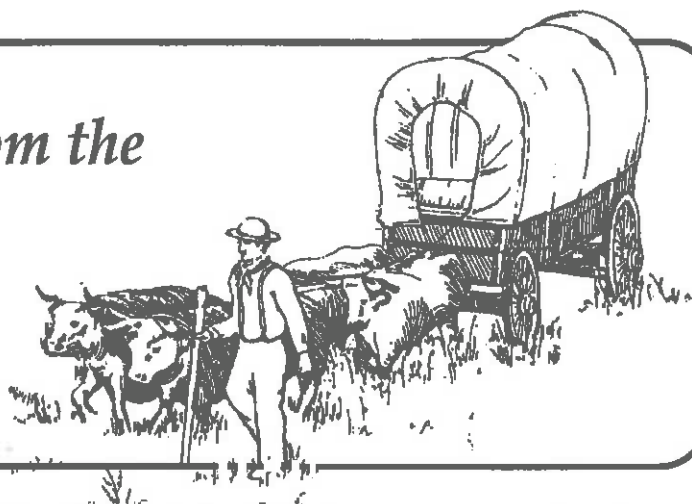


NEWS *from the* PLAINS



Volume X, No. 1

NEWSLETTER OF THE OREGON-CALIFORNIA TRAILS ASSOCIATION

January 1996

1996 OCTA CONVENTION SET FOR AUGUST 14-18 IN ELKO, NEVADA

Tours of the California Trail and the western section of the Hastings Cutoff through Ruby Valley and the canyon of the South Fork of the Humboldt River are among highlights planned for the OCTA convention, August 14-18 1996.

A never-before feature of the annual convention will be helicopter rides over Gravelly Ford on the Humboldt, according to co-convention chair Paul Sawyer.

Some unique features of the convention include a Basque barbecue, a program by famed cowboy poets and a visit to a nearby gold mine. OCTA computer experts will present the first workshop on Trails and the Internet.

A post-convention tour will travel the California Trail from Elko to Rye Patch and then over the Applegate Trail to Goose Lake. Chuck Dodd will lead this event. A two-day pre-convention 4-WD trip over the Hastings Cut-Off is in the works.

All of Elko is getting up for the convention and Paul and his co-chair, Bob Pearce, keep adding new bits and pieces to the convention agenda. They've even got county supervisors and Nevada State personnel to improve the main roads of the trail routes.

Papers will describe the legend of cattle king Dan Murphy, once owner of more than a million acres of range land; the Great Basin story; and the opening of the Hastings Cutoff that set the stage for the Donner-Reed disaster.

—Patricia Loomis



OCTA Events



OCTA members can look forward to an event-packed year in 1996.

- January 29 Gateway Chapter viewing of "Across the Plains: The Journey of a Palace Wagon Family," a play about the Donner-Reed party at the Coterie Theater, Kansas City, MO., 2:00 P.M.
- February 17 CA-NV Chapter Winter Symposium at the historic Sonora Opera Hall. Hear about the gold rush towns of Sonora and Columbia, local Indians and new material on the Sonora Route.
- March 23 OCTA mid-year Board Meeting at St. Joseph, MO.
- March 30 Trails West-OCTA banquet at Holiday Inn-Northeast, Sacramento, CA. For info, contact Mary Mueller after February 20.
- April 20 Jack Steed tour of Johnson's Ranch. For info, call 916-922-7038.
- Aug. 12-13 Pre-Convention tour of Hastings Cutoff, Elko, NV.
- Aug. 14-18 Annual National Convention, Elko, NV.

Robby & Brewster Ride Again—Sacramento or Bust!

THE EDITOR'S CORNER

I have a very simple way to manage the job of editing *News from the Plains*. When material comes in, I toss it in a drawer, and when the deadline for submissions rolls around, I open the drawer and look for the good stuff. Once again, I've been overwhelmed by good stuff—which I should have expected, since I had a bulging folder of good stuff left over from the last issue.

First, here's a good bonehead story. I wrapped up the convention issue in September, updated the journal I'm editing with trail notes from my Nebraska trip and sent the Wyoming sections to Randy Brown for fixing—which he did very well. What I had forgotten was that Randy, along with map-maestro Bob Berry, won OCTA's Meritorious Achievement Award this year, and the convention issue contained not a word about it. This issue tries to make amends.

While you might expect the winter issue of *News from the Plains* to be a sleeper, this may be the best issue I've edited. First, we welcome back Robby Gunstream and the long-suffering Brewster for the first leg of their journey from City of Rocks to Sacramento. Keith and Jo Arnold join with Richard Silva to describe their investigation of the Yreka Trail into California. Levida Hileman provides us with a wonderful account of her adventures volunteering at Independence Rock. Just in time for Black History Month in February, Andy Hammond delivered an 1853 letter by the great mountaineer James Beckwourth. And we have a bumper crop of our usual features, including a list of contributors to OCTA's Fund Raising Drive and a great Buffalo Chips department contributed by Lyndia Carter and teacher Jane Whiteley. This issue is simply jam-packed with good stuff—so much so that I've had to omit or delay publishing some very worthy submissions.

I hope our many contributors can overlook any possible omissions. As usual, I've been too busy. On 5 December, I sent a review manuscript of *The Pioneer Camp of the Saints: The Mormon Trail Journals of Thomas Bullock* to Arthur H. Clark—and if all goes well, we should publish (at long last) the official journal of the 1847 Mormon Pioneer Company in time for the sesquicentennial of the Mormon Trail. The next day, my brother Pat brought by the final proofs of *This is the Place: A Crossroads of Utah's Past*, a children's book we assembled to celebrate the 1996 Utah Statehood Centennial. On December 11 I flew to Sacramento to spend the rest of the week in the California State Library researching other projects—and once I put the NFP to bed, I need to make one more crossing of *Salt Desert Trails* before I finally clear my editorial calendar for 1995.

Am I bragging or complaining? You decide. I have, however, been forced to lay off NFP's secretary (actually, that's really me in another hat), so there will probably be some delay in returning disks and sending off editorial acknowledgments and correspondence. But I have figured out how to better manage this job—I'm going to put incoming stuff in envelopes labeled Chapter Reports, Good Stuff and Not a Chance for promotional junk...

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

You can greatly increase chances of publication (and reduce the chance that the editor will alter your meaning) by sending material on computer disk in either Macintosh or DOS format. Please save the files in a couple of formats, preferably Microsoft Word, WordPerfect 5.x, ASCII text or RTF formats (**I can't read WP 6.0 files or the more esoteric word processors.**) Enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope to have material returned and a postcard for notification of publication decisions.

CALIFORNIA TRAIL DAYS TO FOLLOW ELKO CONVENTION

The Donner Memorial State Park and the Sierra State Parks Foundation will sponsor California Trail Days at the Donner Memorial State Park and at the Peppermill Hotel in Reno, Nevada. The sesquicentennial of the Donner party will be the focus of the event, with a symposium scheduled for August 18 and a hiking tour led by Donner expert Don Higgins on August 19.

For information about the event, contact Frankye Craig at 916-544-3053.

NEWS FROM THE PLAINS

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OCTA Headquarters has a new, full-time
FAX number: 816-836-0989.

Next Deadline for *News from the Plains* is March 1, 1996

NEWS FROM HEADQUARTERS

By Jeanne Miller

OCTA has installed a direct line for our FAX. Instead of using our telephone number, please use our new separate FAX number: 816-836-0989. (We are already getting faxes from Germany, England, Italy and Alaska.)

The headquarters office has a third part-time employee, Ardis Everett. She began work at OCTA in April 1995 after 20 years as a paralegal in the Independence and Kansas City area. She and her husband, Jim, have two daughters; one in Chicago where she is a diagnostic radiologist with the University of Chicago and the other finishing her MBA in Tulsa, OK.

Ardis and family moved to the midwest after 15 years abroad in Norway, Sweden and the Netherlands. She tells us that she is enjoying OCTA and is reading (and purchasing) her way through our library.

By now you should have received the 1996 Roster and our new catalog. Please let me know if somehow yours has not arrived, and we'll send another along.

Price Reduction: The Boettcher-Trinklein 4-tape video set, "The Oregon Trail," which features many OCTA trail authorities has been priced at \$49.95. We were notified that the selling price is now reduced to \$39.95, plus P&H (\$3.00 for the first item, \$1.00 for each additional item).

December 1 has come and gone. The current price for *The 1849 California Diaries of Elija Preston Howell* is \$14.95 for paper and \$24.95 for cloth, less 10% for OCTA members, plus P&H.

We look forward to seeing those of you who will be coming to the midyear board meeting in St. Joseph on March 23.

Happy New Year to all from the Headquarters staff!

THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

As I write, we are entering the holiday season. By the time you read this, the holidays should be behind us. I hope you all have had a meaningful holiday full of many blessings. Along the trails which follow the central corridor to Oregon and California the weather has turned to winter, and OCTA members in that area are probably inside reading diaries and journals and dreaming of next summer's trail activities. On the other hand, the trails which follow the southern route are alive with OCTA activities.

Elsewhere in *News from the Plains* is the announcement of the mid-year board of directors' meeting to be held in St. Joseph on Saturday, March 23. Several committee chairs have contacted me with items they would like to have the directors seriously consider. I have asked that the directors study carefully all committee reports which they will receive prior to the meeting. OCTA board of directors' meetings are open, and members are invited to attend.

Also, please note the request from the Awards Committee for nominees and the request from the Nominating Committee for nominees for the board of directors. These two committees cannot function successfully without your help. You know your local members and those who support the preservation of the trail in your area. The committees need your input.

Paul Sawyer, Bob Pierce and the committee for the Elko Convention for next August continue to move forward with their planning. They are doing their best to have a first-rate convention and will take attendees to visit areas which many of us would be unable to reach on our own. You will be receiving more information about the convention soon. If you have never attended an OCTA convention before,

please come to Elko next August. I am sure you will be hooked on the fun you will have and the education you will receive by joining with other OCTA members for a few days.

—Jackie Lewin

The exact location of the Sarepta Gore Fly is unknown, but the original headstone that marked her grave has been placed in the so-called Plum Creek Massacre Cemetery. Russ Czaplewski located descendants of Sarepta Fly who provided the family history related in the new OCTA marker text. This marker was placed in time for the 1995 Grand Island convention.

See Related Story, page 11.



SAREPTA GORE FLY



The exact location of the Sarepta Fly grave is unknown. The headstone marking her grave was discovered early this century by children playing in a field on the old Dilworth Ranch, not far from this location. It had been covered by prairie grasses and was found half-buried in an animal burrow.

Sarepta Gore, the daughter of James Gore of Andrew County, Missouri, was born January 8, 1841. In 1857 she married William Fly, a twenty-seven-year-old native of Howard County, Missouri. Fly went to the California gold mines in 1852 and remained there for five years. Sarepta and William were married upon his return to Missouri. The Flys soon took up farming in Kansas, but after three years there they joined the Colorado gold rush and crossed the Plains to a Rocky Mountain mining town.

In 1885 the Fly family decided to return to Missouri. By this time William and Sarepta were the parents of three children: Carey B., born December 14, 1858; John Davis, born October 12, 1860; and James M., born April 21, 1863. When the family reached the Plum Creek area, Sarepta died. According to family tradition, her death was sudden and unexpected, and the exact cause is unknown. The date, as revealed on the gravestone, was June 16, 1865. A local legend says that William returned years later with the headstone to mark his wife's grave, carrying it in a wheelbarrow from Kearney, but like other similar wheelbarrow stories, this one is probably pure myth.

William Fly settled in Montana, where he again took up mining and later ranching. He remarried in 1872 and became a prominent citizen of the Bozeman area, where he died in December 1887.

The Sarepta Fly headstone was moved to this location in 1930 in preparation for the dedication of the Plum Creek Massacre marker and cemetery. The only actual burial within this cemetery plot, however, is that of a small, unidentified child whose remains were discovered on a farm near Loomis, Nebraska. The reinterment took place in 1983.

Research for this sign by the Dawson County Historical Society

Signing and Funding by

OREGON-CALIFORNIA TRAILS ASSOCIATION



1995

This is part of your American heritage. Honor it, protect it, preserve it for your children.



"THE LONESOME ROUT"

by Keith and Jo Arnold. Edited By Richard Silva.

August 4, 1855—Yreka is our place we intend to stop at: no person can tell how far it is from here; it would give us grate satisfaction to meete some person that could tell us about the distance and the road; we are often put to grate inconvenience for want of directions; have to travel no person is with us since we left Humbolt that ever traveled this rout.

"August 9, 1855—...our journey was longer that we expected; in fact this rout must be 70 or 100 miles farther than the usuly traveled; this rout is called Lonesome rout." James Bardin (He arrived in Yreka on August 11, 1855.)

Following the discovery of gold at Coloma in 1848, miners followed the gold trail northward to Yreka where gold was discovered in March 1851. Thousands of men hurried to the area from Oregon and California. Emigrants from the States, seeking a more direct route to these new gold fields along the Klamath, Shasta and Scott rivers, traveled a new trail, the Yreka Trail, opened in 1852.

This new route to Yreka followed the existing California Trail to its junction with the Applegate-Lassen Trail in Nevada. From there it followed the Applegate Trail to the Lower Klamath Lake where it turned south to enter Butte Valley. It then traveled west to Butte Creek, south on Butte Creek to Orr Lake. From there it went west and around the north side of Grass Lake, then around the south side of Sheep Rock and finally northwest, through Shasta Valley to Yreka, 73 miles in all.

Few history books mention this trail and little research been done on it. When Tom Hunt, OCTA Trail Preservation Officer, asked for volunteers to map this trail, we agreed to do it, not knowing what we were getting into. How do you go about finding and mapping an almost unknown trail? Where do you start? Who do you contact? Where do you find material that relates to an unknown trail? All these questions we asked ourselves as we began the task.

In this part of California, many residents are descendants of early settlers, so we were able to gather knowledge that has been passed down from generation to generation. Norman Fiock, whose great grandfather was in one of the first wagon trains to travel over the Yreka Trail, showed us part of the trail and steered us to Richard Silva, a local hunter and photographer who was very knowledgeable about Siskiyou County. Without Richard and his local contacts, the mapping of the Yreka Trail would have been impossible.

One of the first things we did was to contact the COED program and supply them with the prominent location names along the trail. COED responded with a list of diaries that mentioned our key locations and also assisted us in locating some of the diaries. Kathy Roubal

and Shann Rupp were especially helpful. We purchased *Platte River Road Narratives* by Merrill Mattes as a resource tool for other diaries, and have located six that were written on the Yreka Trail. Richard Mills and Dale Wilson, OCTA members, are locating other bits of information for us as they visit libraries and museums.

Richard Silva, through Bill Besoain of the Siskiyou County Surveyor's Department, obtained aerial photographs, taken in 1944, 1955 and 1971, of the route of the trail. These photographs clearly showed portions of old wagon roads. Much of the area of the original trail is still very much in the same condition that it was back in 1852.

We also were furnished 1854 GLO maps from Tom Hunt and Bill Besoain that showed portions of the emigrant road to Yreka as it existed in 1856. The early records of the county include "Road Viewer's Reports." These reports were helpful in locating the early roads which were, in many cases, the route of the original trail.

Ranchers, who live on the family ranches inherited from their parents, were able to show us portions of the trail that their fathers had shown them. In most cases their information was substantiated by the aerial photographs.

All the time we were researching diaries and interviewing ranchers, Richard was walking and mapping the trail. Probably the most helpful item that Richard purchased was a Global Positioning System unit. This enabled him to locate points along the trail accurately, and when used in conjunction with the 1856 GLO maps, he was able to transfer the trail onto modern 7.5-inch topo maps.

We have been allocated grant money from the National Park Service for the research and mapping of the Yreka Trail, since it is part of the California Trails system. We have not asked for any reimbursement from the Park Service due to the possibility of the loss of private property rights of the land owners where the trail is located.

The Siskiyou County Historical Society has asked that we write a history of the trail for their 1997 *Siskiyou Pioneer* publication. We are doing our best to meet that deadline. There are still some unanswered questions we are researching. For example, in 1849 Lindsay Applegate brought six wagons from Oregon to the vicinity of Mt. Shasta. In 1850, Governor Joe Lane of Oregon, brought one wagon from Oregon to Mt. Shasta. We have not been able to determine what route they followed to bring those wagons into Siskiyou County. Gene Brantley is assisting us in that particular bit of research, but if anybody has a solution to our dilemma, we would certainly be glad to hear from you. ■

STRANGE VICISSITUDES OF FORTUNE

On to New Helvetia in the Summer of 1995

by Robby D. Gunstream

In every grade of life, from the monarch on his throne to the savage lord of the wilderness, man is the children of circumstances, and a creature subject to strange vicissitudes of fortune.

—John Banks, August 2, 1849

AT RAFT RIVER, NEAR THE

JUNCTION OF THE HUDSPETH CUTOFF

As reported in the July 1995 issue of *News from the Plains*, Harlan Wadley and I planned to travel the final seven hundred miles of the California Trail, leaving Malta, Idaho on August 27 and finishing the route at New Helvetia, more commonly known as Sutter's Fort, in early October. As readers of this department know, I traveled from the Missouri River to City of Rocks in 1991 and 1994. Having been my trail partner in 1991 but unable to join us last summer, Harlan caught up with me this spring: he set out in May on foot from Farson, Wyoming and walked to Malta, Idaho, covering much the same route I had travelled last summer; his solo effort through southwestern Wyoming, the Bear Valley and across the Hudspeeth Cutoff is surely the boldest, most remarkable achievement in United States trail travel this year. Capitalizing on his experience and enthusiasm, we gathered in Malta with Brewster, a pack mule whose mien betrayed his feeling that hauling 120 pounds of gear 700 miles across a landscape whose difficulties were legendary was a dubious prospect, indeed. The mule's obviously superior intelligence aside, the team looked forward to doing battle with the Goose, the Humboldt, deserts and mountains, and with what the trail had in store for us this year.

For today's trekker the California Trail presents challenges similar to those that faced our emigrant forebears. The trail still winds its way west through six distinct regions: the Missouri River bottom, the Great Plains, the Rocky Mountains, the Great Basin, the Sierra Nevada and the central California plain. Each area and the transition zones between them offer distinct problems that must be overcome to negotiate the entire route successfully. This summer we faced the challenges of the three final sections of the emigrant road.

Emigrant diarist John Banks, my companion since the Missouri River, continued to provide emotional, aesthetic and geographic bearings.¹ We shall defer to him for appropriate context in reporting our adventures of this summer.

THE RAFT RIVER AND CITY OF ROCKS

We fell puzzled to know our locality. We are here but do not know where here is.—July 31, 1995

We obtain our bearings nowadays via means the emi-

grants would find remarkable—interstate highways, state and county lines, U.S.G.S topographic maps—while having lost many of the essential reference points—springs and rivers especially—that determined the original path of overland travel. In crossing the Raft River Valley in 1849 to reach the main California Trail, emigrants faced their first "sink," miles of sage brush and a dry, desert pull rumored to be 25 miles long. Today Sublette Reservoir has controlled the sink, the valley is pleasant farmland bisected by Interstate 84 and its truck stop, and the Raft River is hardly the formidable obstacle it was to wagon travellers. In 1849 the Raft River Valley would have seemed just another in a series of north-south trending valleys the emigrants had negotiated since leaving the Green River some three weeks earlier. Today, its role as an east-west thoroughfare is forgotten, and it provides a route between Salt Lake City and its northern neighbors. The valley continues to be the gateway to City of Rocks and the California Trail.

This summer we began our journey by traveling for three days from Malta to the City of Rocks using Highway 71, which parallels the old trail, and passing through the hamlets of Elba and Almo. One of the most important landmarks on the trail, City of Rocks served as a transportation hub throughout the American West during the 19th Century. Most importantly, it gave emigrants a bearing and sense of place in the strange vastness of the West. The site is now a National Reserve and may once again achieve its rightful place in the American consciousness. It remains remarkably similar to how the emigrants found it: unspoiled vistas, minimal road building and development and significant emigrant trail remnants mark the passage of thousands of people, cattle and wagons. It is a great place to visit and explore.

After three days of relatively easy travel, our trek began in earnest. On day four we faced Granite Pass, the greatest single obstacle in the emigrants' path since the Continental Divide and the key to the Snake-Humboldt River country. The route from City of Rocks to the Humboldt River, originally opened by Joseph Reddeford Walker in 1843 to connect the Oregon Trail with the Humboldt River, is probably the least changed section of trail since emigrant days. During the heyday of overland travel, this section of road perplexed even the emigrants: as John Banks noted on August 4, 1849, "This part of the route between Fort Hall and Mary's River is little spoken of by travelers."

Due to its enduring remoteness, the trail between the "three corners" of Utah, Idaho and Nevada is still "little spoken of." A review of trail bibliographies re-

veals less field research and writing on this section than any other. For historians who have tackled it, it has daunted some and invigorated others. Irene Paden thought this section of trail "not a good place to be," full of "discomforts and uneasiness," "fear," "qualms of aversion," and "Indians!"² Thomas H. Hunt, reviewing a similar body of evidence, found these "halcyon days" for the emigrants, "a fairly relaxed period for the traveller."³ Well, friends, what was it going to be? We were anxious to find out.

Today, Granite Pass is on private land, one of several significant privately held trail landmarks. Fortunately, it is in the care of a kindly owner well aware of its remarkable history. After leaving the City of Rocks, crossing Junction Valley and climbing to Granite Pass, we stood and gazed west, sharing the view of the emigrants. One can empathize with the Padens while seeing the splendor that inspired Hunt: it is a vista daunting and invigorating in the same moment. The view must have had the same effect on the emigrants. The eye can hardly take in and make sense of the labyrinth of buttes and bluffs, canyons and twisting mountain ranges that comprise the terrain ahead. The scenery is inspiring, but the prospect of travel through it is intimidating. Knowing we had worn out our welcome in Almo, we bowed our heads, headed west and after an afternoon of steady and occasionally treacherous downhill travel found ourselves in camp along the friendly meadows of Birch Creek. Good water and forage are available in abundance and the modern trail trekker is home again.

City of Rocks to Wells required six days of travel. From Granite Pass, we traveled along Goose and Little Goose Creeks, down Thousands Springs Valley, up West Brush Creek, and through the Windermere Hills to find the head of the Humboldt River. After crossing Granite Pass, it remains in full view for several days; one realizes why this pass was so important as a gateway and landmark and why, ultimately, a case can be made for Granite Pass as the key to emigration to California.

The country is beautiful, affords easy travel, retains great charm, offers adequate water and forage and provides good camp sites. It proved to be a joy, offering some of the best days on the entire trail. Camps at Birch Creek, the junction of Goose and Little Goose Creeks, Rock Springs and West Brush Creek Spring were especially noteworthy. I have to side with Tom Hunt; this section of trail was certainly no worse than what we ex-

perienced between the Bear River Valley and City of Rocks and may have been perceived by the emigrants simply as a continuation of the terrain that began at the Green River.

Yet let us not leave you with the idea of modern Arcadia or that the region held only abundant pleasures. Alas, it was here that Brewster decided he would not cross Little Goose Creek. It was here that we were up past midnight on September 2 looking for Brewster after a lightening storm nearly sent him to his eternal reward. And, alas, it was here that the trail pioneers of old finally resigned themselves to accepting that we were, indeed, going to join their fraternity and travel their trail from beginning to end. If Greenwood and Sublette were in an ill humor at our completing their cutoff in 1994, Joe Walker was downright angry at our having the audacity to attempt his trail in 1995. After making camp at West Brush Creek Spring, we retired for the evening at about 8:30 P.M. in the midst of what we thought was simply a passing shower. It rained and thundered, however, throughout the night, through the next day during our travel to Wells and into the following evening. We discovered later that a low pressure system from the northwest and a monsoon from Mexico had collided over the Wells area causing one of the worst storms on record; it included record rainfall and over 7,000 lightening strikes. We experienced a day of rain, mud and inordinate discomfort, walking through the worst weather of our entire trail experience, and arrived in Wells alive but drenched, filthy and fatigued—yet elated to have been able to cover a remote section of the California road that offers the most unspoiled surviving trail segment.

The Humboldt Wells, the first goal of this summer's outing, was as significant a landmark for us as it was for the emigrants. As Banks noted on August 8, 1849, "to find streams running south seems to afford us great encouragement." A tip o' the hat to Mr. Walker, and we were on our way down the Humboldt.—*To Be Continued.*



Brewster and friend, whose face is most fortunately shaded from the view of our delicate readers, at Granite Pass.

—Photo by Harlan Wadley.

NOTES

1. Quotes in italics are from the diary of John Banks in Howard L. Scamehorn, ed., *The Buckeye Rovers in the Gold Rush* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1965).

2. Paden, Irene D., *The Wake of the Prairie Schooner* (New York: Macmillan, 1943. Reprint, Gerald, MO: The Patrice Press, 1985), 378-79.

3. Hunt, Thomas H. *Ghost Trails to California* (American West Publishing Company, 1974), 83.

VOLUNTEERING AT THE ROCK

by Levida Hileman

Living within 60 miles of Independence Rock for a number of years and even going there on OCTA treks had not prepared me for the overpowering influence the place has had on my life in the past year. In September 1994 a few volunteers started resurveying the names on the Rock. We started using the Robert S. Ellison book printed in 1930 as a reference and guide. Since our chapter had done cursory surveying of the Rock in other years, we believed we might find 40 or 50 new names. The first trips we had to go out with compasses just to get our directions straight on top of Independence Rock. After a few trips and experimenting with accurate and efficient recording methods, we finally came up with an organized surveying system. We worked in groups of three to avoid errors and tried to insure accuracy where lettering might be very faint. It was not long before we realized how massive a job we had taken on and what a treasure of information we were amassing. This job could not be done in just a few months. We hung in diligently until the November winds just got too cold. We were a common sight on top of the Rock all bundled up in coats, gloves and warm hats, huddled down trying to get out of the wind. We learned that the Rock is extremely slippery when wet. All winter while I spent long hours on the computer, Independence Rock remained a force in my life, teasing me with "You've got to get out there." In February two of us ventured out only to be chased home by snow flurries. Spring came and like many projects the volunteers got involved with other things and our group dwindled down to two or three people and then mostly just one person criss-crossing the top of the Rock alone, that person being me. I saw in all of the volunteers almost an addiction to deciphering the lettering and Independence Rock soon took on a personality all its own. I know I quickly felt a very close affinity with the Rock and with the names of the people on it. The different ways that people identified themselves or the parties they were with, the small drawings and putting their names at two different places on the Rock gave most names a meaning of their own—some of them became like old friends to me. Some are in the most beautiful script that they are a joy to read and touch.

So much of our work is by feel. The Rock literally comes alive. I put all the names in the database, so I soon became very familiar with the names from poring over those lists hour after hour, checking and rechecking. I believe my husband thinks I have a love affair with the

Rock and he is probably right. I drive out there and as I drive up I have a feeling of rapport with that massive hunk of rock that gives me a feeling of warmth. Many of the names I have come to know intimately and can locate them easily for tourists even without being on the Rock.

I spent time going out into classrooms talking about the Trails, especially in Wyoming. In late May I accompanied four groups of third and fourth grades on two different days out to Independence Rock. I was their

"historian." I prepared them for the trip by going into their classrooms twice. The second time, dressed in my pioneer dress, I spoke specifically about the trail between Casper and Independence Rock and then about the names themselves. After 30 minutes when I asked for questions, one boy raised his hand immediately. I thought, "Good, I sparked some interest." His question, "Why do you have holes in your glasses?" This threw me for a loop for I didn't understand what he was talking about and of course my mind was totally immersed in trail.

The first day excursion with 40 third and fourth graders on top of the Rock went fairly smoothly. The teachers had gotten enough volunteer mothers to go so supervision was not a big prob-

lem. The instructions from the teachers were simple enough. "Stay behind Mrs. Hileman when going up the Rock." Imagine yourself trying to stay ahead of 10-year-old boys who had been cooped up on a bus for an hour, all anxious to outdo one another. I was going up that Rock faster than I ever had, (Huff, Huff) just trying to stay in front of the kids. The teachers were helping the slow ones. Luckily I had climbed the Rock enough times so I was in good shape. I had told them that once on top they could scatter out as they liked to see the names as long as they stayed in the vicinity of an adult. This worked fairly well until some boys found some baby bull snakes. Several of the children recorded names they found and many tried their hand at doing rubbings. The instructions not to slide down the Rock and not to run when going down reached the ears of most of the children. I did learn one thing from this day—the teachers needed a whistle so we could get the children's attention when I wanted to talk.

I was now optimistic for the first day had basically been very successful. Again there were about 40 kids. But unlike the previous day, there were few volunteer mothers. Again it was almost a foot race to the top in my effort to stay in front of the kids. HUFF! HUFF!



Kathy Orr goes to great lengths to decipher names on "The Rock."

The teachers had decided I should keep the whistle and the same instructions were given about staying in the vicinity of an adult. Unfortunately there were many kids and few adults. They were all over the top of the Rock like ants, I was blowing my whistle wildly—to no avail. Two boys found the same two baby snakes and wanted to 'smoosh' them. I suddenly discovered that my role as historian had turned into disciplinarian. (Where are the teachers???) Children are going everywhere and I'm blowing the whistle thinking, "And I volunteered for this!" Really though the days were very enjoyable. We all got down with no mishaps and the children did show an eager interest in the things they were told. They sent me the nicest thank you notes relating their experiences. One class even made a huge construction paper poster of Independence Rock and signed their names on it. Even Bill Clinton, 1994 had his name on their version of the Rock.

For the rest of the summer my volunteerism was less eventful but no less exciting. A small group of us spent our time being OCTA trail interpreters and "Meeting the People at the Rock." The first time that I went out I was well prepared with all kinds of trail handouts, with books for suggested trails reading and of course our list of names on the Rock so we could help people find names. This list at this time contains about 1,300 names. I went out prepared to answer questions and to give out information. What I was not prepared for was the wealth of information that was given me in return by interested travelers and trail descendants. I regret that on the first day I did not take notes on specifics given to me related to names on the Rock. One family found a name and said, "He was in the original Brigham Young party," and others had similar interesting information. I later realized this information should be put in the database of names. I found it so exciting to meet descendants and to talk with them and to see their joy when able to discover an ancestor on the Rock. I met a young descendant who was named after the very ancestor who left his name on Independence Rock. This name had not been previously recorded. Young people, old people, so many people were all interested in learning more about Independence Rock and the trails. I answered all kinds of questions even desperate ones like, "Where am I and which direction do I go to get to Rawlins?"

One tour bus of people from mainland China went through and many of them climbed to the top. I didn't hear any of their reactions to the names. One of the older Chinese men fingered my pioneer dress and bonnet and asked me if I had made it. I had rows of small ruffles on the bonnet. When I said yes, he said, "That is good. Not many people take the time anymore." I guessed he might have been a tailor in China. Another Chinese man got very excited over the chunk of flint I was using as a paper weight. He picked it up and told me how he had to use flint to start fires during WWII when the Japanese invaded China. He even had to demonstrate how to do it. He was so eager and kept saying, "This brings back

memories I thought I had forgotten."

As a volunteer at the Rock one is asked to do all sorts of things, such as be a narrator while the video camera is running, take photographs of visitors and even participate in an impromptu interview for a local TV station. All of the volunteers who helped this summer really enjoyed meeting the travellers.

This spring was a very wet one in Wyoming with many late snowstorms in the mountains. The last week of May the Sweetwater River was well out of its banks. On the southeast corner of the Rock the water was all the way to the base of the Rock and one couldn't walk around it there. This is the corner where the main trail first approached the Rock. From this we can know that the years that inscriptions close to the ground on the south side of May 25 or May 29 were not wet years such as this year. The travelers would have had to go on the north side. Due to the high water the mosquitoes were unbelievable this year. Such years had to be especially hard on the emigrants. Even with bug spray it was difficult to concentrate on surveying names close to the ground.

Other diaries record how members of their party went into the hills to gather snow to make ice cream on the 4th of July. I had always wondered how this could be. This year snow could easily be seen the last week of June and snow could still be seen on July 4th. Even this year July 4th was cool despite the sun. A cool breeze was blowing and the women volunteers wore shawls and our man wore his coat. Two dressed-up mountain men headed for a rendezvous passed through on July 4th, one wearing his capote. I told him he was the most sensibly dressed. They climbed the Rock in their moccasins with no trouble and then we discovered the one had no soles on his moccasins. I told them of the two earliest inscriptions we had found, two Campbells dated 1831. I had not had time to research to see if they might be related to Robert Campbell, fur trapper. They told us what they knew of Robert Campbell's family, but they could not think of the brother's names.

This has been another interesting facet of this whole work at Independence Rock. The door has opened to so many tempting questions that beg time for research. Are the two Campbells possibly related to Robert Campbell? Is the W. Stansbury a family member or possibly a member of the Howard Stansbury expedition? These and other questions are waiting for me to get time to pursue them. Meanwhile the survey work at the Rock continues. Maybe in this next year we can feel we have done a fairly thorough job of surveying. There is one thing I know for certain. Once again this winter, Independence Rock will be playing a dominant role in my life and yes, once again I will be out there with my whistle and the children. ■



BRUFF AND ME

by Hank Fincken

In the summer of 1992, I was looking for a new character for a one-man play. I first ran across J. Goldsborough Bruff when I wrote a novel (unpublished, darn!) in 1981 about the California Gold Rush. Bruff led a company from Washington, D.C. to California in 1849, and they rewarded their safe arrival by abandoning him in the Sierra Nevada. Was he bitter? No, or hardly. He set up a no-cost hotel where stragglers could get dry clothes, a dry night's rest and—when he had it—a good meal. His basic humanity in the worst times makes him a hero and an inspiration for us all.

Bruff had a plan. If the published reports and President Polk's promises of California gold proved false, he would publish his journal as the best emigrants' guide ever written. [It's arguably the best emigrant diary ever written—*Ed.*]. The gold did not pan out (is that where the expression comes from?) and neither did his dream of publication. By the time he had rewritten the manuscript, his news was old news. All that effort resulted in nothing—or at least no material gain.

My research included a 32-day trip along the California Trail the summer of 1993. Like Bruff, I came with maps and provisions, but was far from prepared. My tent was good for drizzle, not downpours. I left my wife behind, so I experienced some of the same loneliness Bruff and other '49ers did. My solace was this pain should make my script credible.

My favorite memories are of the people I met along the way, like Bob and Karen Rennells who stopped what they were doing to show this stranger the hill where Bruff probably descended to Green River. Chester Buck took me through a pouring rain to see trail ruts that I would not have found with a map, sunshine and neon lights marking the way.

Not every experience was pleasurable. The rain soaked many of my plans. After Bear Valley, I never saw the sun again until Elko. I have my doubts that the sun ever shines in Idaho, but the smiles on people like Stan Lloyd, my guide through City of Rocks, more than compensated.

In mid-June I had lunch at the monument at Bruff's campsite in the Sierra. I thought of Bruff's hunger and how he would have shared the little he had. Already, I had decided the play would end here, not with the hunt for gold itself.

I spent a few days at the Bancroft Library and returned to Indiana. It took me another year and a half to read other diaries, classic texts like *The Great Platte River Road* and write the script for my show. I had to get feed back from those who know The Road better than I (William Hill, Todd Gunther, Carol Schreider), and of course rewrite, rewrite and rewrite.

I'll take Bruff's play on the road in 1996. If your community would enjoy a performance, my address is in the 1996 OCTA directory and my phone is 317-255-3566. (I charge but the price is negotiable.) I hope to meet with more local experts, so that my play gets better and better. My dream is to finish this tour at the 1996 OCTA Convention in Elko. Like Bruff, I'm not getting rich with this adventure, but I love the opportunities it has given me. What do you think Bruff would say, knowing his work has inspired this Hoosier and in turn so many others?

CROSSROADS SUPPORTS UTAH TEACHERS

Utah Crossroads teamed up this fall with the Utah Council for Social Studies and the *Deseret News* (Salt Lake City) to present a Centennial tour for Utah teachers over the state's historic trails of exploration, trade and emigration. The unique educational venture was planned and directed by Nancy Andersen from Salt Lake City, who heads up the chapter's Education Committee.

On October 14 nearly one hundred public school teachers took part in the all-day field trip over Hensley's Salt Lake Cutoff of the California Trail which ran from from Salt Lake City to Silent City of Rocks in southern Idaho. Teachers of Utah history from all parts of the state signed up for the tour. Their interest and response was truly enthusiastic.

With full chapter support, Nancy patterned her tour after the Salt Lake Cutoff field trip during OCTA's 1994 national convention at Salt Lake, adding a number of new educational features of her own. An official activity of Utah's 1996 Statehood Centennial and co-sponsored by the state's oldest newspaper, the Centennial Series Tour for Utah teachers won wide publicity for OCTA and its trails preservation program in the state.

Nancy and her husband, Ron, both served as guides for the tour, one on each bus, with Crossroads Dave Bigler and Michael Landon also taking turns at the microphone. Nancy teaches Utah history in the public schools and Ron, who guided 1994 convention tours in Salt Lake Valley, teaches math at Kennedy Junior High.

Special tour stopovers included the Bidwell-Bartleson Trail in northern Utah, Miles Goodyear's Fort Buenaventura in Ogden, fords and ferries on Bear River and the Golden Spike National Historic Site where the rails of the transcontinental railroad were joined in 1869.

Before the buses pulled out, George Ivory, Crossroads president, told the teachers about OCTA and gave them information and membership applications. He later pointed to the activity as a creative example of how chapters can team up with local education and history groups to preserve the story of America's move west in the public schools.

Nancy Andersen now plans to organize similar field trips in 1996 during Utah's yearlong centennial celebration. Utah became America's forty-fifth state on January 4, 1896.

—David Bigler

A FEW LINES BY WAY OF PASSTIME...

by Andy Hammond

The above words appear in a letter written by Jim Beckwourth, the ex-slave and black mountain man who discovered Beckwourth Pass in 1850 and who opened the Beckwourth Trail in 1851. The letter was written while he was living on his "War Horse Ranch" in today's Sierra Valley in northeastern California.

Beckwourth himself led the first wagon train over the Beckwourth Trail. Included in that train was ten-year-old Ina Coolbrith who would later remember Beckwourth as "one of the most beautiful creatures that ever lived. He was rather dark and wore his hair in two long braids twisted with colored cord that gave him a picturesque appearance. He wore a leather coat and moccasins and rode a horse without a saddle."

Not everyone shared poet Coolbrith's romantic view of Beckwourth. Perhaps because of his background and frontier ways, he has been portrayed as a runaway slave and a crude, vulgar, semi-literate liar. While it is certain that he enjoyed spinning a fine tale, the other claims aren't proven. Beckwourth was freed by his father who filed a number of deeds of emancipation attesting to that fact. One such deed, dated Tuesday, April 13, 1824, reads as follows: "Jennings Beckwith appears here in open court and acknowledges the Execution of a deed of Emancipation from him to James a Mulatto boy."

As for Beckwourth's character, numerous accounts left by emigrants show him to have been unusually kind and generous. And his own writings prove that he had a good command of the English language, including vocabulary and syntax. Beckwourth's letter, written to the Marysville (California) *Herald* and published as follows on August 13, 1853, speaks for itself.

BECKWOURTH VALLEY, July 27, 1853 Messrs. Editors:—I have taken the liberty of writing a few lines to you by way of passtime, which I hope may be of interest to some of your readers.

We have beautiful weather hear at present, everything is in a flourishing condition. We have had fine showers of rain every few days a greater part of the summer season, which keeps the grass and vegetables green all summer. The farmers in the southern part of this valley are in fine spirits; their crops of potatoes, onions, barley, oats, and turnips are in a flourishing condition.

The valley is being settled up very fast, there have been between twenty and thirty quarter sections of land taken up this spring. There are between sixty and seventy inhabi-

THE REMARKABLE JAMES BECKWOURTH

tants living at present in the valley, including men, women, and children. There are four families that have settled here, and we hear of several more that are coming in from some of the mining districts. There has one family settled here that has crossed the plains this season. The first emigrants that passed here was on the 14th of this month. Their stock was in tolerable good condition.

The emigrants report the road down the Humboldt or Mary's river to be very bad, and the river very high, being six feet higher than at any previous season, and the water so very strong of alkali that it is killing a great many of their stock and causing it to be very unhealthy among the emigrants.

There are a great many traders out this season from Sacramento city and Marysville. Some inducing the emigrants to Sacramento and others to Marysville. Marysville has far the most superior road. The farmers in American valley and the citizens generally, have turned out and have put the road in good order, and my advice to the emigrants would be to take that road, as they have plenty of grass and water all the way down to the valley.

Indians have been a little troublesome to some traders who have passed out this spring; there has been no very serious damage, only their provisions taken from them. There have been a

great many Indians about this season—they are very treacherous and no confidence can be placed in them at all, some appear to be friendly, but they cannot be trusted.

I think the State of California should take some measures to protect the emigrants from various depredations that are being committed this season. The Indians appear to become bolder and more troublesome every year.

A gentlemen reported to me a few days ago, from the sink of the Humboldt, that a train coming down the Humboldt lost a great portion of their stock; some of the company who had horses left, went in pursuit and found their trail, and in the trail was a fine boot track; they followed about sixty miles, when their horses gave out and they had to return. They are headed by white men beyond doubt, and something should be done to put a stop to it.

I intend to start to-day to the forks of the road at the sink of the Humboldt to induce the emigrants to travel this road.—Although the citizens of Marysville do not think it worthwhile to pay me for my trouble, or even to pay me the amount that I have paid out to get the road. Though it certainly is more to their advantage than to mine.

Your obedient servant,
Jas. P. Beckwourth



James Beckwourth, Mountaineer.

BOB BERRY AND RANDY BROWN WIN OCTA'S TOP AWARD

Meritorious Achievement Awards Go to Dedicated Volunteers

Meritorious Achievement Awards, OCTA's highest honor, were presented to Robert Berry and Randy Brown at the Awards Banquet, held August 12, 1995, at the Grand Island, Nebraska OCTA National Convention.

ROBERT BERRY

Robert Berry's notable accomplishments in OCTA's behalf have been unceasing for almost a decade. He organized and was the first president of the Nebraska Chapter. He served as Legal Counsel for OCTA and completed two terms on the Board of Directors, from 1986 to 1992, during which time he prepared revisions and commentaries for OCTA's Bylaws. He reorganized OCTA's accounting and budget system to make it run more smoothly.

Berry's tireless efforts in trail preservation have been especially commendable. He personally undertook the long and extensive negotiations and legal work required for the acquisition of Nebraska's California Hill.

In 1990, Berry planned, organized, and directed the very successful national OCTA convention at Omaha. He also led and participated in several field trips to place Carsonite markers on emigrant trails.

Bob Berry almost single-handedly researched, designed and produced the Western Emigrant Trails map, the most successful and financially remunerative publication OCTA has ever had. He worked on the map in 1989, then, with Board approval, was able to have the map printed in 1991. Since then the map has gone through a second edition and has sold over 15,000 copies. Bob is currently making small necessary revisions to the map, to be printed soon as the third edition.

RANDY BROWN

As chairman of the OCTA Trail Marking Committee, Randy Brown, using Carsonite markers, marked trails throughout Wyoming, and in doing so, succeeded in making friends with virtually all land owners involved. He also helped mark trails in western Nebraska. Over the years he has installed over 350 of the white OCTA markers. He traveled 2,400 miles round trip during a long school holiday to install an OCTA marker at the Nancy Kelsey grave in California.

In regard to graves, Randy fenced seven graves at Robidoux Pass, and identified and marked graves near Torrington, Granger and Casper. In this activity, he enlisted the enthusiastic help of his students.

Randy once stated that he had compiled a listing of almost 4,000 names from 55 sites—almost all of them in Wyoming! He has also written informative and interesting articles on trails and related sites that have been published in *Overland Journal*.

Randy and his wife are Charter Members of OCTA. He teaches school in Douglas, Wyoming and has led countless field trips and adventures for the state chapter.

TWO SITES TO BE MARKED IN NEBRASKA

The Graves and Sites Committee will mark two sites of the late trail era located near Lexington, Nebraska: the Sarepta Gore Fly grave and the Plum Creek Massacre site.

The Plum Creek Massacre marker will be placed at the actual site of the massacre and burials which is located a couple of miles east of what is incorrectly called Plum Creek Massacre Cemetery. Bob Wallace, director of the Dawson County Historical Society, is working with the landowner and Phelps County to have an access road built to the true site of the graves of the eleven men killed on August 8, 1864. When this is accomplished the marker will be placed at this location. I would like to thank Bob and Clyde Wallace of Lexington for their help with this project.

—Randy Brown, Committee Chairman

THE PLUM CREEK MASSACRE

On the morning of August 8, 1864, a war party of Cheyenne Indians attacked a freight wagon train near here, killing eleven men and taking captive Nancy Jane Morton of Sidney, Iowa, and nine-year-old Daniel Marble of Council Bluffs. Thomas F. Morton, Nancy's husband; William Fletcher, her brother; and a cousin, John Fletcher, were among the dead. Wounded by two arrows, the ordeal of nineteen-year-old Nancy Morton had just begun.

The wagon train attacked consisted of eleven or twelve wagons from two outfits. One was owned by C. F. Hendrie & Company of Council Bluffs and had eight men and an equal number of wagons loaded with stamp mills being shipped from the company's iron works in Iowa to Black Hawk, Colorado. The other was the Morton train of three or four mule-driven wagons delivering goods purchased in St. Joseph to Denver.

The August 8 attack was witnessed by Lt. Joseph Bone of the Seventh Iowa Cavalry, who was stationed at Plum Creek telegraph station a mile and a half west. Lieutenant Bone immediately wired his commander, Col. Samuel Summers, at Fort Kearny: *Send company of men here quick as God can send them one hundred Indians in sight firing on ox train.*

The soldiers arrived in the evening and found the plundered wagons still burning. Lt. F. G. Comstock was detailed to take charge of the burials. He wrote: *... we buried the eleven men in a long trench but nothing had molested [the] dead previous to our arrival. This is the site of the grave. From varied accounts a partial list of the victims can be compiled: Morton, the Fletchers, a Mr. Marble and possibly one Marble son, Charles Wiff, a Mr. St.*

Clair, and four others unknown. The gravesite was described as being "upon the roadside in a mound slightly elevated and partly surrounded by a ravine."

Danny Marble was released at Hackberry Creek in western Kansas on September 11, along with three other captives who had been taken at the Eubanks ranch on the Little Blue River on August 7. Nancy Morton remained a captive of the Cheyenne for six months. Through the efforts of officers at Fort Laramie she was released in February 1865 while in the Powder River country in northern Wyoming. A trader among the Indians, Jules E. Coffey, went to the Indian village with \$1600 worth of trade goods to be used as a ransom. From Fort Laramie Nancy Morton returned over the trail to Fort Kearny and then took the stage to Nebraska City. She passed directly by this site, where her family and friends had been murdered a few months earlier. She wrote in her memoirs that being at the gravesite brought back "the memory of that fatal morning repeatedly before me, not as a picture, but a present reality." She reached her home in Sidney on March 9, 1865. In November she married George W. Stevens. Nancy Morton Stevens died in 1912.

The Dawson County Historical Society obtained the original manuscripts that Nancy Morton had written about her experience through a friendship that developed between her granddaughter, Lulu Lawton Purinton, and Clyde Wallace of Lexington. Wallace began studying the Plum Creek Massacre in 1930 and provided much of the information for *Captive of the Cheyenne*, written by Russ Czaplewski and published by the Dawson County Historical Society in 1993.

Signing and Funding by

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1995

This is a part of your American heritage. Honor it, protect it, preserve it for your children.

THE READING TRAIL

by Lyndia Carter

Going west was a great adventure for young people. This month's books will take you along on that adventure. Two of these books, both excellently researched and written, are based on real-life young people; the other is an absolute work of fiction, creativity, imagination and hilarity. Let's go down the trail with Mose, Mary Ellen and Jaimie.

The The Pioneers Go West by George R. Stewart is based on the life of 17-year-old Mose Shellenberger of the 1844 Stephens party, the first company to take wagons over the Sierra Nevada into California. This was an amazing feat, but Mose did not go over the mountains with them. Mose's story has even more adventure than tugging wagons over the Sierra; he spent the winter in the mountains! It was fortunate that in 1885 he wrote down his experiences so that the great writer and historian George Stewart could pass them on to us. This book is starting on its third generation of young readers and it is just as interesting to read now as it was for kids back in 1954 when it first came out. A good many exciting things happen on the trail to Mose, but his greatest adventure comes near the end of the book when he and two others volunteer to stay in the mountains through the winter to guard the wagons that were too heavily loaded to pull over the mountains. The cabin they built in 1844 was used by the Donner-Reed party when they were snowbound two years later; Mose was more fortunate. When Mose and his companions try to escape from their snowbound camp as winter threatens to destroy them, Mose cannot make it and has to go back alone to live or die in the cabin in the snow. You will enjoy reading about how he survives. From the minute they leave Council Bluffs in the spring of 1844 until Mose is rescued in late February of 1845, he has one exciting adventure after another. This is the real-life stuff you can't possibly resist.

Mary Ellen Todd is the real person upon whom Jean van Leeuwen's *Bound for Oregon* is based. Mary Ellen was just nine years old when her family traveled from Arkansas to Oregon Territory. She had some frightening, some exciting, some heart-breaking, and some joyful experiences on the trail. In her older years, she told her true stories to her daughter and grandchildren. Her daughter wrote them down. While doing research Ms. Van Leeuwen found the account and based her novel on it. Of course, because it is a novel, she invents conversations and some other details not in the actual account, but she stays true to the experiences of the Todd family. Because it is based on reality, this novel gives a realistic account of the hardships faced by families who traveled two thousand miles by wagon through the wilderness to a new home. You also will see the love in a family that helps them endure together. It is a story that will win your heart. This was one book I could not put down. I was swept up by this young girl and her family from the first page to the

last. It was a very enjoyable experience on the reading trail.

The Travels of Jaimie McPheeters by Robert Lewis Taylor is outlandish, outrageous and occasionally downright ridiculous. This humorous, imaginative and sometimes spicy look at the way west to the California gold fields has a lot to entice teenagers, particularly boys. When Jaimie's unconventional father sets out to make his fortune in the gold rush, fourteen year old Jaimie goes along. Every imaginable absurd adventure happens to him enroute, every conceivable stereotype becomes enormously exaggerated and a thoroughly creative writer has his way with history. But Taylor did a good deal of historical research (check his bibliography)—he just wrote "tongue in cheek," making a spoof, a parody. The story will hopefully make you curious enough to research for yourself to unravel fact from fantasy.

This book came to my attention when discussing with a fellow history buff and writer, Robert Kirby, how he got hooked on history. He attributes it in part to Jaimie McPheeters. Kirby said that this book was the cause of him being briefly suspended from high school. It seems that he began reading this book one morning in the school library and got so involved that he could not put it down all day. In fact, he was so enthralled that he never left the library and missed his classes. Since roll was taken in each class, it was discovered he was not where he should have been and the hunt was on. He was found in the library, lost in the pages of the book. When asked to surrender the book and get to class, this normally mild-mannered student refused. The librarian did not take kindly to such behavior. To make a long story short, the book was finished that day, but not at school! I certainly do not recommend that you read historical fiction when you should be in class, but I think you can see by this story that the book is certainly capable of holding your interest. As you read, remember to take this story with several grains of salt, as us old timers would say. Just because it's in a book doesn't make it true. Have a good time with it (I did), and get curious enough to go beyond this book to realistic works. It's OK to play with history as long as you can separate truth from fiction, and you can only do that by learning what is real history.

See you on the reading trail,

Mrs. C.

The Pioneers Go West (Previously titled: *To California by Covered Wagon*). By George R. Stewart. Landmark Books, Random House, 1954 and 1982. Ages 10-15.

Bound for Oregon. By Jean Van Leeuwe. Dial Books for Young Readers, a division of Penguin Books, 1994. Ages 9-14.

The Travels of Jaimie McPheeters. By Robert Lewis Taylor Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1958; Signet Books, 1967. High school and adult.

CROSSROADS

HUDSPETH CUTOFF—EPISODE THREE

It was darn cold that early morning of Saturday, October 7. The wind blew and it threatened to rain (or snow!). But there we were at Twin Springs Park, Idaho, eating bagels and sweetrolls, and sipping coffee and hot chocolate (no one much favored orange juice that morning), getting ready to take the last third of the Hudspeth Cutoff. In two field trips, Gar Elison and Kent Malan had taken us on the other segments of the trail and we were anxious to complete the last leg. But the weatherman was sure telling stories when he promised sunny weather.

Guide Gar described the California Trail at Twin Springs and the 22-mile dry drive to get there. We followed ruts up the steep hill above the park to see where the emigrants headed from here. The trail crossed private land, so we had to back-track and re-join the trail near East Kurtz Spring. Modern agriculture has destroyed the trail through the dry farms, but our guides pointed out where it had gone through a narrow canyon. We took a road up the steep hillside to look down upon the trail and the site of the Shepherd-Wright massacre of 1859. With a marvelous panoramic view, Gar and Kent recounted the story. We then headed back to the bottom of the canyon to the Sublet troughs, a mile from the massacre site.

We followed the trail as it wound through the canyon westward. The weather began to cooperate and when we stopped for lunch at Sublet Park we could enjoy ourselves out of doors. After lunch we skirted the reservoir that covers the trail and arrived at the grave site where the four dead from the massacre were buried thirteen miles west—it was too dangerous to bury them where they were found.

The trail continued through farm land and beautiful meadows, heading straight west. We went through the Zollinger ranch as the trail followed Meadow Creek Road. At one point, the road crossed the trail and it was fun to see very visible ruts. We paused for Gar and Kent to point out the alternate routes along the California Trail. We visited important landmarks such as McClendon Spring, the Raft River and Cassia Creek. After the Hudspeth Cutoff rejoined the California Trail near a branch of Cassia Creek, we backtracked to the Woodbury Ranch. Gar had permission to go on this private land to see grave sites, inscriptions along the Raft River and the Parting of the Ways.

After spending the night in nice, warm motel rooms in Burley, we awakened to an absolutely perfect

day for trail travel—but we had to get to the rendezvous site by 8:00. We watched a beautiful moon-set to the west and a magnificent sunrise to the east.

At the Conner Creek store, Gar Elison read from California Trail and Salt Lake Cutoff journals to set the stage for the day. We eagerly headed to the City of the Rocks. As we drove through Arimo, we discussed the story of a legendary massacre in the area. Once in the Silent City of Rocks, we became typical tourists and had fun climbing and exploring those amazing formations. We were not able to access the trail through Pinnacle Pass but we did go on to the junction of the California Trail and Hensley's Salt Lake Cutoff. We ventured on to Granite Pass, where there we felt a special closeness to the pioneers as we walked in their footsteps.

We returned to the junction and had a good time walking both trails. Hensley's Salt Lake Cutoff was too badly damaged to travel, but we walked to the stage station and took vehicles back to City of the Rocks for lunch. After lunch, we approached the Salt Lake Cutoff through the Raft River Narrows in the opposite direction. Since we were running out of time, we could only look up the trail and see the ruts, rather than follow it toward the City of Rocks. The trail to Utah led along the Raft River, a beautiful, sparkling creek. Some vehicles followed Gar cross-country along ruts while others stayed on the road toward Naf. While the Tea vehicle waited for Gar's group, the Carters walked back toward Raft River in the ruts. The trail was so wide and there were so many parallel swales visible that it was clear what a super-highway the cutoff had been. When the vehicles again united, we bid farewell to the trails until next spring.

—Lyndia Carter

NEBRASKA

TREK PLANNED TO ADAMS COUNTY

Thanks again to all who helped make the Grand Island Convention a great success.

I am planning the chapter's spring field trip and want to hear from members in western Nebraska. We hope to tour Adams County, an interesting area that we haven't explored. Stops would include Lone Tree, Elm Creek, 32 Mile, Beals, Summit and Sand stations, plus massacre sites, ruts, trail markers and Susan Hail's grave. Call me at 402-751-2243 with suggestions.

Since Nebraska is home to the Oregon, Mormon, Lewis & Clark and military and Indian trails, we won't run out of places to go.

—Russ Gunung

CALIFORNIA-NEVADA

ANNUAL RETREAT A BIG SUCCESS

Officers and committee heads held their annual retreat October 21st at the home of President Bill Rupp in Jamestown to hear an update on the National Convention in Elko, Nevada next August, adopt a budget and plan activities for the coming year.

Paul Sawyer and Bob Pearce, Co-Chairs of the August 14-18 Elko convention, reported tour guides will be trained by Charles Greenhaw this winter, the Kiosk at the confluence of the South Fork and Main Humboldt rivers will be dedicated, helicopters will be employed at the convention to view sections of the trail inaccessible by bus, and air conditioning of buses has been approved.

Tom Hunt called from Eureka during the retreat, reporting on problems concerning rock climbing in City of Rocks and motorcycle riders at Black Rock point.

President Rupp introduced the chapter board: Vice President Keith Arnold; Treasurer Ormie Lamson; Secretary Mary Mueller; and Past President George Hesse.

Outings planned for 1996 were announced. They include the Winter Symposium in Sonora in February, Johnson's ranch and 40-Mile Desert in late spring and summer outings on the Volcano Road, Big Trees Road and Caples Lake/Carson Pass; California-Applegate Trail; work parties to High Rock Canyon and a co-sponsored trip with the Southwest Chapter on the Southern Trail in New Mexico.

Shann Rupp reported 2,078 documents have been surveyed by COED.

Jo Arnold was appointed to the new position of hospitality committee chair in a move to recruit new chapter members.

Mary Lou Lyon gave an update on plans to hold the national convention in Chico in 1999, which would celebrate the sesquicentennial of the 1849 Gold Rush.

—Patricia Loomis

COLORADO

CHAPTER TOURS CHEROKEE TRAIL

About 18 Chapter members braved wet and windy weather on Saturday, September 30, to meet at the Franktown museum where they were treated to a presentation by Douglas County historian Clyde Jones. Lee and Jane Whiteley and Richard and Mary Ann Gehling provided maps and detailed handouts to each member and then led the group to Russellville, site of the Russell Brothers' 1858 gold discovery and currently the site of an archaeological dig. The caravan travelled some muddy roads that parallel or intersect the Cherokee Trail in three counties, stopping to view plainly visible trail ruts along the way, arriving at the Jim and Ruth Ann Steele Ranch in the sunshine to enjoy picnic lunches.

Point of Rocks, a major landmark on the Cherokee Trail, is located on this ranch and some members hiked to the top to enjoy the spectacular

view. We also visited the grave of Charles Michael Fagan, a civilian teamster with the U. S. Army, who froze to death in the snowstorm of May 2, 1858. The grave, on the ranch property, is marked by a pile of rocks and an unmarked headstone (the original wooden cross is no longer there) and was mentioned in many diaries after 1858. The Steeles have maintained their ranch in its natural state during their years of ownership and are exploring possibilities, through legal channels, of preventing land development in the future. Hot coffee and the Steeles' unique brand of western hospitality provided a happy ending to this field trip.

The Chapter joined the Cherry Creek Valley Historical Society at the Melvin Schoolhouse Museum-Library in Aurora on November 2 for a program on Trails of Eastern Colorado: The past, the present and the future; a quick history, landmarks, markers and remnants along the Santa Fé, Oregon, South Platte, Cherokee, Smoky Hill and Overland Trails. (For more information: Lee Whiteley 303-798-6546.)

—Jim and Margaret Bowers



Colorado chapter members gather at Fagan's Grave on this September's field trip.

—Photo by Jane Whiteley

WYOMING

TREK COMMITTEE KEEPS CHAPTER BUSY

The Wyoming Chapter had three different treks since the National Convention. In late August members followed Randy Brown and Lee Underbrink from Casper to Independence Rock. Stops included Avenue of Rocks, Willow Springs and Ryan's Hill. At Sweetwater Station stockade we viewed the stones that formed the foundation for the bridge constructed across the Sweetwater River east of Independence Rock. The group then traveled to Devil's Gate and waded in the river into the canyon to view immigrant names. Those who had not made this trip before were very impressed with Devil's Gate. In September, Randy Brown led a group on a trek following the trail from the grave of Joel Hembree, across the Barber Ranch to the site of the Kelly-Larimer massacre site. We stopped at the graves of those killed in this incident. We then went to a site named the "Indian Cave" and most of the group climbed up to view the names and Indian paintings. In October we still had beautiful weather and Randy Brown once again led a group on a trek to an area called "Spanish Diggings," several massive quarry sites dug out by prehistoric man. We were astonished at the amount of rock these ancient people quarried with stone tools. The day ended with Randy leading the brave ones of the group into a cave that involved climbing straight down for about 10 to 12 feet.

Pinky Ellis gave an excellent program in October on the Stock Trails in the Big Horn Mountains and in November we were fortunate to have Dr. Greg Brondos speak on the Indian Wars. In December a joint Christmas party was held with the Natrona County Historical Society. In January new officers will be taking over. The new officers for our chapter are: Tim Monroe, president; Pinky Ellis, vice president; Sally Lund, secretary; and Ken Appleman, treasurer. New board members are Mary Holden and Brock Hileman.

—Levida Hileman

SOUTHWEST

FALL MAPPING TRIP A BIG SUCCESS

From October 14 to 22, 1995, Don Buck, Richard Green and Rose Ann Tompkins enjoyed the beauty of southwest New Mexico as they concentrated on the Southern Trail mapping project. Armed with one 4WD vehicle, two GPS (Global Positioning System) units, two portable CB radios, a measuring wheel, topographic maps, diary accounts and Don's trained trail eye, they continued the effort begun last spring at Cooke's Spring, north of Deming, NM.

Headquarters was at City of Rocks State Park about 25 miles north of Deming. This unique spot in the tablelands and mountains of New Mexico had few other campers sharing this wonderful campground. We quickly fell into a

routine of getting up at dawn, eating breakfast, plotting the previous day's findings on the maps, heading out to continue the search until darkness descended to force us back to camp, showering, eating dinner, and heading for bed to listen to the camp windmill, the coyote serenades, and the owls calling to each other.

Rose Ann ferried Don and Richard from site to site, often meeting them at some remote access road as there were few roads parallel to the trail. At times we all walked back and forth across the brushy landscape to find the depression that would send them down the trail again. Don said that it takes a lot of miles of walking (and driving) to find one mile of trail, and he is right. But we did find trail, sometimes where we expected it, sometimes where we didn't expect it. Sometimes nothing was found, but other times there were shallow swales, deeply eroded swales, lines of rocks thrown off of the trail, vegetation lines, graves, grooves made by wagon wheels and rust marks on the rocks from those wheels.

Richard made a videotape of the week, concentrating on showing the trail and the landmarks. Besides having a record of what we did, he hopes to make a training tape for future mappers. Don is writing a technical report of the week and it will be on file as part of the mapping project.

Mapping the Southern Trail is a long term project, but it is being done. The Southwest Chapter now has topographic maps, original land survey maps and numerous diary accounts to assist in this project. Each mile of trail plotted on the topographic maps is a mile closer to our goal.

—Rose Ann Tompkins

GATEWAY

BOY SCOUTS TO WORK WITH CHAPTER

The Gateway Chapter met at the Pony Express National Memorial on September 9, 1995. Richard Hill was elected president. He has been a very active member and gives very interesting talks on his Mormon ancestors that went west with a handcart company. Gateway member Dave Martin displayed the new trail markers and gave an update on them. High profile sites such as the Wolf River crossing, Prairie Springs campground and Mosquito Creek were picked to start this trail marking project.

Boy Scout Leader Darrel Meek asked Gateway to let his "troops" work to earn merit badges and do community service. The boys will drive the posts and help develop an Interpretive Guidebook that will guide visitors to the markers and describe the site. Mr. Meek is interested in making this a living history lesson for his Boy Scout volunteers.

Our annual Pioneer Dinner is scheduled for March 12. In May we plan to have Bill McKinney, St. Joseph Parks director, talk about the Sun Bridge Conservation area.

The chapter wants to thank Darlene Peniston for leading Gateway through another great year.

—Jim Jarrett

Announcements

MID-YEAR BOARD MEETING MARCH 23 IN ST. JOE

The mid-year board of directors' meeting will be held on Saturday, March 23, in St. Joseph, Missouri. The meeting will be convened at 8:00 A.M. in the community room of the Pony Express National Memorial. All directors are asked to submit a report of their trail-related activities over the last six months. All chairmen are asked to submit a report for their committee. If any member has any items which he or she would like to see on the business agenda, please notify Jackie Lewin, president (816-279-5059). All reports should be sent to Jeanne Miller at OCTA headquarters by February 15. Jeanne will copy the reports and distribute them to the directors for study prior to the meeting.

CALL FOR AWARD NOMINATIONS

All chapters as well as individual members of OCTA are asked to consider nominations for the 1996 awards, to be presented at the August Convention in Elko.

Meritorious Achievement, OCTA's highest award, may be given either to individuals or organizations who have "brought to all Americans a greater awareness of the identity and significance of trails and landmarks," generally over a period of several years. Usually only one or two Meritorious Achievement awards are made each year.

Certificates of Appreciation could be more numerous and are given to individuals who make a particular effort to achieve short-term goals, such as mark a specific trail or site, help pass beneficial legislation, or obtain funding.

Volunteer of the Year award is given to one particular individual who, within the last 12 months, undertakes and achieves a worthy goal that is over and above the recognized objectives of a chapter or committee. (This award was not given in 1995).

Nominations should be in letter form and should be sent to:

W.L. Rusho, Awards Chairman
Oregon-California Trails Association
5299 Gurene Dr.
Salt Lake City, UT 84117-7449

To give the Awards Committee sufficient time to correspond and prepare plaques, the nominations must be received no later than JUNE 1, 1996.

IN MEMORIAM

Mrs. Barbara Caulfield for James Caulfield.

FUND RAISING III OFF TO A GOOD START

By December 8, 1995, OCTA received over 100 contributions to this year's Fund Raising Drive:

Endowment Fund	\$3090.00
Annual Fund	\$1013.00
Designated Funds	\$2222.00
Funds received as of 12-8-95	\$6325.00

A list of this year's contributors follows. Special thanks to those OCTA Members who chose to "continue the pace."

Larry Melton	William H. Saunders Jr.
George and Beverly Hesse	David L. Schulte
Eva Allen	Dee W. McKenzie
Dr. and Mrs. Duane M. Kline	Jane Orthel
Lee and Dorothy Kroh	Martha R. Barnes
Bill and Shann Rupp	Clifford H. Fiscus
Tom McCutcheon	Frank and Laurie Brown
Richard and Joanna Dale	Doris E. Dart
Jeanne S. Miller	Charles K. Graydon
Thomas W. Carneal	Frances W. Milne
Willard R. Garred	Norman J. Barker
Tom James	Edna Lee Edwards
Ivan and Olive Watts	Harry K. Peterson
Martin H. Schloo	Eleanor M. Neumayer
Theodore H. Harley	John Balmforth
Mary Ann Kelsey	Robert Shellenberger
H. A. Blackstone MD	Nicholas Ifft
Charles R. Hehmeyer	Judy Brown
Jeffery E. McClung	Gerald and Marilyn Mosher
Howard Cramer	Arthur Cobery
Carl and Sue Jacobson	Theodore & Donna Spinning
Greg Childs	Roy Welton
Newton TerMeer	Maury T. Adams
Margaret Walker	Charley E. Taylor
Archie Gordon	Gerald and Patricia Phillips
Richard A. Higgins	James W. McClain
Darrel D. Hansen	Louise Hammer Rossi
Michael Rei	Rev'd William Tapley
Albert B. Faris	Gene and Eisel Brantley
Bucky Green	Byron C. Shutz
David A. White	Scott and Dorothy Hendricks
Merrill J. Mattes	Brian Booth
Vincent J. Petrovski	Naomi Stanley Kulp
William A. Rhoads	Rose Burnham
Ida M. Fishel	Mrs. Edward P. Jones Jr.
Richard J. Laird	Harold A. Lapham
Francis E. Cuppage MD	Richard and Aileen Kennon
Edith F. Kuhn	Nancy Taylor
Doyle and Fiona Reed	Priscilla A. Marsh
Charles M. Little	Princess Everton
Carl MacDonald	Kendall & Elaine McNabney
Ken & Dorothy Tompkins	Robert and Margaret Carey
Tom Ronk	Paul & Margaret McAndrews
Albert K. Supp	Gene and Phyllis Lambert
W. E. Givens	Joseph F. Baumgardner
Bill Daggett	Donald S. Galbreath
Dr. and Mrs. Tige Crane	Edwin and Mary Jo Sprague
Michael W. Brown	Peter Van der Pas
Lloyd and Gladys Robinson	Robert G. Colvin
Doug and Eloise Crary	Marjorie B. Kernick
Doris Sparks	Ned and Ethel Kirkham
Marion R. and Velma Coen	Jacqueline Williams
Nanci Blackmarr	

I just received my hard bound copy of *The 1849 California Trail Diaries of Elijah Preston Howell*, published by OCTA. It is an attractive volume. It is everything you said and more. The introduction is well written, skillfully annotated, and a good read. I hope that future volumes in the "Emigrant Trails Historical Series" will be the same size and format. As a book collector I would like to see a colophon delineating the size of the editions.

Don Franklin
Santa Ana, CA

I am trying obtain information about members of my family who came across the country from Missouri to California in three separate wagon trains in 1851, 1852 and 1860 (or 1861). I have long been intrigued with the emigrant movement westward, and now, realizing that members of my family were part of it has spurred my interest.

- 1) In 1851, Mr. Preston F. Logan (a widower with 3 sons) left Lexington, Missouri to travel in a wagon train to California. That is all I know of him or his journey.
- 2) In 1852, Mr. William H. Rogers and Irene F. (Hardin) Rogers travelled to California with their two children, Sara Frances (age 10) and James Taylor (age 4). James Taylor is my great-grandfather. Mr. Henry Andrew Hardin (brother of Irene) accompanied them. Again I have no further information about their journey, other than that they had lived in Lexington, Missouri and settled in Sonoma and then Mendicino counties in California.
- 3) Finally, in 1860 or 1861, my great-great grandfather Benjamin Wesley Hunt was a captain of a wagon train that also travelled from Clark (?) County, Missouri to Sonoma County, California. He travelled with his wife, Elizabeth Sullivan and at least 2 children, Sarah Catherine (age 11) and Charles William (age 8). This is all I know of their journey.

If anyone has any information about their journey, journals in which they are mentioned, or even suggestions on how I might further research this, I would very much appreciate your letting me know.

Randall R. Harris
1677 Santa Barbara Dr., San Jose, Ca. 95121
Email: randyh49@aol.com"

I am trying to find information about my grandfather, William Bennett Gibbs, who was born in Barnard, Vermont in 1838 and moved to Waupaca, Wisconsin in about 1855. He worked there for a few years and then hired on with a man by the name of Cummings to drive a herd of horses from St. Joseph, Missouri to Sacramento, California. I am trying to find any information I can about this horse drive and its purpose. It was the year of the pony express and there were supposed to have been about 1,000 head of horses involved.

Thank you for considering this request.

Kathleen G. Knudsen
Osino 163, Box 6, Elko, Nevada 89801

Queries and Comments

Whatever happened to that Historic Trails Interpretive Center planned for Wyoming? Is it still moving along? The answer is Yes, and it has had a new surge of energy in recent weeks. There have been a few broken axles along the way, but no fatalities and the wagon company and its partners are about to make a major river crossing where we have a large cache of supplies on the other bank. That cache is \$700,000 in state funds that are waiting for us. The river crossing is the \$50,000 in matching funds we still lack to release that \$700,000. We already have the other \$650,000 of the required match.

Farther along the trail is a much larger cache of money, \$1,500,000, that the voters of Natrona County have already approved. To get that money, we must wait for it to be collected and then we must have assurance that our BLM partner will get its construction funding for the building itself. The BLM already has funding for the initial architectural and engineering studies.

Our other partner, the City of Casper, has donated over 10 acres of prime land for the project. The BLM has selected a superb architect who is already producing initial plans and concepts for the building. The Foundation has entered into a contract with one of the best exhibit designers in the business, and exciting, innovative exhibits are in the early stages of design. Best of all, the partners are all working with a harmony that is a joy to behold. Too many big projects have been spoiled by lack of early coordination between architects and exhibit planners. This project is fortunate to have avoided that problem.

Whenever public funds are involved, the realities of politics must be faced. We have successfully overcome most of the political hurdles, but we face challenges on the national level. Funding for the construction of the Center was contained in the President's Budget for the BLM in the Bush Administration. With the change of Administration, the process had to start again. The Interior Department produced enough money to get us to the early architectural stages, but the balance of the funding must be provided by special legislation. The Wyoming delegation will introduce legislation to provide this funding, but there are only three members of that delegation (two senators and one representative). Therefore, the needed votes must come from around the whole nation. When the time comes, your encouragement to your delegation will be most helpful.

The project is moving along the trail to completion, but, like an emigrant wagon train, it has overcome some severe hardships and is confidently facing the obstacles that still lie in the trail. No major journey or project is ever as easy as it first seems. There are always the detractors who say it can't be done, and there will be some welcome "I told you so's" when it becomes a reality.

Ron Lund

Buffalo Chips

TRAIL GUIDE

by Lyndia Carter

The future of the trails OCTA is preserving depends on the attitudes young people are developing and learning in their classrooms and homes, so it is appropriate that this section of *News from the Plains* presents successful activities and ideas sent in by teachers and parents so others who are working with children and teens can use them. A great thing about teachers is that they are always willing to learn and are constantly look for new ways to facilitate learning. If you have ideas or learning activities that you feel would enrich the trail and pioneering experiences of young people, please send them to *News from the Plains* to share with others who want to preserve our past and make learning about the past meaningful and exciting for kids.

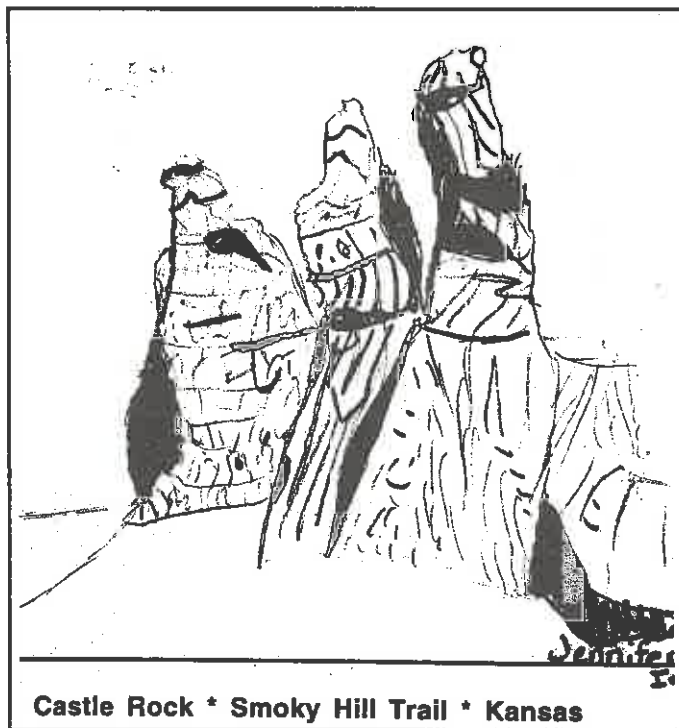
JACKIE WILLIAMS

Our first contribution comes from Jackie Williams who is the author of *Wagon Wheel Kitchens: Food on the Oregon Trail*. Jackie is often asked as a guest to speak to third and fourth grade classrooms and museums in Washington state. She has found these ideas very successful when she makes her presentations. These ideas will work well with a wide variety of age levels from elementary school to adults. Her book would be a good addition to your school or home library.

1. Roast coffee beans and grind them in an old coffee mill. Talk about how beans were packed for the trail. Discuss other drinks on the trail, such as tea and in some cases chocolate.
2. Discuss and demonstrate the making of fire. Tell about gathering buffalo chips and other types of fuel.
3. Discuss water sources and how dirty river water could be cleaned, such as using cornmeal as a filter. Demonstrate filtering and purifying techniques used by the pioneers. These demonstrations and discussions can lead to talking about germs and water-borne diseases.
4. Give out samples of cookies or gingerbread made using the old recipes and contrast with modern recipes. Have someone make the goodies beforehand. Pass out the old-time recipes with the modern equivalents.
5. Bring in samples of flour and sugar as they looked over a hundred years ago. Show hardtack (make some ahead and pass out samples if you'd like). Describe a typical trail dinner and have students imagine how it would taste. Bring in samples of dried onions, peaches, pumpkin, apples, etc. to show food preservation and the variety of foods available for eating on the trail.

6. Bring in a bowl of bread dough and let the children watch it rise. Most children have not ever seen bread dough. Talk about how bread would be baked on the trail.
7. Set up stations around the room with a volunteer doing some food related task. There could be a station for roasting beans, another for filtering water, one for showing and tasting dried foods or demonstrating how to cook with them, and one for old and new recipes for gingerbread. (You may wish to have some hands on activities so children can participate in food preparation in the old way—supervise carefully.)

OCTA member Jackie Williams received a Certificate of Commendation from the American Association of State and Local History in 1995 for her book *Wagon Wheel Kitchens*.

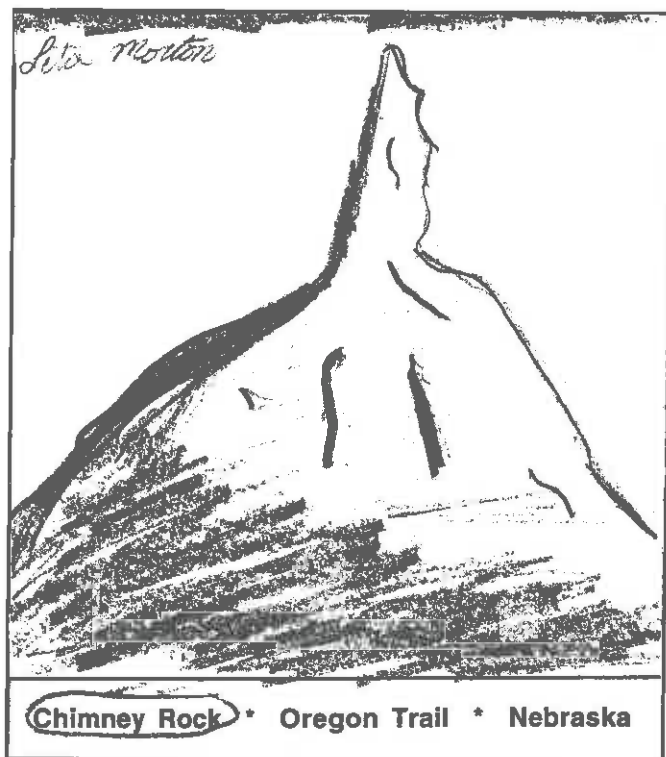


Castle Rock * Smoky Hill Trail * Kansas

Jennifer L. Iriye captured Castle Rock on the Smokey Hill Trail in Kansas.

BUFFALO CHIPS NEEDS YOUR HELP!

Kids and teachers, these are your pages—let's fill them up. Send articles, poems, stories and above all, puzzles and pictures to Buffalo Chips, 1451 Kensington Ave., SLC, UT 84105.



Leta Morton sketched an imposing Chimney Rock on the Oregon Trail in Nebraska.

CLASSROOM OF THE QUARTER

Our Classroom of the Quarter is a creative outfit from the Colorado Front Range. Congratulations!—Editor.

I am a fourth grade teacher at Century Elementary in Aurora, Colorado, Aurora Public Schools. I am a member of OCTA's Colorado Chapter.

My students are studying Colorado History, including its geography, landforms, water courses, animals, trails and people.

I use the landforms along the trails that pass through or lead to Colorado as our focus for study and research. Students used maps, travel brochures and photographs as their guides. Headings from trail diaries and journal sketches sparked their imaginations and placed them on the trails in the 1848-1850 era.

I am also enclosing a photograph of our bulletin board. Our landforms are on display. They are in place along the trails. We are experiencing discovery and settlement.

Thanks for supporting student publications.

Jane Whiteley











Enthusiastic members of Jane Whiteley's fourth-grade class at Century Elementary in Aurora, Colorado show off their trail project.
—Photo by Jane Whiteley

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WHAT'S NEW IN THE NEWS?

-  Our lead article outlines the schedule for this year's National Convention in Elko, Nevada.
-  Sharp investigators are shedding new light on the Yreka Trail in northern California. Page 4.
-  Robby Gunstream and the indefatigable (and long-suffering) Brewster set out from City of Rocks for Sutter's Fort. Page 5.
-  Levida Hileman describes her love affair with "The Rock." Page 7.
-  Black Mountaineer James Beckwourth was no illiterate as this letter to the *Marysville Herald* shows. Page 10.
-  Follow the "Reading Trail" with Lyndia Carter. Page 12.
-  Chapter News. Pages 13-15.
-  And, of course, Buffalo Chips Rides Again! See Pages 18-19.

The Nominating and Leadership Committee is calling for nominations for the election of four members to OCTA's Board of Directors at its upcoming annual meeting in Elko, Nevada, in August, 1996. The terms of present Directors Lee Underbrink, Larry Jones, Will Bagley and Rose Ann Tompkins will expire in 1996.

According to OCTA's bylaws, any current member is eligible to be nominated to serve on the Board. Also, any member may submit the name of one or more nominees. Written and signed nominations, including signed endorsements from three additional members for each nominated individual, are required. Each nomination should include a brief description of the nominee's qualifications, experiences and trail-related activities. The nominee must submit a signed statement of his or her willingness to serve. Nominations and suggestions should be submitted by April 1, 1996. Ballots will be mailed to the general membership in May. Please send nominations and suggestions to:

Roger Blair
1658 S. Mountain View
Sheridan, WY 82801-3221
307-672-8090