Indian and one of San Jose's Founding Fathers. Luis Maria Peralta was, at 18, also one of San Jose's pioneering settlers. He and his family also lived in this two room house, where he died in 1851.

Across the street is the mid 1850s house built by San Jose's seventh mayor, (American Period), Thomas Fallon and his wife, Carmel, a native of Mexico and the brains of the family. He and his family lived there from 1858 to 1878. Captain Fallon raised the first American flag in San Jose in front of the juzgado, (jail) during the Mexican War in 1846.

The other half of the Conference members went to the Oak Hill Cemetery first, using a well researched and illustrated guide prepared by Patricia Loomis with the aid of Clyde Arbuckle, city historian and John Milne, Family Sevice Director of the Cemetery. Other Argonauts who were in Clyde's class for many years were also involved, especially Barbara Dorr, Bonny Chohrach, and Virginia Hamneress.

The first burials by the Pueblo of San Jose were there in 1839. Many of the very early graves had wooden markers which have succumbed to the weather, earthquakes and grass fires. Many "Overlanders" found San Jose as The End of Their Trail.

A dedication of a new tombstone, given by the Memorial Park and placed by the delegation of OCTA members was the first order of the day. Appropriately, the speaker was 92-year-old Clyde Arbuckle who had remembered exactly where it should be.

A map keyed to the thumbnail sketches of 25 selected pioneers coincided with red markers placed by the Oak Hill Memorial Park for us. Many are of people whose diaries and trails we have followed.

Plans by the committee of Argonauts are to double the size of the booklet at a later date as they have time. There are many more early pioneers who deserve to be recognized. The Oak Hill Memorial Park people were so excited by the book that they purchased 100 copies and ordered more. If you have an interest, copies can be ordered through Beverly Hesse.

We returned to the Italian Gardens for a fine dinner and a speech by "Himself" who had organized the first and largest Chapter of the Oregon-California Trail Association ten years ago. Chuck Dodd introduced the guests and spoke about Tom Hunt's accomplishments. Hugh Bunton, the Archeologist for the Cedarville Susanville BLM gave an award of recognition to Thomas H. Hunt for all of the work he and others from OCTA have done in preserving and mapping the trail through the Black Rock Desert and High Rock Canyon Area. Tom said that the award would be placed in Independence at headquarters. He then followed with some awards of his own and a short talk.

The Third Speaker on Saturday morning was Kitty Monahan, who spoke on the New Almaden Quicksilver Mines. Her instructive talk outlined the history of the mercury mining first by the Indians for the red cinnabar ore they used and traded for body paint to the first Spaniard, Andres Castillero who had called it the Santa Clara Mines. It became a very important part of the mining story in the Sierra and also in the Comstock Lode of Nevada since mercury was needed to extract the gold

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and silver from their native matrix. Without it, the history of the years of mining in the "Mother Lode" could not have been the same.

Her speech was preparation for the Sunday excursion at New Almaden. We started with brunch in the Hacienda village where early adobe miner's cottages are still occupied. A chapter meeting was led by President George Hesse in the village hall. At 11 a.m., we moved to the foot of the mountain now belonging to the New Almaden Quicksilver Park to board the beds of open trucks for a guided tour up and over the mountain. Kitty stopped the procession often to explain what it was we were seeing and what had gone on at that spot. The hills were a verdant green of native plants (especially the poison oak) with flowers sprinkled around. At vari-

ous points, we were encouraged to hike to see some of the ruins of the mine. The lunch stop was on a plateau with a beautiful vista and picnic tables. Another truck unloaded a feast for us to enjoy. After the barbecued chicken and homemade cookies, we listened to an interesting man, Freidolin Kessler who had been stationed there on the hill with the CCC as the resident artist during the Depression.

Five hours later, we returned to our starting point to visit the New Almaden Museum and to say our good byes. We parted, knowing much more about the early history of California, the importance of the San Jose Area which was the final destination for so many who made the ruts we usually follow— San Jose, The End of the Trail.

IDAHO

The chapter had a field trip May 7th to mark a grave at the Les Brodie Ranch. The present owner found out from the original owner that a nine-year-old emigrant girl had been bitten by a rattlesnake the day before arriving at the ranch area. The people in the wagon train asked if the girl could be buried in a ranch field. The emigrants buried the girl and piled rocks over it. Mr. Brodie had never disturbed the grave, and he wanted it marked to preserve the site.

The ranch is located by the Craters of the Moon National Monument, close to the Goodale Cutoff.

Janece Thornton

TRAILS HEAD

Saturday, May 14 was the date of our trek along the "California Trail" as the 1855 Kansas Survey called the Westport to Lawrence Road. This route stayed north of the more familiar Westport to Olathe to Gardner branch of the Santa Fe-Oregon-California trail system.

The trail was a connection link between the various Shawnee Indian Missions as early as the 1830s. It was used as an overland route in the 1840s and 1850s (including Fremont and Parkman). Finally it was extremely important in the 1850s and 1860s, during the Border War period.

Craig Crease was the wagonmaster for the group which filled a 20 passenger bus. Other arrangements were handled by John Leamon and Jim Budde.

Future events include a trek to Pottawatomie County, Kansas on the Oregon Trail in September and a symposium in October.

Ross Marshall

ALL 50 STATES NOW HAVE OCTA MEMBERS!

by Jackie Lewin, Membership Chair

Good news! OCTA now can claim memberships from all 50 states. Those of you who attended the general meeting at the Baker City convention may remember the membership committee appeal for help in gaining a member from West Virginia. As of February, that membership has been gained through the addition of Mr. & Mrs. Roy Pennington of Green Bank, West Virginia, to OCTA's ranks.

The Penningtons heard about OCTA through a mailing from headquarters to those on the University of Nebraska mailing list. A letter from Merrill Mattes was enclosed in the mailing. Mr. Pennington was on his third reading of *The Great Platte River Road*. Thank you, Merrill, for your part in encouraging the Penningtons' membership. Mr. Pennington would also like for someone to "do a book of the same caliber on the trail from Fort Laramie to Oregon City."

It is always interesting to learn something about OCTA members. Mr. Pennington is a semi-retired security

guard and his wife is a school teacher. He has one teenage daughter. He writes of his interest in history: "We are in our mid-fifties and like western history. I spent five years in the Air Force and was discharged in California. I went to Oregon to visit with my sister and went to work in a plywood mill. I stayed four years but never did take an interest in the Old West. That didn't happen until I returned home to West Virginia in 1964. Some locals were digging up Civil War relics with metal detectors, and I became interested in the Civil War and read all that I could find. That interest expanded to include the history of the Old West. My main interest is from Lewis and Clark's expedition through the emigrants' migration."

The Penningtons have visited several sites along the Oregon Trail and have "gotten special pleasure in walking in those very tracks." If you have a chance to meet the Penningtons out on the trail please give them a strong OCTA welcome.

Fischer's Series Leads to Trail Travel

by Bruce Johnson

During the day of cheap airfare, why would I risk the modern day peril of traveling the Oregon Trail in a minivan with two young children and an uninterested wife? As a fifth grade teacher, I've always taught my students about the Oregon Trail in a halfhearted manner. It was the trail people followed to Oregon, until last spring during the sesquicentennial of the Oregon Trail.

My journey on the Oregon Trail actually started when I began reading James Fischer's articles on the trail in the Kansas City Star and then would share them with my students. Soon, they began reading the articles and bringing them in to share. By the time the series had finished, some of us had fallen in love with the Oregon Trail. I wanted to see its ruts, feel its history and hear its passion. Most of my students' summer travel plans would not include the Oregon Trail; I would have to bring the trail to my students.

Just like the pioneers, fatigue was a problem for us, especially when you wake up at 4:00 AM to begin a 1300 mile trip. The problem is, fatigue is slightly more dangerous at 65 miles per hour. Plus the pioneers never had to deal with the hypnotic effect of listening to "Old McDonald's Farm" countless times.

It has been well-documented that the emigrants got lost on the trail, or took ill-advised short cuts. The times we were lost weren't life threatening, just inconvenient to a family of the 90's that likes to see everything as quickly as possible.

I imagine the pioneers miscalculated the distance between campsites. Possibly, they spent too much time at Independence Rock or Register Cliff carving their names in the rocks. Maybe as a result they might have spent a night at some ungodly campsite. This happened to us on the second day. We left the hotel at 8 AM to see Scotts Bluff National Monument. After being captivated for two hours by the creviced beauty of this weathered landmark and the surrounding majestic vistas, we went to Ft. Laramie, where we walked its spacious grounds, shot a pretend can-

non, and talked to people dressed in period costumes for another two hours. After lunch it was a short jaunt to Guernsey. We thoroughly enjoyed getting lost in the wagon ruts. Just as fascinating were the countless signatures carved by emigrants at Register Cliff. When we reached Casper at 3 PM we made a horrible realization, we were having too much fun. Unfortunately, we had only traveled 175 miles and we had almost 300 miles to our planned stop.

It would be a long afternoon with two cranky children and a dismayed wife. The rest of the day would be stop, focus and shoot. Rather than enjoying Independence Rock and Split Rock as the pioneers did, we rushed them 90's style. When we finally reached Little America we were greeted by what looked like the World's Largest Truck Stop. By now we were so tired we would have slept in a covered wagon.

I guess bringing our children on the trip made the experience complete. They adjusted to the rigors of the modern day trail-probably better than we did. They walked, sometimes ran the Oregon Trail. Windlass Hill was the only exception. Nettie and I got double our exercise when we carried the boys up most of the hill.

There was never a dull moment on the trail with my four year old son Ryan. His constant chatter and questions kept us amused and awake. He wanted to know how we knew all this stuff. It is amazing how gullible a four-year-old is. Ryan was also afraid of rattlesnakes on the trail but he was ecstatic when he saw a live one on the road from the comfort of our van. He wanted to stop to see the next dead deer but fortunately we never saw another dead one.

Two-year-old son Alex had his moments also, but was content to ride in the van with his (din-din) blanket and pacifier. As long as he kept his pacifier and we provided the music and snacks he was happy.

My wife showed real growth during the trip. When we began our expedition, Nettie knew very little about the Oregon Trail. By the end of the trip she

became quite knowledgeable. She was impressed by the historic importance of the sites and the beautiful scenery. Nettie eventually gave up writing in my log and she put the kabosh on stopping at every historical marker during the stress of the second day. All in all she was a real trooper for putting up with my various stops and side trips.

Although the Oregon Trail offers some wonderful attractions its most redeeming feature is its people. It is ironic that people were the most important part of the trail 150 years ago, too. We enjoyed the people who made our trip on the trail more informative and enjoyable. Getting to know our fellow trailblazers was the most rewarding part of our trip. At stop after stop we kept seeing the same pioneers quenching their thirst for trail knowledge. Seeing persons you recognized from previous stops reaffirmed our mission and revitalized us.

If I would have known how much I was going to enjoy the trail's gentle meanderings, I would have gone all the way to Oregon. But this is the 90's and we have schedules to meet. Since we were going to Montana, I regretfully left my friend at Pocatello, Idaho. We had traveled nearly 1300 miles, eaten too many times at McDonalds and taken eight rolls of film. Now that winter slips into spring I am getting the itch to hitch up the van, listen to Ryan ask if we are there yet and capture some more trail memories. For now I'll carry the summer trail memories with me forever. They'll be as ingrained in my mind as the wagon ruts on the trail.

Future OCTA Conventions

1995

Grand Island, Nebraska

1996

Elko, Nevada

1997

Pocatello, Idaho

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first overland settlement in the Spanish province of New Mexico. A little later, in 1609-10, they founded its new capital, Santa Fe. Spain's first attempt to colonize Texas came in 1731 with the establishment of a civil settlement at the mission of San Antonio (which had been founded in 1718). In Arizona the Spanish colonial outposts of Tubac and Tucson date from 1752 and 1775.

With all of these beginning dates in mind, we could postulate an overland emigrant time frame from 1598 to 1912, over 300 years! Or we could keep our secular Anglo-American focus and narrow it down to 1841 to 1869. Take your pick. Depending on what time frame you select, you will run head on into my fourth fundamental question, *Where were the emigrant trails?*

In the widest application, emigrant trails cover the trans-Mississippi west but the conventional practice is to begin them at the jumping-off places along the Missouri River, between Independence and Council Bluffs. That accounts for the Oregon Trail, California Trail, and the Santa Fe Trail. When we turn to the Southern Route, the picture is not quite so tidy. American settlement of eastern and parts of southern Texas began much earlier than it had for Oregon or California. When Texas proclaimed its independence from Mexico in 1836, estimates have American settlers outnumbering the Mexican inhabitants by as much as ten to one. So if we assume eastern and southern Texas is analogous to Missouri, in the sense that by the 1840s both had been settled by Euro-Americans, then the jumping-off places in the south for emigrant travel to California in the Gold Rush would be Fredericksburg (settled by immigrant families from Germany in 1846), San Antonio, and gulf ports like Corpus Christi and Brazos Santiago (at the mouth of the Rio Grande). A glance at the *Western Emigrant Trails* map will show a web of roads leading out of the gulf ports in southern Texas either to San Antonio, Austin, and Fredericksburg or to Mexico. (To simplify the southern area, the map does not display all of the main roads in this

region of Texas.) Thus, trying to disentangle roads used by gold rush emigrants from roads used locally by Texans becomes nearly impossible.

The Texas frontier, however, was only one southern jumping-off region for overland bound emigrants during the Gold Rush. For the first time, the Santa Fe Trail out of Independence changed from essentially a commercial/trading trail to one used also by emigrants bound for California. In addition, a good number of emigrants took the Fort Smith to Santa Fe Trail, running along the Canadian River, and even the lesser known Fort Smith to El Paso Trail, traversing northern Texas. In the southwest, most of the 49er traffic eventually funneled to the Gila River and the Yuma Crossing of the Colorado River and then across the desert to Warner's Ranch, the first settlement reached in southern California. Estimates vary, but anywhere from 12,000 to the recent estimate by Patricia Etter of over 20,000 gold rushers, including Mexican miners from Sonora, made it to California by way of the Southern Route in 1849. Those figures mean that a fourth or even a third of the total migration to California in 1849 came by way of the various southern trails. And this does not factor in the numbers who traveled on the Old Spanish Trail and Mormon Trail to Southern California. The magnitude of the gold rush traffic on the Southern Route should compel OCTA to broaden its view on what forms main corridors of emigrant travel.

After 1849, emigrant trails proliferated as quickly as new gold fields were discovered up and down northern California. To name a few: the Nevada City Road of 1850, the Beckwourth Trail of 1851, Johnson's Cutoff of 1851-52, Nobles Trail of 1852, Henness Pass Road of 1852, Walker River-Sonora Trail of 1852, and Yreka Trail of 1852. With gold discoveries following in Nevada, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, and Arizona, during the late 1850s and early 1860s, emigrant-mining-stage-freighting roads popped up everywhere. By this time the U.S. Government got into western road building, first with surveys, followed by construction of new

wagon roads. Examples are the Lander Road of 1858, the Beale-Mojave Roads of 1858-59, and the Central Overland Road of 1859 stretching across central Utah and Nevada. This latter road, surveyed and improved by Capt. Simpson of the U. S. Topographical Engineers, served in quick succession not only emigrants but the Pony Express, mail and stage lines, and the first intercontinental telegraph line. Then in 1862 a major silver strike at what quickly became Austin, in central Nevada, turned the Central Overland Trail into a mining-freight road.

Prior to the Civil War, stagecoach lines made their appearance on the western landscape linking up major cities, like Salt Lake City and San Francisco. Such luminaries as Mark Twain, Horace Greely, and Sir Richard Burton used and wrote about the Salt Lake to San Francisco state line. With stagecoaches carrying more affluent emigrants as passengers, should we call stage routes, "emigrant trails"? A case in point is the famous Butterfield Overland Mail stage line that linked Saint Louis with San Francisco via a southern route from 1858 to 1861, when the Confederate army seized the southern trails and forced the Butterfield enterprise to re-route their stage line to northern trails.

The bewildering picture that emerges almost defies description. By the late 1850s and early 1860s, western trails and roads had become so diverse, overlapping, and interconnected that sorting out what is an emigrant trail from mining, freighting, mail, and stage roads in the west is packed with problems. The decades following the completion of the transcontinental railroad created even greater complexities for the emigrant trail historian, as my last two examples will demonstrate. The difficulty in determining what comprises an emigrant trail, or when they existed, or where they were comes from the recent and last volume in the *Covered Wagon Women* series. In his introduction to the last two diaries, Kenneth Holmes points out that the Springer family, on their way to eastern Oregon from Missouri with a wagon party in 1885, followed at various times the

continued on next page • • • • •

TRAIL BITS



➤ This February Photo by Joseph W. Fairfield shows the progress on construction of the Chimney Rock Visitors Center. The center, located just to the east of Chimney Rock (visible in background), should be open for summer visitors.

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➤ Stanley B. Kimball reports that he will conduct his 9th annual Great Western Trails Travel Study course from August 1 to 8 this summer. Students take this course for history credit from Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville.

This summer he will take his students from the Guernsey, WY area over the trail to Salt Lake City. Since he will be delivering a keynote address at the OCTA convention, he has scheduled this trip in order to conclude before the convention.

➤ OCTA member, Virginia Hamneress was recently featured in the *San Jose Mercury News* as part of Women's History Month. She is a member of the CA-NV-HI Chapter and editor of the chapter newsletter, *Trail Talk*.

Virginia is the granddaughter of A. P. Giannini, the San Jose-born founder of what is now the Bank of America. In the article she spoke of the childhood visits to Santa Clara Valley of California, and the beauty of the area at that time.

➤ Robby Gunstream will continue his walk on the trail begun from St. Joe in 1991 with Harlan Wadley and the infamous mule, Jackson. (See March, 1992 NFP for the tale of that walk.) This summer he will journey from Sweetwater Station, WY, to Wells, NV, via South Pass, Sublette's Cutoff, Bear River valley, Hudspeth's Cutoff and City of Rocks. He will be joined by six companions and a string of pack animals. They will leave Sweetwater Station on July 17 and hope to be in Wells toward the latter part of August.

Those that wish to correspond with the group are welcome to do so. All words of encouragement or otherwise will be gratefully received and cheerfully acknowledged. Write care of General Delivery, Montpelier, ID 83254 in time for delivery by July 30.

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➤ The Oregon Trail marker in Nampa, Idaho was recently rededicated. This DAR marker, originally placed in 1926, rededication was part of the Oregon Trail sesquicentennial celebration. At the ceremony, OCTA member and Regent of the EEDAHHOW Chapter of the DAR, Mildred Skinner, acted as MC, while OCTA board member Larry Jones was the speaker.

Next NFP deadline Sept. 1, 1994

NOTICE

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original Oregon Trail, an old overland stage road, railroad right-of-ways, and even boarded a train for part of their journey. In 1888 the Hampton family party from Kansas, wagon bound for Oregon, struggled along roads in Kansas to reach the old trail along the Platte River, then switching to the Overland Trail through southern Wyoming, and after 59 days, tiring of the hardships, abandoned the trail at Fossil, Wyoming (near the Utah border), and loaded their wagons and teams on a freight train.

The family then boarded a passenger train for Portland, arriving two days later! And so ended the overland emigrant wagon experience.

Well, I trust I've left you just as perplexed as I am about answers to these four fundamental questions on emigrants and emigrant trails. I promised there would be no answers. Hopefully, however, you will be more understanding and tolerant of us trail buffs who are trying to make intelligible an inherently unintelligible phenomenon called emigrant trails.

Next year, *News From the Plains* will start a new section by, for, and about our younger readers. We need your drawings and stories about the overland trails or your adventures on field trips or in libraries. Subjects can be based on facts or fancy, and we're interested in everything from poems to puzzles to pictures. Send me your submissions and suggestions on what to call this exciting new department.

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