



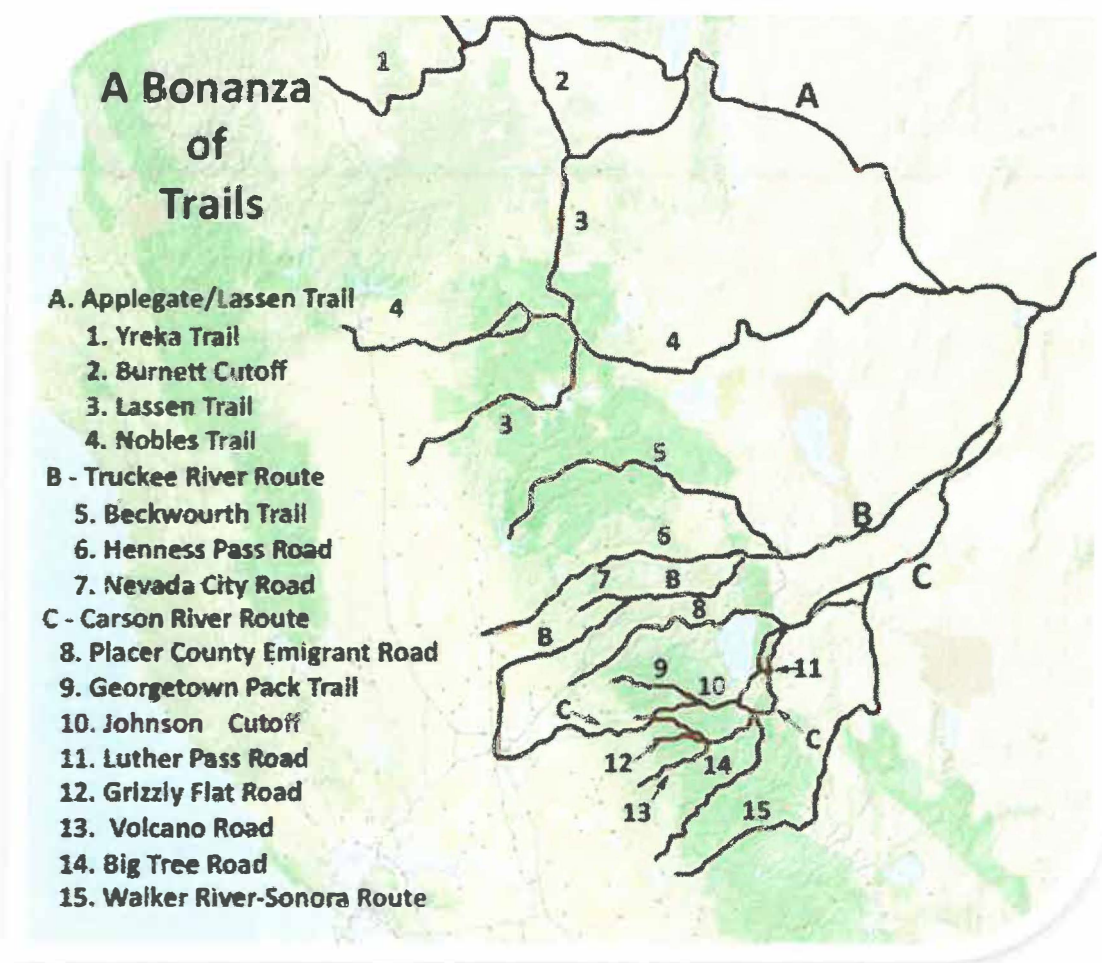
# OREGON-CALIFORNIA TRAILS ASSOCIATION



## THIRTY-THIRD ANNUAL CONVENTION

September 21 - 25, 2015

Hosted by California-Nevada Chapter



## CONVENTION BOOK

**HARVEYS**  
LAKE TAHOE

Stateline, Nevada



# **WELCOME TO THE THIRTY-THIRD ANNUAL OCTA CONVENTION**

Stateline, Nevada

A Bonanza of Trails awaits you in the high Sierra.

The convention committee has been working hard to make this one of the best conventions ever.

A look at the variety of bus tours and hikes should be enough to make all rut nuts grin with delight.

The scenery is world class, and you will have the chance to pause and enjoy it unlike the emigrants who hurried along to cross this final barrier before winter set in.

The Lake Tahoe area is rich in natural and cultural history, and we can only touch a small part of it during our convention, so we invite you to spend a few extra days exploring the area.

Carson City has a wealth of activities and sites from a steam train ride to Virginia City to John Fremont's "lost" cannon at the Nevada State Museum in the old U.S. Mint.

If you could use a nice relaxing soak, try either Grover Hot Springs State Park, or Walley's Hot Springs Resort, which are just a short drive south of Lake Tahoe.

Just ask any of your California-Nevada Chapter hosts for suggestions on more activities or places to visit if you do not find enough information on Page 52.

We are looking forward to visiting with old friends, meeting new ones at the dessert Welcoming Receptions, and traveling the trails with you in this spectacular place.

Mark  
Wilson

President CA-NV Chapter



Dick  
Waugh

2015 Convention Chair

## **A PARTIAL LIST OF SPONSORS AND SUPPORTERS OF THE 2015 OCTA CONVENTION**

Amador County Historical Society

California Trail Center Foundation

CA-NV Chapter Cash Donors

Harveys Lake Tahoe

National Park Service

Orrin Schwab Books

The Sacramento Archeological Society

San Joaquin Historical Society and  
Museum

Sorensen's Resort

Truman State University Press

Walley's Hot Springs Resort

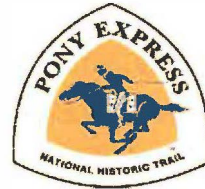
Wells Fargo Bank

And the many organizations that publicized  
the convention in their newsletters

A more complete list is posted by the  
Registration/Information Desk  
in the Promenade.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Welcome	1
2015 OCTA Convention Supporters and Sponsors	1
California in 1840s	2
History of the Truckee-Donner Trail	7
First Wagons Over Donner Summit	10
Geology of the Sierra Map of Trails	15
Map of the Trails	16-17
A Bonanza of Trails History	18
Seeing the Elephant	26
Lake Tahoe Environs	28
Preconvention Tours	29
Convention Bus Tours	32
Speakers	34
Book Room Vendors	42
Author's Night	43
Exhibits	43
Suggested Reading	44
Awards Night	46
Live Auction	46
Raffle and Auctions, Class 101	47
Workshops	48
End of the Trail Evening	50
Suggestions for Visiting Lake Tahoe	53
Lake Tahoe Data	56
Who Made It Happen?	57
2016 OCTA Convention, Idaho	back cover



Thank you,

**National Park Service**

National Trails

Intermountain Region

Santa Fe, New Mexico

*for funding these  
convention expenses*

**All Printing  
Postage Expenses Speaker  
Expenses Audio-Visual  
Expenses**





# CALIFORNIA IN THE 1840s

By Tom Hunt

As we begin our trip to explore portions of the historic Truckee-Donner Trail, it might be beneficial to establish the historical context which surrounded the opening of the emigrant routes into California. Obviously, these openings and the overland emigrant experience of which they are a part did not occur in a historical vacuum. The California to which the emigrants were coming deserves a little consideration in order to place the California Trail into proper perspective.

First of all, it must be remembered that in the years from 1841 (the year in which the Bidwell-Bartleson Party, the very first of all the overland emigrant wagon trains to cross the continent to the Pacific Slope, arrived in California) until 1846, when that year's emigration arrived to discover that the Bear Flag Revolt and the U.S. occupation of Mexican California had taken place, the emigrants were actually preparing to settle in a foreign country when they arrived in the Great Central Valley of California.

To the native-born Californians, these American *emigrants* (spelled with an "em") were really foreign *immigrants* (spelled with an "im"). And these newly-arriving Americans fully understood that they were entering a society and a country which was quite alien to those which they had left behind—a different style of living, a different culture, a different heritage, a different style of government, a different set of laws, a different language, and, for many of them, a different religion.

And yet they continued to come, and while their reasons for coming may have been varied and perhaps unclear even to themselves, and while some of them might have secretly harbored thoughts of seeing California brought into the American Republic, the assumption must be that, as the price to be paid for entering into a new life at the very western edge of the continent, they were prepared to accommodate themselves to these very profound changes.

Let us take a very brief look at the Mexican California of the early 1840s and at those historical events which shaped it.

After the establishment of the Mexican Republic in 1824, California (or Alta California, as it was more properly called) continued to be ruled by a series of military governors appointed by the government in faraway Mexico City. Sometimes these governors were native Alta Californians; more often they were not. Sometimes they proved to be capable; often they were not. There were a great many changes of administrations, and there was much political infighting.

It is also true to state that, as the years went by, the Alta Californians began to feel less and less content to be under the control of what they perceived to be the largely inattentive government in Mexico City and more and more independent and willing to challenge (or ignore) direct Mexican control of their affairs. This is not at all surprising considering how far distant Alta California was from Mexico itself and taking into account the propensity of the Alta Californians for engaging in political intrigue amongst themselves.

As early as 1836, one of the native Alta Californian governors, Juan Alvarado, declared the "free and sovereign state of Alta California." It was sort of a moot point as far as anyone else



was concerned, and there continued to be a bewildering round of governors, some native-born and some from Mexico, until in 1842 when the very unpopular Governor, Manuel Micheltorena, had the distinction of being the very last *non*-Californian Governor to be appointed from Mexico City.

It is perhaps safe to sum up the realities of the political situation in Alta California at the beginning of the period of emigrant arrivals from the United States by saying that the Californians conceived of themselves as being fully capable of running their own affairs, if not entirely capable of ruling each other. From 1842 until 1846, the political infighting and maneuvering went on, often with a division between the northern and southern parts of the state (so what else is new?) and continuing attempts by one faction or geographical division to assert authority over the whole state.

Against this ongoing background of discontent and political intrigue, we must take a look at the role played by non-Californians in Alta California. There were substantial numbers of foreigners, including Americans, living in Alta California prior to the beginning of the overland emigrations. The commerce of Alta California consisted almost entirely of the trade in hides and tallow, and the native Californians were content to produce their items on their immense ranchos and leave the business of trade, as well as the providing of goods and services, to others. These were the roles which were filled by the foreigners, and a great many of them became Mexican citizens, accepted the Roman Catholic faith, married into prominent Alta Californian families, and became influential and active in the life of Alta California.

Under Spanish and, later, Mexican Law, title to all land resided in the crown or in the state, and land could only be granted to individuals by the Crown or State. Only presidios (military forts) and pueblos (towns) were granted titles in fee when established and duly recognized. Even the Roman Catholic Church did not actually hold title to its vast mission holdings, and after the Secularization Act of 1833, ownership of all mission lands officially reverted to the state. The one way for an individual to get clear title to land was to apply for a land grant from the Government. The minimum size of a grant was fixed at one square league or 4500 acres, and the largest was fixed at eleven square leagues or just under 55,000 acres.

However, additional acreages could be amassed through marriage or by gift, purchase, or bequest from a grantee. Once granted, land could then be broken up and sold in smaller units by the grantee.

The intent of the Secularization Act of 1833 was to make the mission Indians self-sustaining by turning over portions of the church lands to them. In actual practice, it led to the acquiring of these lands by the Californians and contributed directly to the further expansion of the Rancho System. Since the Land-Grant/Rancho System was to be one of the most important, if not the most important, factor in the subsequent historical interplay between the American emigrants and the native Alta California populace, let us devote a few moments to its consideration. I quote from Robert Glass Cleland's *From Wilderness to Empire*:

*In applying for a land grant under Mexican Law, the petitioner stated that he was a native-born or naturalized Mexican citizen; set forth the location, boundaries, approximate size, and identifying landmarks of the desired tract; testified that none of the land in question had been included in a previous concession; declared that he*

*was prepared to stock the holdings with the number of horses and cattle required by law; listed the names of the neighboring ranches; and supplied a diseno, or rough topographical map, of the property. The diseno showed not only the boundaries of the grant, but also the hills, watercourses, marshes, wastelands, and other landmarks mentioned in the petition.*

The petitioner then went through a verification procedure which required that the grant be surveyed by a magistrate in the presence of a number of assisting witnesses and neighboring owners. The boundaries of the grant were surveyed on horseback, and the actual measuring was done by means of a long rawhide rope stretched between two poles. At the end of the survey, the new owner (to quote again from Cleland) "entered upon and walked over said lands, pulled up grass, scattered handfuls of earth, broke off branches of trees, and performed other acts and demonstrations of possession as signs of the possession which he said he took of said lands."

While not officially noted in this verification procedure, it might be added that it was entirely possible that some sort of monetary gratuity might also have changed hands in this process.

Obviously, such imprecise verification procedures, in which very often such things as trees, rocks, and watercourses were used to delineate the boundaries of the grant, were bound to lead to many disputes, and this was one of the reasons why there was so much continuing litigation over land boundaries after California came under the control of the U.S. This, and the fact that the recycled mission lands often carried no valid title with them because the Catholic Church had never had title to them in the first place.

The difficulty of obtaining land under the Mexican Land Grant System and the on-going confusion as to title were two problems facing the newly arrived emigrants. The fact that the minimum size for a land grant was 4,500 acres presented another problem. Such a large acreage required a very substantial investment of capital in order to proceed to stock it properly as required under the law. Added to this was the fact that most emigrants were farmers in the traditional American way, and not cattle ranchers, and they were thus accustomed to thinking in terms of the acreages they needed for a successful family farm back in the States. They saw the Californian Land-Grant/Rancho System as a barrier to farming as they had always practiced it.

Finally, the idea of having to give up their U.S. citizenships to qualify for a grant didn't sit well with many of them, either. All of these considerations entered into the ever-growing feeling of tension between the emigrants and the Californians.

Political developments back in the States were to have a very direct impact on events in California, too, and we here turn briefly to a discussion of those developments.

James K. Polk had become President in 1845, and he entered office with three major foreign policy goals: settlement of the Oregon boundary question with Great Britain, completion of the annexation of Texas to the Union (a process which had begun under his predecessor, John Tyler), and, due to his very strong suspicion that Great Britain or some other European power had the same thing in mind, the acquisition of Alta California from Mexico.

By 1846, he had succeeded in accomplishing two of these goals. Texas had voted to accept annexation to the U.S. in June of 1845, and Polk had succeeded in negotiating a



satisfactory and peaceful settlement of the Oregon boundary dispute with Great Britain. Only the California matter remained to be resolved, and Polk was undertaking to negotiate a purchase of California from the Mexican government while, at the very same time, quietly feeling out sentiment amongst the Alta Californians for direct annexation with their concurrence. During 1845, Polk had instructed the State Department to make Thomas O. Larkin its "confidential agent in California" with an eye towards taking advantage of the disillusionment and dissatisfaction of many Alta Californians over Mexican neglect.

There appeared to be a real possibility for a successful conclusion to these dual efforts, but then, in December of 1845, Congress officially annexed Texas, and an outraged Mexican government broke off diplomatic relations with the U.S. and refused even to receive Polk's personal emissary for further direct negotiations on the question of Alta California.

Early in 1846, American and Mexican armies faced each other along the Rio Grande. A minor skirmish served as a pretext, and the U.S., charging that Mexico had initiated hostilities, declared war.

Meanwhile, back in California, John Charles Fremont, who was just then exiting California after being ordered out by the very nervous military governor, Don Jose Castro, was overtaken on the shores of Klamath Lake in Southern Oregon by a special military courier from the States, Lt. Archibald Gillespie (Peter Lassen was his guide). Upon receiving Gillespie's communications, Fremont immediately hastened back to California. There is a continuing debate amongst historians as to the contents of Fremont's messages and to his reasons or motivations for returning, but the American emigrants took it to be a sign of U.S. support for some sort of rebellious action on their part, and they flocked to his camp. The American settlers initiated several minor skirmishes with Governor Castro's forces, and within a few days they proclaimed a California Republic in Sonoma and raised the Bear Flag. Fremont arrived in Sonoma towards the end of June and took charge of the nearly two hundred men who had gathered there, and the so-called Bear Flag Revolt was underway. The California Republic was short-lived.

Commodore Sloat arrived in Monterey on July 7, 1846, and raised the American flag before turning over his command almost immediately to Commodore Stockton. The Bear Flag (now California's state flag) came down at Sonoma two days later.

On August 30, 1846, Edwin Bryant, arriving by pack train at Johnson's Rancho on the Bear River north of Sacramento, had this to say in his journal about this fast-paced and bewildering run of events:

*Mr. J. (Mr. Johnson) gave us the first number of the first newspaper ever published in California, entitled "The Californian," and published and edited at Monterey by Dr Robert Semple, a native Kentuckian. It was dated about two weeks back. From the columns of this small sheet we gleaned some farther items of general intelligence from the United States, all of great interest to us. The leading paragraph, under the editorial was, in substance, a call upon the people of California to set about the organization of a territorial government, with a view to immediate annexation to the United States. This seemed and sounded very odd. We had been travelling in as straight a line as we could, crossing rivers, mountains, and deserts, nearly four*



*months beyond by our Government; but here, on the remotest confines of the world as it were, where we expected to visit and explore a foreign country, we found ourselves under American authority, and about to be "annexed" to the American Union. Events such as this are very remarkable, and are well calculated to excite the pride and vanity, if they do not always tally with the reason and judgment, of American citizens and Republicans. Distance 17 miles.*

Two days later, on September 1, 1846, Bryant reached Sutter's Fort.

Keeping in mind that Captain Sutter had been one of those foreigners who had willingly adapted himself to the California system and held his large holdings under a land grant, let us end our little digression into California history with Bryant's encounter with the irony of the new state of affairs

Crossing the Rio de los Americanos, the waters of which, at this season, are quite shallow at the ford, we proceeded over a well-beaten road to Sutter's Fort, arriving there when the sun was about an hour and a half high. Riding up to the front gate I saw two Indian sentinels pacing to and fro before it, and several Americans, or *foreigners*, (as all who are not Californians by birth are here called), sitting in the gateway, dressed in buckskin pantaloons and blue sailors' shirts with white stars worked on the collars. I inquired if Captain Sutter was in the Fort? A very small man, with a peculiarly sharp red face and a most voluble tongue, gave the response. He was probably a corporal. He said in substance, that perhaps I was not aware of the great changes which had recently taken place in California; that the Fort now belonged to the United States, and that Captain Sutter, although he was in the Fort, had no control over it. He was going into a minute history of the complicated circumstances and events which had produced this result, when I reminded him that we were too much fatigued to listen to a long discourse, but if Captain Sutter was inside the walls, and could conveniently step to the gate a moment, I would be glad to see him. A lazy-looking Indian with a ruminating countenance, after some time spent in parleying, was dispatched with my message to Captain Sutter.

Capt. S. soon came to the gate, and saluted as with much gentlemanly courtesy, and friendly cordiality. He said that events had transpired in the country, which, to his deep regret, had so far deprived him of the control of his own property, that he did not feel authorized to invite us inside the walls to remain. The Fort, he said, was occupied by soldiers, under the pay of the U.S., and commanded by Mr. Kern (of Fremont's party).

I replied to him, that although it would be something of a novelty to sleep under a roof, after our late nomadic life, it was a matter of small consideration. If he would supply us with some meat, a little salt, and such vegetables as he might have, we neither asked nor desired more from his hospitality, which we all knew was liberal, to the highest degree of generosity.

Reprint from 1991 Sacramento OCTA Convention Book, with permission by author, Tom Hunt

# THE HISTORY OF THE TRUCKEE-DONNER TRAIL

Tom Hunt

The year 1844 marked the opening of the Truckee-Donner trail as the first successful emigrant wagon route over the Sierra Nevada and into California.

The party opening this route is known as the Stevens-Townsend-Murphy Party. Elisha Stevens (or Stephens) was the elected Captain of the party. With the party were the old trapper and mountain man, Caleb Greenwood, as well as two of his sons, John and Britain. Caleb was hired as the party's guide as far as Ft. Hall, beyond which he had no firsthand knowledge of the trail to California. The party worked its way down the Humboldt River as far as the sink by the wagon route opened via City of Rocks in 1843 by the Joseph Walker contingent of the Chiles-Walker Party.

At the Humboldt Sink, Walker had turned his party southward along the eastern flank of the Sierra Nevada (abandoning his wagons in the vicinity of Owens Lake) to cross into California via Walker Pass and the Kern River. The Stevens-led party wished to continue directly westward from the Sink, and after receiving helpful information from an old Paiute chief, whom the party named Truckee, the Stevens Party crossed the Truckee Forty-Mile Desert to reach the Truckee River at Wadsworth.

They then worked their way directly up the river via Truckee Meadows (Reno) to the mouth of present-day Donner Creek. At the creek, the party split: a group of two women and four men, all young and vigorous, packing by horses on up the Truckee River to Lake Tahoe and then crossing the Sierra Nevada to follow down one of the tributaries of the American River to arrive at Sutter's Fort a few days before the main party; the main party following up Donner Creek to Donner Lake and camping there a few days while the men scouted out a crossing of the crest of the Sierra Nevada.

Here the decision was made to leave six of the wagons, including their valuable contents, at the lake and to proceed to take the other five wagons over the difficult pass just to the west of the lake using the extra oxen from the abandoned wagons to help with the pulling. Three young men volunteered to stay with the wagons at the lake over the winter in order to protect the goods from the Indians, but the entire party proceeded to climb the pass. The climb over the granite outcroppings was exceedingly difficult and dangerous, requiring that all the contents of the wagons be unloaded and carried to the top, but in late November (George Stewart gives the probably date as November 25) they finally succeeded in reaching the top. The three young men then returned to the lake and to the six wagons which had been left behind.

The three of them immediately set about to construct a rude log cabin, roofed with hides and pine boughs, in which to spend the winter. Later, realizing that they faced starvation due to the deep snows which prevented hunting, they made the decision to abandon the cabin and try to make it over the Sierra Nevada to Sutter's Fort. However, young Moses Schallenberger, the eighteen-year old brother-in-law of Dr. Townsend, found that he could not make it and returned to the cabin to spend the winter by himself. He was found alive the next spring, and his experience remains one of most memorable chapters in the in the annals of the Californian emigrations.

The main Stevens Party proceeded on from Donner Pass through falling snow to some point along the Yuba River Valley (Stewart suggests that it may have been in the vicinity of Big Bend, and this would appear to be borne out by the famous 1846 Jefferson Map). Here the party halted to allow Mrs. Martin Murphy to give birth to a baby girl, Elizabeth Yuba Murphy. Here also the decision was made to split the party for a second time. The five wagons, the women and children, and two of the men of the party could get into Sutter's and return with supplies and fresh animals.

A cabin was built for those who were to stay, most of the cattle were slaughtered for food, and then seventeen men proceeded on to Sutter's. Here they were re-united with the six who had packed in by way of Lake Tahoe. The original plan was for the men to return immediately to the mountains and bring the women and children down to Sutter's but California was in the midst of one of its many petty revolutions, the so-called Micheltorena War, and Sutter, and ally of Gov. Micheltorena, persuaded the men that the party in the mountains was safe enough and that the snow was too deep to allow a rescue attempt, and then off most of them marched to Southern California.

It was not until March of 1845 that those left in the Sierra, including young Schallenberger, were brought safely into the Sacramento Valley. Later, when the snows melted, the men went out and brought the wagons in, too. Technically, the wagons did not reach the end of their journey until 1845, but it had been proved that there was a practicable emigrant wagon route via the Truckee River. This was to remain the only route by which wagons were brought into Central California until the Mormon-Carson [Carson River Route] and Lassen Trails were opened in 1848.

In 1854, a party which included Caleb Greenwood and sons, (it also included James Clyman), returning eastward to meet that year's emigration and persuade the emigrants to come on to California, opened an alternate route northeastward from present-day Truckee via Dog Valley and then back to the Truckee River at Verdi, a few miles west of Reno. This route allowed future wagon trains to avoid all the dangerous and fatiguing crossings in the upper Truckee River canyon. This Verdi-Dog Valley-Truckee by-pass was to be used by all subsequent emigrants following the Truckee River route.

In 1846, an alternate crossing over the Sierra crest was opened from the eastern end of the Donner Lake in a southwesterly direction through Coldstream Canyon. Two crossings were eventually opened off of the Coldstream Canyon approach – Roller Pass, the southernmost crossing, and Coldstream (or Middle) Pass between Mt. Judah and Donner Peak. Both of these passes were about 700 feet higher than the original pass, but they were not as difficult to approach. For many years, wagon travel was almost entirely by these two other passes.

The following three paragraphs are quotes from Chuck Grayson's *Trail of the First Wagons Over the Sierra Nevada*.

*The pass opened by the Stevens Party was used by those who followed until late September 1846 when the Joseph Aram Party scouted out a route to avoid the steep wall of Donner Pass. They found a tour up Cold Stream Valley to a saddle 7,850 feet high between Mounts Judah and Lincoln, less than two miles south of the original pass. This*



*pass was relatively easy to approach until 400 feet. where it rises precipitously up a thirty-degree slope.*

*Several days behind the Aram Party, a group captained by Nicolas Carriger and guided by Greenwood reached the pass. In order to reach the summit, Carriger's diary indicates that they led twelve yoke of oxen to the top, let down long chains, and pulled one wagon at a time to the top. A log roller, laid across the lip of the pass over which the chains were passed, served to lessen the friction. This pass soon became known as "Roller Pass." It was perhaps two years later that a large party cut a switchback trail up the unbelievable steep mountainside.*

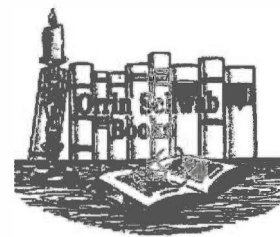
*...The three trails over the summit converged at Summit Valley near present Norden, and from there to the Sierra foothills the entire route became a constant fight to overcome a myriad of steep ridges and valleys, rock-strewn canyons, and granite out-croppings.*

In 1849, diaries indicate that a route was opened northward off the historic Truckee-Donner Trail from Greenhorn Creek in the vicinity of present-day Chicago Park and Rollins Reservoir. This trail took the '49ers directly to the Grass Valley-Nevada City area.

In 1850, a route from Nevada City, following a ridge to the north of the original trail route along Lowell Ridge, was opened into the Truckee-Donner Trail at Bear Valley. This route is today very closely approximated by State Highway [CA] 20. Because of the extreme difficulties of taking wagons over the original route, especially at such places as Steep Hollow, most emigrant traffic after 1850 followed this route into Nevada City, Grass Valley, and then on into the Sacramento Valley.

The Donner-Truckee Trail, while the most historic of all the trans-Sierra emigrant crossings, was far from the easiest because of the rough terrain and the necessity of having to cross from one ridge to another in the long descent to the Sacramento Valley. From what we can deduce from contemporary records, many of the other crossings were much more heavily used than the Donner-Truckee Trail. It was not until the establishment of improved toll roads, notably the Dutch Flat-Donner Lake Road, and the opening of the trans-continental railroad in the 1860s that this route again gained preeminence as the main transportation corridor into central California.

Reprint from 1991 Sacramento OCTA Convention Book,  
with permission by author, Tom Hunt



Come visit me in the book room.  
I have recently acquired several  
large Western book collections.

- Great variety of inventory
- Books in every price range

**Orrin Schwab Books**  
**800-823-9124**  
**osnbooks@gmail.com**

## A REPORT: THE FIRST WAGONS OVER DONNER SUMMIT©

By David Hollecker (Rev. 2015)

*(The opinions expressed in this copyright article are those solely of the author and they may or may not define the opinion of the organization in whose publication it appears.)*

Man has changed the character and geography of the Donner Summit area over the past 170 years. Road building, railroad construction, utility and pipe lines have had their way to change the summit to the point that if the emigrants saw the pass today, it would be unrecognizable to them. Today, this has caused confusion and misinterpretation of where the wagon roads went over the top.

George Stewart, an author of several books about this pass, basically (I'm paraphrasing) threw up his hands after 20 years of searching and said I don't know where it went; maybe someone will find it one day. Well, it has been found in two areas where no one thought it could have possibly gone. When writing about the summit, most authors have started with the assumption that the 1844--1846 wagon road went up and over the top on the south side of Summit Canyon, where the rail road is situated. When providing the interpretation of diary quotes, past and current authors try to find a quote to fit that area on the south side of the canyon.

One of the popular books written about the pass is *Tail of the Elephant*, by Olive Newell, published in 1997. Newell remarks on page 363 of her book, *"...routes taken by the following emigrants is somewhat arbitrary because their descriptions are so meager and tend to be unclear whether the Roller Pass or Coldstream summit is meant."*

Philip Weddell, back in the 1920s, marked Coldstream Pass as an emigrant wagon crossing based solely on his observations of a "trail." He never mentions where he found the trail or the research that guided him to this location or to several others in his trail markings. No emigrants

used Coldstream pass as there are no diaries found mentioning the trail passing any lake near the top after mid-September 1846; Lake Mary in this case. This is something that surely would have been mentioned by later diarists.

The Central Pacific RR used Coldstream pass to transport equipment to build the rail road beyond the uncompleted tunnels. Newell's confusion over the diaries stems from the fact she accepts Weddell's markings. She and others offer no thought as to the wagons possibly going over the top on the north side of Summit Canyon.

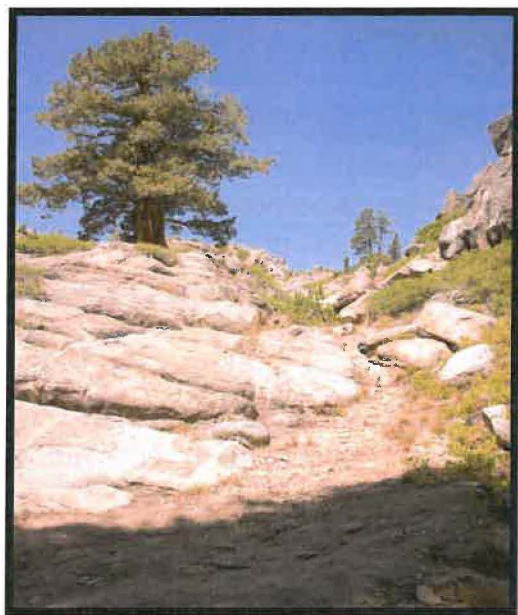


Photo #A – Trail heading towards Stephens Pass.

When this article first came out in 2014, John Krizek, President of OCTA, sent me this observation,

*When I was researching the Stephens-Townsend-Murphy Party experience for the Forgotten Journey video about 14 years ago, Don Wiggins took me up there to show me where he figured the first wagons got over the top.*

*...Don pointed how they could not have come up following [what was later] the Dutch Flat Road because they didn't have time to build rock [portions] of the road.*

*Assuming he was correct... looking up at the pass, there was the obvious choice of*



*going up the north side, rather than the south side where the railroad and China Wall got built. Sure enough, we went up and over and came down in the Donner Ski Ranch area on the west side [passing Trails West marker T-40].*

In the summer of 2011, Chris Wray and Don Buck walked down that route. They recorded trail artifacts made by man and wagons. At about that same time, I was searching the internet and came across a "report" on recreational opportunities, as I remember, and that person also mentioned seeing what could be an old trail but gave no details. I lost that internet page shortly thereafter, so I don't remember who wrote it other than they mentioned they lived in the area.

In early 2009, I had been spending time at the summit and came across two large rocks (boulders) that had wagon tire wear on the surface and they were in alignment with Stephens pass.

As mentioned, in 2000, Trails West, Inc. placed a steel rail marker at the pass, now called Stephens Pass, near Lake Angela. Don Wiggins' trail research in the area determined that the route had to be over that pass. Despite finding little ground evidence at the time, the organization went along with his suppositions and placed the marker at that pass. Trails West received some criticisms for this marking as it did not conform to what earlier trail historians believed where the pass was located.

So what are we to make of these "two discoveries?" Well, it needs to be verified and documented. In July, 2014, Dick Vaughn, Howdy Hoover, Bill and Leta Bishell, Jim and Denise Moorman, members of Trails West and OCTA's CA-NV Chapter and photographer Dan Murray hiked down the trail and photographed trail artifacts and made notes on what they saw. The evidence found is conclusive.

When determining where wagon roads exist, one must rely on diary quotes and physical changes to the ground. Some historians, as

mentioned above, believe the wagons went up Summit Canyon and then turned to the left and went where the China Wall is now. They believed the wagon road then turned somewhat to the right and went over the top and down. In this process they would have passed Lake Mary. This has been the accepted route of the first wagons for decades. Whatever supposed evidence was on the ground was pretty much destroyed or altered by all the activity over the years. But the few diary accounts that have been found for the 1844–1845 period do not describe this route as the one that was taken.

So now we need to look at the few diary quotes that have been known for some time that show that Stephens Pass is where they were:

*It took us three days to take our wagons and cattle from the bottom of the cascade to the top – about 4 miles. The oxen could be trailed from the bottom to the top by blood. Since we crossed, there has been a new route found that is a great deal better. Six or eight yoke of oxen can pull up a wagon in two hours. On top of this mountain is a small lake.*

D. Rhoads, 1846

*A mile brought us to a small dimple on top of the mountain, in the center of which is a miniature lake surrounded by green grass. It was some time before we could determine our course down the Sierra on the western side. The emigrant wagon-trail was entirely effaced. Around the small lake we saw the traces of encampments; but beyond it, in no direction, could we discover any signs that man had ever passed.*

Bryant, 1846

*From the time we left the lake on the north side of the mountain [Donner Lake] until we arrived at the lake on the top...*

William Todd, 1845

The key in these quotes are the last sentences. Some historians, in writing about this trail, have almost to the person, bracketed the



words "Lake Mary" at the end of the word "lake." Problem: Lake Mary is not at the top of any mountain. Lake Mary is 200 to 800 feet lower in elevation than Coldstream or Donner Passes. The lake at the top can only be Lake Angela on Stephens Pass.

So, there are other Donner Pass writers that "confirm" the first wagon route over the Sierra is next to the old Central Pacific RR. One source they use is the J. E. Freeman 1866 map showing the rail lines and the two emigrant trails. Mr. Freeman drew that map some 20 years after the fact and assumes that most of the Dutch Flat Road is on top of the first 1844 emigrant road and any evidence of emigrant wagons using the same route was compromised. Freeman's map also shows the 1846 and later road over Roller Pass; but no trail over Coldstream Pass.

Moses Schallenberger was a member of the first party over the pass. He gave an interview and said in part that the route in 1844 used by the first wagons went over the pass where the present railroad is located. In 1844, Moses was 17 years of age and the interview occurred in 1885, when he was 58, some 41 years later.

Olive Newell, on pages 15 and 16 of her book, says there are several types of emigrant recordings of experiences.

Diaries: day to day records written while traveling...

Journals: made soon after their journey...

Letters: as immediate as journals...

Reminiscences: recollections of events... several years afterward . . . drafted by the emigrant or dictated to a transcriber. A reminiscence is the least dependable for accuracy since memory fades and changes over time...

*From the top of the mountain, Donner Lake was in full view a few miles to the left of the road looking east.*

Reynolds, 1849

Again, some writers have bracketed the word "right" after the phrase "... to the left ... " thinking the diarist made a mistake in writing down his directions. But did he? Notice photo #1 in this article where the photographer, standing on a rock, is taking a picture of the 1844 route.

The Reynolds quote about the view of Donner Lake was made in 1849. Many writers have said that the first route over the Sierra ended by early 1847 with the 1846 mid-September opening of Roller Pass. Apparently, this first route and bypass was still used to some degree by the emigrants.

There is a report that has wagons using a different way to the top in 1845–1846 than the 1844 route used by the Stephens-Murphy-Townsend party. Peter Benitz, in researching his family history, read 3 books: *The Brazen Overlanders of 1845* by Donna Wojcik, *California Trail* by George Stewart and *Wagons West* by Frank McLynn. He found references to his family member, Michael Kolmer, which he had traveled with a wagon train led by Caleb Greenwood. Benitz adapted from these books this statement:

*The hardest miles of all – it took 2 to 3 days to climb to the pass. At one point faced with a rock cliff, some emigrants took their wagons apart [unloaded?] and lifted them piece by piece; others found a bypass...*

Michael Kolmer (A.K.A. Coleman),  
1845 – Grigsby-Ide party

Caleb Greenwood, the Grigsby-Ide party guide, had found a route/bypass up the east side of the mountains that was easier than the one followed in 1844. This bypass, of some 1,300 feet, is off to the side of the 1844 trail, near the top. Sometimes, as in this case, the evidence being the wagon tire wears on two boulders.

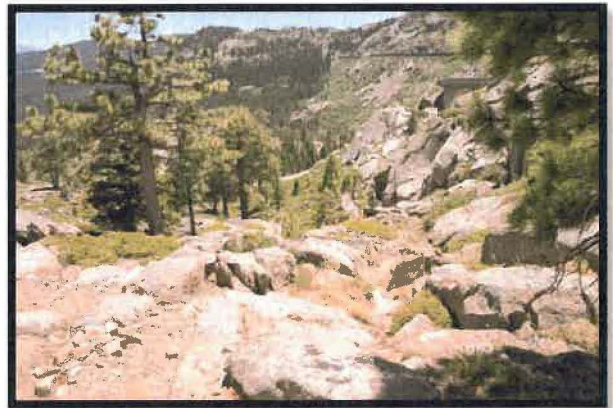
The following are photos of trail evidence. ~



1. Photo of the photographer standing on a large rock and just below him, rocks were stacked to allow right side wagon wheels to easily go over. Note rocks in lower right for wagon left side wheels to use. Donner Lake is in the upper left corner. *1844 route.*



3. Trail at center right of photo. *1844 route.*



4. Note rocks pushed aside or lined up in lower left of photo. *1844 route.*



2. Rocks piled at end of a Juniper log for wagon wheels to get up on log to traverse a rough spot. Juniper trees contain very dense wood. Growth rings are very close together making for very slow deterioration. *1844 route.*



5. Possible rope and chain scars on this Juniper tree could have been made by holding or pulling wagons up the steep trail. I could find no diary quotes that mentioned them doing this. *1844 route.*



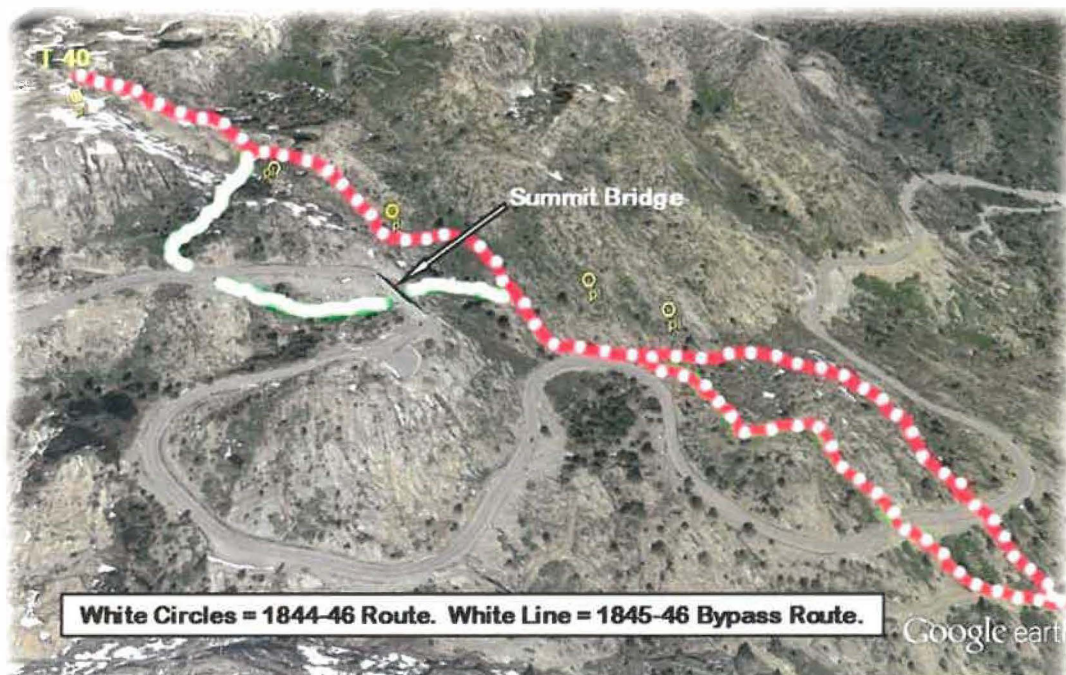


6. Wagon tire wear on one of the boulders in the bypass. Wear can be seen on the very left and right of this rock. 1845 and later bypass.

First photo courtesy of Dick Waugh; Second through fifth photos courtesy of Dan Murray;  
Sixth photo by Dave Hollecker

Reproduction of any kind of this copyrighted 2014 article in part or whole is only with the prior written permission from the author at: [MTGRIZZ@AOL.COM](mailto:MTGRIZZ@AOL.COM)

#### AERIAL VIEW WITH NORTH AT TOP OF PHOTO



T-40: Trails West's Stephens Pass Marker. pl: Power Line Poles



## THE GEOLOGY OF THE SIERRA NEVADA

Much of the western part of the “lower 48” has been added to, or accreted onto, the western edge of the North American Tectonic Plate by denser, subducting oceanic plates. As they sink beneath the continental plate, lighter material is scraped off and added to the edge of the continent. The heavier material continues to sink until chemical and physical processes alter its composition. Magma then begins to rise to the surface, creating volcanic activity. This is what is currently happening on our coast from Cape Mendocino in northern California to British Columbia. It is responsible for the Cascade Range beginning with Mt Lassen. (Our infamous San Andreas Fault ends at Cape Mendocino.)

Both the Sierra Nevada and the Klamath Range were created in this way.

The Sierra Nevada range, “UNA GRASIERRA NEVADA,” is Spanish for “a great snowy range.” It is a united mountain range that extends about 370 miles along the eastern border in the north central section of California, varying from 40 miles to 75 miles in width.

The mountain range summits increase gradually in elevations from north to south; from the Feather River area at 8,000' to Mount Whitney at 14,496', the highest peak in the lower 48 states. There are 12 peaks over 14,000' and 500 peaks exceeding 12,000' in elevation.

The eastern flank has numerous steep (2,000' to 3,000') scarps with the tilted and sloping western flank and foothills.

Approximately 100 million years ago, the emplacement of the Sierra Nevada granite batholiths occurred. These batholiths are immense bodies of solidified granitic magma. They began as titanic upwelling of molten rock deep beneath surface volcanic activity. As the volcanic flows died, this magma gradually cooled and solidified into solid granite structures. Erosion and uplift have brought them to the surface. The whole Sierra Nevada consists primarily of these immense granite batholiths and unrelated metamorphic rocks.

The western foothills are a complex of folded and faulted rock strata consisting of material scraped off the subducting oceanic plates and shoved up against the granites. They have undergone alteration through great heat and pressure. Fluid flows during this period have deposited concentrations of minerals and metals, including gold. This area we call The Mother Lode.

From the Desk of Jack Clough, 1991, and PowerPoint presentation of William Hirt, Geologist, College of the Siskiyous, 2007.

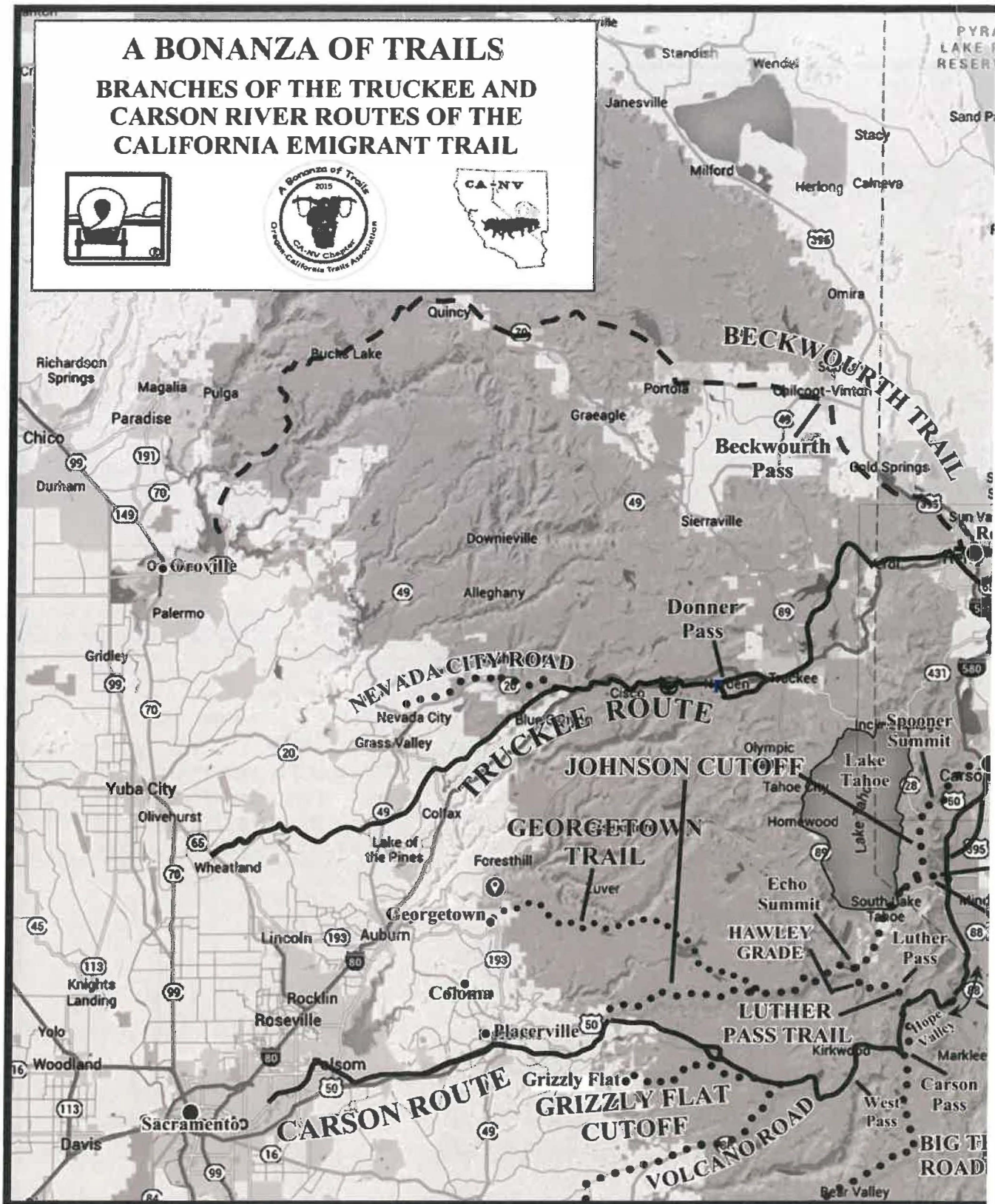
From the top of West Pass:

*The road is long and winding before the crest is gained, from which a view of many miles on either side, overlooking lakes and streams – lawns, valleys, defiles and dells; mountains split up into chasms and fissures, between which rose up lofty walls terminated with numerous turrets and columns—showing a disorder and confusion that forcibly impressed the mind of the beholder of there once having been a terrible convulsion.*

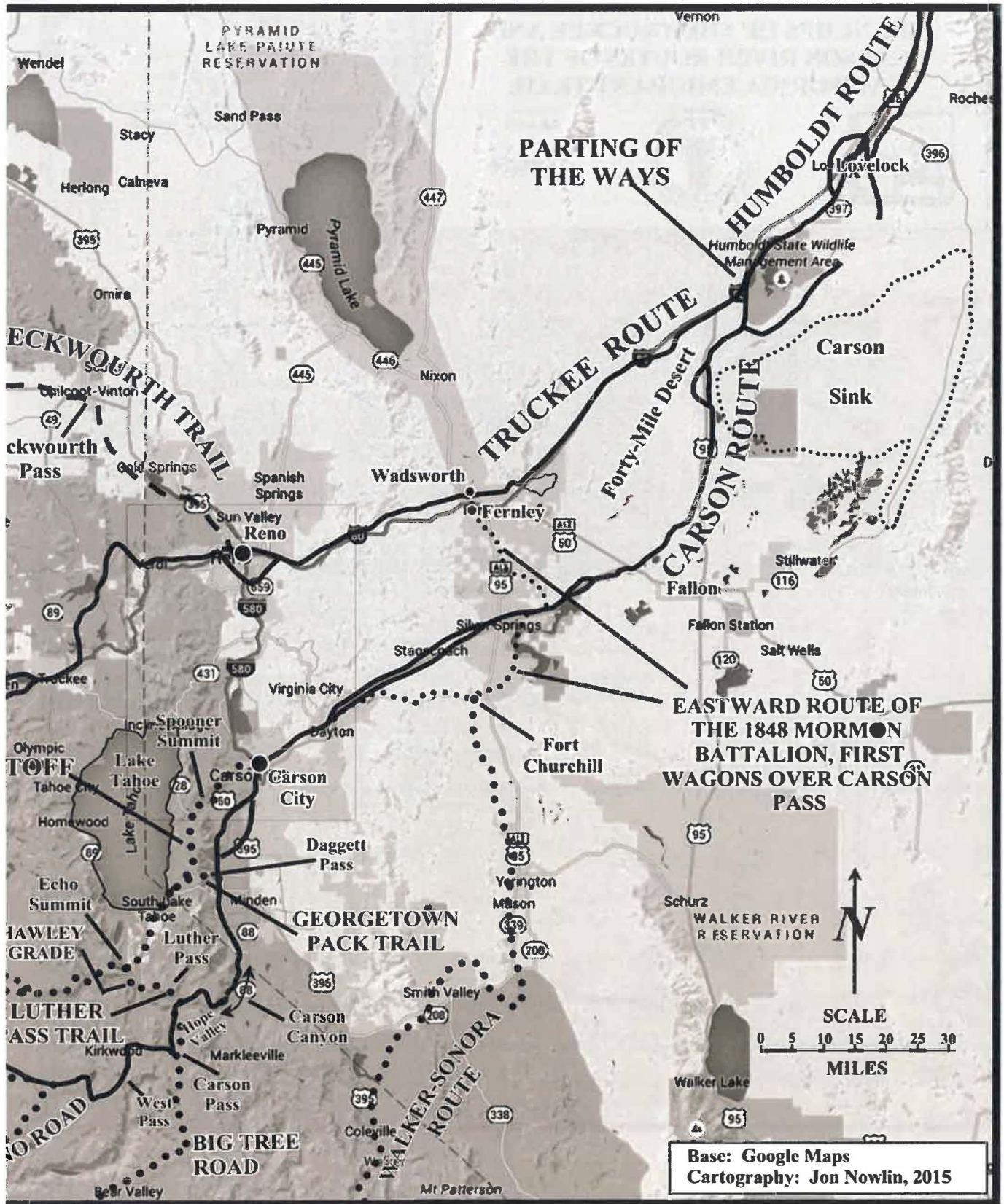
Madison B. Moorman, 1850-51

# A BONANZA OF TRAILS

## BRANCHES OF THE TRUCKEE AND CARSON RIVER ROUTES OF THE CALIFORNIA EMIGRANT TRAIL









# A BONANZA OF TRAILS HISTORY

by Individual Researchers

## INDIAN TRADING ROUTES

Native Americans were the first humans to establish trans-Sierra routes, following existing animal trails. These trails allowed them to seek cooler summer temperatures at the higher elevations, to hunt, and to trade with other tribes. During the summer months Indians on the eastern side of the Sierra were trading wonderful Piñon pine nuts, along with highly coveted obsidian; with Indians on the western slope who offered acorns and valuable sea shells. There were many other objects for trade but those were the primary commodities.

Their trading system was so active and complex that Pacific sea shells have been found in the Rocky Mountains, a thousand miles away.

These trails had been used by Indians for over 10,000 years before they became pack routes when men of European descent explored, hunted, and trapped the West. Most trans-Sierra wagon roads also began by utilizing these existing routes.

The Truckee and Carson River trails were among the routes that began this way, opening them to wagon travel that brought tens of thousands of emigrants and gold seekers with wagons and animals to California.

## TRUCKEE RIVER ROUTE (1844)

### First Wagon Trail to Northern California

The first attempt to enter northern Mexican Alta California over the Sierra Nevada with wagons was the Bidwell-Bartleson Party of 1841. Leaving Independence on the Missouri River, they followed the Oregon Trail until branching off at Soda Springs in present southeastern Idaho. In the attempt to reach the Humboldt River, they eventually had to abandon their wagons and resort to packing until they met the formidable barrier of the Sierra Nevada. A little north of present Sonora Pass, they struggled over the mountains into the San Joaquin Valley to John Marsh's rancho, near Mount Diablo, in present Contra Costa County. The next attempt to reach northern California by wagons came with the Joseph Walker party in 1843 but they were also unable to find a direct route over the Sierra Nevada and reached the San Joaquin Valley farther south near Bakersfield over what became Walker Pass.

It was not until 1844 that the Stephens-Townsend-Murphy Party opened a practicable wagon route over the northern Sierra Nevada by way of the Humboldt River, Truckee River, and Stephens Pass (Donner Pass area). Even they had to abandon their remaining wagons a little west of the Sierra summit in winter snow and were unable to retrieve them until the early spring of 1845. But they had proved there was a wagon route across the Sierra Nevada. Trail improvements leading to and over the Sierra Nevada in 1845 and 1846 resulted in a more viable wagon route, known as the Truckee Trail or Truckee River Route.

In 1850 an alternate trail to the new diggings along Deer Creek branched off the Truckee Trail in Bear Valley and followed the corridor of modern CA 20<sup>1</sup> to newly established Nevada City. This became known as the Nevada City Road.

---

<sup>1</sup> NV – Nevada State Route; CA – California State Route.

### **THE NEVADA CITY ROAD (1850)**

By 1850, news of gold at Deer Creek Dry Diggins had reached the eastern part of the United States and became known to many seekers of gold and land before they started west.

Those who came took the shortest route possible to this newly discovered bonanza. The new trail left the older Truckee Trail in Bear Valley and then climbed the ridge to the west and generally followed the top of Washington Ridge westward into Nevada City. The older trail from Steep Hollow on the Truckee Trail into Nevada City was practically abandoned.

Soon after the original trail was pioneered, it became a busy toll road between Nevada City and Bear Valley.

In 1859, it became a public road but was still known as "the emigrant road to Nevada City."

The trail divided about seven miles east of Nevada City. Both routes led to Nevada City.

Improvements were made as the route progressed from an emigrant trail to a toll road, public road, county road and finally to a state highway, CA 20.

### **BECKWOURTH TRAIL (1851)**

While William Nobles was surveying his new route in 1851, colorful frontiersman Jim Beckwourth, using his own funds, had found and developed a new wagon route that brought gold seekers to the diggings at Bidwell's Bar, north of Marysville. Beckwourth's route branched off the Truckee Trail at Truckee Meadows (present Reno-Sparks) in an arching northwest direction, along the corridor of present U.S. 395, to Beckwourth Pass.

Here it turned west, and northwest, generally along the corridor of present CA 70 to American Valley (present Quincy). From there, the Beckwourth Trail turned generally southwest by the southern end of Bucks Lake and then onto Bidwell's Bar on the South Fork of the American River, now under Lake Oroville.

In early August of 1851 Jim Beckwourth led the first wagons over his new trail to Marysville. Unlike William Nobles, Jim Beckwourth was never compensated for his investment in developing this new trail. However, he built a ranch-trading post, called "War Horse Ranch," just west of modern Beckwourth on CA 70 where he regaled emigrants passing by.

### **HENNESS PASS ROAD (1852)**

The Henness Pass Road, a branch of the Truckee Trail, was about 125 miles long. Its main terminus was the Marysville, California, area. First described as a trail in some 1849 accounts, and then widened to a road in about 1849-50. The road soon became an important route for emigrants to reach the middle regions of California and miners to seek their riches in mining areas of California and Nevada. Its gradual climb to its highest point, Henness Pass, at only 6700', and being open later in the winter than other roads, made it a popular route. It became such a heavily traveled toll road that the freighters were requested to use the road during the daylight hours and the stagecoaches during the night.

With the completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869, horse-drawn traffic over the Henness Pass Road became almost obsolete. In the 1870s the road became a conduit for the

logging industry. Today, the road is still open for traffic, but the vehicles need to have a high rise axle with four-wheel drive.

### **APPLEGATE TRAIL (1846)**

Initially To Southern Oregon

Early in 1846—the same year of the Donner Party tragedy—a small exploring party of Oregon pioneers, led by Jesse Applegate and Levi Scott, set out from the Willamette Valley settlements in Oregon with the intent of opening a southern wagon road into Oregon. Its purpose was to secure a safer overland route into Oregon Country.

The exploring party traveled south from the Willamette Valley on an old Hudson's Bay Company pack trail, approximating modern I-5, to the Rogue River Valley in southern Oregon where they turned generally southeast through uncharted country. This took them past Klamath and Goose Lakes and through the Black Rock Desert to link up with the established California Trail along the Humboldt River. From there the exploring party pushed northeast on the California Trail to Fort Hall on the Snake River in present southeastern Idaho.

They were successful in persuading several Oregon-bound wagon trains to follow them back over this new route. After considerable hardship and outright suffering due to lack of adequate provisions, lateness of the season, and onset of winter storms, these trains arrived in the Willamette Valley settlements. A southern route into Oregon had been established--although ill-feelings lingered--and several wagon parties used the new wagon trail in 1847 and 1848. Soon major wagon routes would branch off the Applegate Trail into northern California.

### **LASSEN TRAIL and BURNETT CUTOFF (1848)**

Intending to bring emigrants to his rancho in the northern Sacramento Valley, Peter Lassen piloted a small wagon train in 1848 along the California Trail as far as the Applegate Trail at the north end of present Rye Patch Reservoir in Nevada. Lassen intended to follow the Applegate trail as far as Goose Lake in northeastern California and then turn south and blaze a new wagon trail along the Pit River corridor to his rancho north of present Chico.

Lassen's trail blazing wore down his small wagon party, and they became dispirited and depleted of provisions 50 miles short of his ranch. Fortunately for Lassen and his disgruntled party, at this point they were rescued by a large wagon train of vigorous Oregonians, captained by Peter Burnett. They had been following Lassen's wagon tracks since coming upon them where the Pit River turned south into Big Valley.

Burnett's success lay in finding a 50-mile shortcut between the Applegate Trail at Tule Lake and Lassen's new trail that allowed, for the first time, wagon travel between Oregon Territory and California. This Burnett Cutoff between the Applegate and Lassen Trails continued to serve as the sole wagon route between California and Oregon for a number of years.

With Lassen serving as their guide, Burnett's Oregonians supplied the provisions and manpower to open a wagon route directly down the long divide between Mill Creek and Deer Creek to Lassen's rancho. This Lassen Trail would become one of three main routes into northern California in the gold rush of 1849.



### **NOBLES TRAIL (1852)**

Pierson B. Reading was an 1843 emigrant who worked for John Sutter and obtained a large Mexican land grant on the Sacramento River south of present-day Redding. He accompanied Sutter to the mill site on the American River shortly after the gold discovery of January 24, 1848.

Upon returning to his rancho, he found the Klamath Mountains to the west resembled the Sierra at the American River discovery site. Prospects on Clear Creek, a tributary of the Sacramento River, proved him correct. The community of Reading's Springs soon grew up in the Clear Creek watershed. It was renamed Shasta City in 1850.

William Nobles arrived in California in 1850. In 1852 he convinced the leaders of Shasta City that he had discovered a shorter and easier cutoff from the Lassen Trail in the Black Rock Desert directly to their city. For this he was paid \$2,000.

The Nobles Trail became the major route to Shasta City and other Northern California locations until the railroad was completed.

### **YREKA TRAIL (1852)**

Following the discovery of gold at Sutter's Mill in the western Sierra on January 24, 1848, it was discovered in the eastern Klamath Mountains within months by Pierson B. Reading, who found similar conditions west of his large land grant on the Sacramento River at Cottonwood Creek.

In 1849 and into 1850, gold was being mined on several tributaries of the Klamath River, including the Scott and Shasta Rivers.

In 1851, Abraham Thompson, encamped with a group of miners on the flats above the west side of Shasta Valley, discovered surface gold in rich concentrations. Thompson's Dry Diggings became Shasta Butte City, and by an act of the state legislature on March 22, 1852, Yreka, the county seat.

The Yreka Trail was opened in 1852 as a cutoff from the Applegate Trail, beginning at the southern end of Lower Klamath Lake, proceeding southwesterly along Willow Creek and then Butte Creek and slipping through the High Cascades at the relatively low elevation of about 5,100' at Grass Lake.

From there it winds around Sheep Rock and drops into Shasta Valley, heading northwesterly to Yreka, a total distance of about 70 miles.

### **CARSON RIVER ROUTE (1848)**

In 1844, John C. Fremont crossed these mountains in the dead of winter over 20' to 30' of snow.

In 1848, remnants of the Mormon Battalion opened the Carson River Route to wagon travel. This small Mormon group, made up of 45 men and one woman, 15 wagons, 300 head of animals, and one brass cannon, was making its way to the Salt Lake valley to rejoin family members and church leader Brigham Young.

This route, opened from west to east, was the best route to the gold fields. Even though the emigrants had to travel to a great height, never before reached by wagons, at 9,600' at West

Pass. This route proved to be the best and shortest way to Hangtown (Placerville) and the gold fields.

During the gold rush, it is estimated that in the years of 1850 and 1852 each year more than 50,000 emigrants came overland to California with most of them using the Carson Pass route. After 1852, new cutoffs were opened that would take emigrants to other gold diggings.

The route, later improved and re-named the Amador-Carson Valley Wagon Road, became a commercial freight road carrying men, supplies, lumber, and equipment east to the gold and silver mines of Nevada.

### **DAGGETT PASS-GEORGETOWN PACK TRAIL (1850)**

The Georgetown Pack Trail was opened in 1850. It left Carson Valley and went over Daggett Pass into the Tahoe basin, going around the south end of Lake Tahoe. It climbed to Echo Summit and followed along the South Fork of the American River before its last steep ascent to Peavine Ridge.

From there it followed ridges northeast to the town of Georgetown. In 1852, the Johnson Cutoff was established as a wagon road over much of the same route from the Tahoe Valley to Peavine Ridge. By 1857, the pack trail had become a wagon road that provided an alternative route to the valley and mines in Placer and Nevada counties.

### **JOHNSON CUTOFF (1850)**

John Calhoun Johnson, a young attorney from Harrison County, Ohio, emigrated to California on horseback in the spring of 1849. Shortly after arriving in El Dorado County that August, he found the perfect site for a farm.

He quickly built a home on what he called his rancho and opened it as a hotel to weary emigrants arriving on the Carson route. His hotel was known as the Six Mile House because it was six miles east of Placerville on the emigrant route. Several emigrants of 1850 wrote in their diaries that it was the first house they had seen since crossing the plains.

In 1850-51, his rancho served as headquarters for the El Dorado County militia during Indian Wars of 1850-51. Johnson was appointed adjutant to the militia. Forever after, his friends called him "Colonel." He was also sometimes known as "Cock-eyed" because he was cross-eyed.

### **JOHNSON CUTOFF (1852)**

Opened to emigrant traffic in the spring of 1852, Johnson Cutoff is a variant of the Carson Route.

The route is named for John Calhoun Johnson who, in the company of Delaware Indian scout Fall Leaf, first explored an ancient Indian trade route over the Sierra Nevada and modified it for emigrant travel.

The advantages of this route were that it was 50 miles shorter than the Carson route; it was 2,000' lower in elevation than the highest point of the Carson route, and had only a single crossing of the South Fork of the American River.

This does not mean it was easy. An emigrant in 1852 described the 800-foot rocky climb from Tahoe's Lake Valley to Echo Summit as "Just like climbing a tree, only harder."

The Pony Express and Snowshoe Thompson both used this route to deliver mail across the mountains. Stagecoaches carried passengers at breakneck speed around its steep and stony turns.

When silver was discovered in Nevada in 1859, the tide of traffic turned east to carry the heavy freighting traffic of supplies for the silver mines.

### **GRIZZLY FLAT ROAD (1852)**

The names of the men who opened the Grizzly Flat Road in 1852 are unknown. The merchants at Grizzly Flat would certainly have benefited from the emigrants taking the Grizzly Flat Road and it is likely they had a hand in opening this emigrant route.

The town of Grizzly Flat sits on the ridge between the North and Middle forks of the Cosumnes River. In 1850 a group of miners were preparing their evening meal when a large grizzly appeared at their camp and hence the name Grizzly Flat.

The Grizzly Flat Road leaves the Carson River Route at Leek Springs and follows Baltic Ridge west, descending to Capps Crossing on the Cosumnes River.

Ascending the hill south of the river it follows ridges down to the town of Grizzly Flat. It was used as an alternative route to Placerville and Lone. Emigrant diaries describe completing the twenty-mile road in a day although some camped about halfway, on the river, at Capps Crossing.

Excerpt from the *Mountain Democrat*, July 1, 1876

Placerville Herald August 5, 1853:

Along the valley of the Carson River, in Lake Valley, and many trading posts on this side of the summits, they are actively striving to turn it to Volcano, Grizzly Flat, and any and every other way than the old or Carson road to Placerville.

### **VOLCANO ROAD (1852)**

Before 1852, any wagons traveling the Carson Trail or Johnson Cutoff and wanting to reach Amador County had to come the long way through El Dorado (near Placerville) first. However, in 1852, Stockton merchants and Volcano entrepreneurs jointly constructed a new "cutoff." Volcano was a booming town with gold mines, sawmills, and other enterprises, that lies in a volcano-like crater.

The wave of migrants was "stolen" from the Placerville-Carson route, for at the junction of Volcano and Placerville routes about 3-4 miles west of Tragedy Spring, "runners" were praising the Volcano route. Soon this new emigrant road was used by hundreds, if not thousands, of overland packers on foot and emigrants with wagons, to Volcano. Instead of the longer route through El Dorado, it diverted them into Amador County (then part of Calaveras County), along a ridge and deposited them directly into Volcano. It was the first town they had encountered since Mormon Station, or Genoa, in what would become Nevada in 1864

A few were forewarned that Volcano and stayed to the ridges to make their way to towns of Sutter Creek and Jackson.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup>*Logan's Alley, Vol. IV*, Larry Cenotto, pp. 184, 257



## **PLACER COUNTY EMIGRANT ROAD (1852)**

Emigrant diaries, circa 1852, show that the Placer County Emigrant Road, or the Scott Route, departed from the Carson Route on the Carson River near Empire, Nevada. Some emigrants went directly, while others passed by way of Eagle Station, to the Ophir Creek vicinity in Washoe Valley.

The route climbed the Ophir drainage to Tahoe Meadows then down to Lake Tahoe, then due west over Stateline Point, then south along the west side of Lake Tahoe to the Truckee River outlet. From that point the route followed downstream to a crossing opposite Squaw Valley. It then climbed out of the valley on the west side to the Sierra summit.

The route then basically followed the ridge-line down the Foresthill Divide to the Forks House location. Some emigrant accounts suggest the route was difficult and unfinished. There were discussions in 1857 of tying the route to the new National Road at Honey Lake. The Placer County Emigrant Road was used during the rush to Washoe and through the 1860s. However, it never achieved the success of the competing Johnson Cutoff or the Henness Pass Routes.

## **WALKER RIVER-SONORA TRAIL (1852)**

The Walker River Trail opened in 1852 when emissaries from the Gold Rush town of Columbia were sent to find a new crossing of the Sierra Nevada and divert emigrants to the Southern Mines. The route turned south from the Carson River Route along the Carson River to the Walker River and then west into the mountains.

Columbia's scouting party advertised the new route as the shortest and fastest way into the mines, but in reality it turned out to be longer and more difficult than established trails. The first emigrants to attempt the new route--the Clark-Skidmore Party--toiled for weeks to reach the Sierra crest at what would soon be called Sonora Pass. A rescue party from Sonora met the bedraggled emigrants at Relief Valley and guided them safely to Columbia.

The next year thousands of emigrants struggled to haul their wagons over the pass. Few had anything good to say about the route. Soon after an article by a railroad survey team appeared in a San Francisco newspaper in 1854 declaring the Walker River Trail the worst route imaginable; the trail was abandoned.

## **LUTHER PASS TRAIL (1854)**

This trail is a relative short connecting route between the Carson Trail in Hope Valley and the Johnson Cutoff in Lake Valley near Lake Tahoe.

It was named for Ira Manley Luther who drove a wagon over the route in 1854 and left his name painted on a rock.

He originally named it Johnston Pass for General Albert Sidney Johnston, commanding general of the Utah Territory, but it was changed to avoid confusion with Johnson's Summit.

Located in the eastern Sierra drainages of the Truckee and Carson Rivers, it allowed travelers using the Carson River trail to connect to the Johnson Cutoff and cross a pass at 7,740' elevation, about 2,000' lower than West Pass on the Carson route.

In the 1860s, after much improvement, the road became a major route from California to the Comstock mines.

Mr. Luther, born in New York in 1821, came to California for gold in 1850. Instead he became an entrepreneur, operating many successful business ventures on both sides of the Sierra.

Luther Pass crosses the Sierra at Johnson Summit.

### **BIG TREE ROAD (1856)**

#### **Big Tree-Carson Valley Wagon Road**

As the gold rush increased and more diggings were discovered, other roads were needed to get miners to the various towns up and down the Mother Lode.

In 1855, the California legislature appropriated \$5,000 for the Surveyor General to evaluate the existing wagon routes over the Sierra in order to determine which ones would be best for the construction of commercial wagon roads and to also find the best route for the transcontinental railroad.

Numerous merchants in the Murphys and Stockton areas petitioned the Surveyor General to explore a road from Murphys to Hope Valley. The merchants were told there were not enough funds for their request but they could do it at their own expense. The town of Murphys raised \$500 and proceeded to explore the route. They discovered a workable route and, in 1856, the Big Tree-Carson Valley Wagon Road was built and went into use.

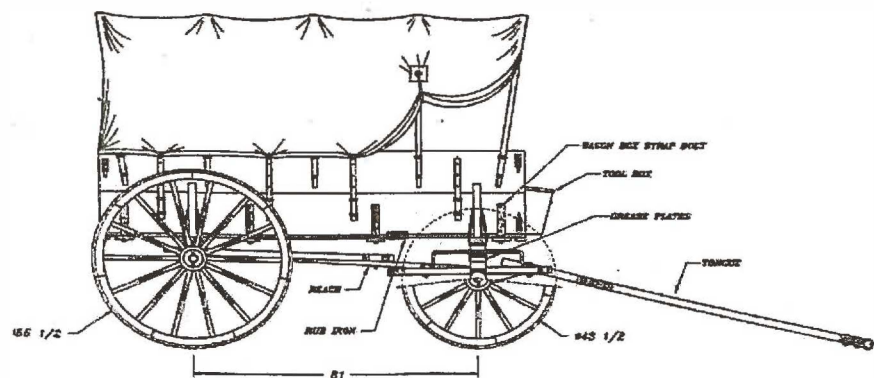
### **After 1859:**

The Carson River Route Trail became the Amador-Carson Valley Wagon Road

The Johnson Cutoff became the Lake Tahoe Wagon Road

The Truckee River Route became the Dutch Flat-Donner Lake Wagon Road.

The Nobles Trail became the Honey Lake Wagon Road and the Humboldt Wagon Road.



Wagon Schematic by Richard Davis  
Overland Journal, Vol. 15, Number 2, Summer, 1998, pp 40, 41.

 **CALIFORNIA TRAIL  
INTERPRETIVE CENTER**

[www.californiatrailcenter.org](http://www.californiatrailcenter.org)

### **California Trail Center Foundation**

It is our mission to enhance the values of the California Trail Interpretive Center for our community, visiting public and future generations.

[www.trailcenterfoundation.org](http://www.trailcenterfoundation.org) \* [ctcf1849@gmail.com](mailto:ctcf1849@gmail.com)  
421 Court St. Elko NV 89801 775.340.2031

# SEEING THE ELEPHANT

By Jan Petersen

"Seeing the Elephant" was an 1830s phrase when circuses and live elephants first came to the United States. Most had seen a picture of an elephant in the family's bible in the Noah's Ark picture but...to see one up close was a mind boggling experience. Folks would attend the circus, and then try to describe this odd animal to those who had not attended--and it wasn't easy to describe such a unique animal. With great exasperation, these people would just exclaim, "You Just Have to SEE the Elephant for yourself!"

"Seeing the elephant" became an expression for seeing and experiencing an event, good or bad, that was almost larger than life...something that one had to experience for one's self.

Beginning in the 1840s, hardy pioneers outfitted themselves for their westward adventure in late spring. Excited and optimistic emigrants announced they were "going to see the elephant." Homes, possessions, and farms were sold to purchase a wagon and supplies for a long journey to reach the Golden West.

George Read wrote to his father before leaving Missouri in 1850, "I left with a heavy and sad heart. I have some faint idea of the elephant, even at this early stage."

Crossing Kansas territory and seeing a number of graves led Joshua Variel to write in his diary; May 19, 1852: "I fancy we are on the track of the Elephant."

Spring storms along the Platte River in Nebraska Territory created excitement and elephant sightings. Lewis Shutterly noted May 24, 1849:

*Started at 5 o'clock remarkably cold. Rained and blew until noon. We all got completely drenched... pitched our tent and rolled up in our blankets without supper. This, I thought was seeing the Eliphant. If not, I hoped I might return without seeing him.*

A few days later, May 30th, he again noted,

*We have had respectable winter all day...we have again overtaken the elephant.*

*Spring run-off created dangerous crossings with swift currents at creeks and rivers in the plains. Wagons tipped over spilling their contents – goods, oxen, and people downstream. Elizabeth Bedwell wrote May 15, 1852 crossing the Grand River in Iowa, "saw a few hairs of the Elephants tail.*

Travelers reached the Humboldt Valley mid July.

"We have got far enough along to begin to have a sight of the Elephant" noted Leander Loomis in 1850 describing the Humboldt winding its way across northern Nevada.

Muddy river water was most exasperating to the travelers... Elisha Perkins, 1849, "*This is what is called seeing one of the elephant's tracks.*"

Dust! The emigrants were almost at their wit's end. Elizer Stillman Ingalls, crossing Nevada in the 1850s, wrote,

*The road all along this river is so dusty that it makes travelling very disagreeable...have seen the dust so thick that we could not see wagons that were not more than 25 yards ahead. This is getting a peep at the Elliphant.*

Arriving in California...Louisa Clapp declared: "I think that I may without vanity affirm that I have seen the elephant."



Peter Decker noted...

*Engaged in the first meal we had in four months. Sitting at a table was a novelty. If our dirty faces did not frighten the women, it was because they had seen the Elephant.*

Martin Griffith walked the 40-Mile Desert in 1994 and wrote of his experiences in *Nevada Magazine*:

*There is no better way to gain an appreciation for the emigrants' feat than to walk the trail in the dead of summer as they did.*

*Take my word for it... the elephant lives.*

### **Elephant's Back from Frog Lake**



With permission from noondueler <<http://www.summitpost.org/users/noondueler/39033>>

### **The View West of the Sierra Crest overlooking Lake Tahoe**



## LAKE TAHOE ENVIRONS

### **AN IMPORTANT NOTE ON THE SUN AND QUICK TEMPERATURE CHANGE**

Being in the mountains, the sun peaks over the mountains later in the day, but it also appears earlier for the same reason. When the sun disappears, it gets cold quickly. Take your jackets to afternoon and evening events.

**CLOTHING CODE** Dress according to your activity. Attendees usually wear casual clothes for events, although some people dress up for the Awards Dinner and some like to wear their period clothing. For the Friday night dinner is it come-as-you-are or you are invited to wear period clothing.

**FOOTGEAR** ALL tours require sturdy shoes or boots to be worn—no sandals or flip-flops.

**PRECONVENTION AND BUS TOURS AND TREKS** The convention offers various tours: hiking, bus, and private vehicle. The tours conducted during the convention are all-day bus tours to trail sites and places of interest. The hiking tour is Tour D, the Hawley Grade-Luther Pass Tour.

Preconvention, self-drive tours in two- or four-wheel-drive private vehicles are one- or two-day treks to generally less accessible sites. They have been arranged in advance with details about the tours provided by the Preconvention Tour Leaders.

**SELF-GUIDED TOURS** Suggestions for self-guided tours to places of interest around the Tahoe area are included in the Convention Booklet. Other handouts will be available at the Registration/Information Desk during the convention.

**ALTITUDE AND TEMPERATURE** Lake Tahoe area is about 6300' elevation. Into and out of this area, the altitude quickly increases to over 8000'. Preconvention and bus tours may traverse areas up to 9600'. Check your tour for elevation information. A headache may be a symptom of **altitude sickness or dehydration. Drink plenty of water.**

The average temperature range for September 21-25 in the South Lake Tahoe area is 35° to 70°. While the days may be warm, night temperatures drop quickly. With climate change, it may be warmer or cooler. Wear layered clothing.

**DIETARY CONCERNS** If you have special dietary concerns or needs, write and sign a letter describing your needs and hand it to Phyllis Smith at the Registration Desk 72 hours in advance. Vegetarian dinners will be provided for those who have requested them in advance. Lunches include vegetarian selections.

**SUN PROTECTION** Be sure to use sunscreen and wear a hat, sunglasses and a long-sleeved shirt. Less dense air of higher altitudes lets the sun affect your skin more quickly than at lower elevations.

### **DRINK WATER DRINK WATER DRINK WATER DRINK WATER DRINK WATER**

Take water with you. Drink water before you feel thirsty. Higher altitude and drier air of this region will quickly dry you out, internally and externally. **Stay hydrated.**

**MEDICATIONS** Be sure to fill out the Emergency Medical card in your neck wallet completely. Including a list of your medications, any medication allergies, such as insect repellent and treatments for insect bites. Replace in your neck wallet.

**LOST & FOUND** Bring any found items to the Registration/Information Desk; lost articles there, also.

**Let Us Know If We Can Be of Any Help To Make Your Stay Most Pleasant**

## **PRECONVENTION TOURS<sup>3</sup>**

**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2015**

### **JOHNSON CUTOFF**

This 2-day tour began September 19 – Beginning elevation 4600', highest elevation 7400'. High clearance vehicle and CB radio were required.

An overnight stay was enjoyed at the historic Strawberry Lodge, Kyburz, CA. Dinner and breakfast were offered.

John C. Johnson opened a new route to the gold fields of California in 1852. Having a ranch 6 miles east of Hangtown (Placerville), CA, he saw an opportunity to siphon emigrants off the Carson River Route by way of a shortcut that would go by his ranch on the way to the gold fields. It was shorter in distance and lower in elevation than the Carson route.

The tour began where the Johnson Cutoff left the Carson River Route east of Carson City, NV, continuing west through Carson City, up Kings Canyon to Spooner Summit, staying east of Lake Tahoe, eventually arriving in the valley south of the lake and continuing through the Tahoe basin to the base of Johnson Hill.

Participants had an opportunity to observe the difficulty the emigrants had taking wagons up Johnson Hill to the summit.

Continuing west on U.S. 50, the tour stopped at several trail sites, including the crossing of Pyramid Creek at Slippery Ford. At Wrights Road, the tour traveled 4 miles up to Granite Spring Road where the Johnson Cutoff turned west and followed the ridge for 25 miles before it left the ridge descending to the American River and going back up to Union Hill where it rejoins the Carson Route.

Scheduled stops included the site of the Brockliss Bridge crossing of the American River, Union Hill, Class 1 trail segments, Johnson's ranch site, and many others.

Guide was John Winner.

### **OPENING OF CARSON RIVER ROUTE**

This 2-day tour began September 19 – Beginning elevation 764', highest elevation 8600'.

This tour guide suggested an overnight stay near the starting point of the tour and required an overnight along the way. Vehicle-to-vehicle communication was required.

This eastbound tour will follow the Carson River Route in the direction it was opened, west to east, by remnants of the discharged Mormon Battalion. This group of one woman and 45 men were headed for Salt Lake Valley in Utah. This "gold rush" trail became the most traveled trans-Sierra route.

This tour began at Coloma, CA, traveling to Silver Lake via Pleasant Valley, Pollock Pines for lunch, Sly Park, and Tragedy Spring (CA 88). Travel time was estimated to be six to seven hours.

Kit Carson Lodge at Silver Lake (CA 88) offered a special OCTA rate for September 19. The lodge's restaurant offers three meals a day. There are two campgrounds nearby.

---

<sup>3</sup> NV – Nevada State Route; CA – California State Route.



On Day 2, the tour continued east over Carson Pass to Woodfords, along the base of the mountains, passing historical landmarks. A lunch stop at Genoa, NV, ended the tour; a visit to the local museum was possible. Food was available at the local store/deli or restaurants within walking distance.

After the guided tour ended, there was an option to drive to Harveys via Kingsbury Grade, or continue to the Carson City Museum and then take U.S. 50 to Harveys.

Guide was Tom Mahach.

### **FOOTSTEPS OF JOHN C. FREMONT HIKE**

This 1-day was offered September 19 – Beginning elevation 7,500' to 7,900', with a drive to Carson Pass at 8,600'. The hike was a moderately-difficult 4.5 miles. Parking was limited at both ends, so the tour carpooled. Using vehicle shuttling for the beginning and end.

The tour followed the route used by John C. Fremont and Kit Carson in 1844 as they crossed the Sierra Nevada in an attempt to reach Sutter's Fort (Sacramento). There was hope for the tour to be able to discover the site of Fremont's base camp.

The hike was mostly on trail over rocky, uneven ground, through aspen and fir forests, through one soggy section, ending where emigrant wagon trains made the final push to Carson Pass.

Only people in good health and physical condition should consider this hike. They were asked to be prepared with sturdy hiking boots, day pack, and clothing for variable weather (including snow), lunch, snacks, water, sunscreen, hat, sunglasses, and a camera. A hiking stick is a plus.

The tour met at the parking lot to the left after you turn onto Blue Lakes Road from CA 88, south of Lake Tahoe, just before it climbs to Carson Pass. Toilets were available in the parking lot, but they used "nature" for the rest of the day.

Guide was Mark Wilson.

### **SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 20**

#### **GRIZZLY FLAT CUTOFF**

This 1-day tour was offered September 20 – Beginning and highest elevation 7,388'.

A high-clearance 4-wheel drive vehicle was a requirement as were sturdy shoes – no sandals or flip-flops.

The 20-mile Grizzly Flat Road was opened in 1852. It left the Carson Route at Leek Springs, followed Baltic Ridge, descended to the North Fork of the Cosumnes River, and, after climbing away from the river, continued to follow ridges to the town of Grizzly Flat in El Dorado County, CA.

This full-day tour followed closely the route of the original Grizzly Flat Road.

The road was overgrown with whitethorn in several places and some vehicles may have been scratched. There might have been downed trees across the road requiring a tight turn to maneuver around them. Portions of this route are a beautiful example of the "setting" the emigrant experienced.

The tour began at the first parking lot to the left the Mormon Emigrant Trail (Iron Mountain Road) off CA 88. Restrooms are available there.

There was an option of a 1.25-mile downhill walk from Baltic Ridge to Cosumnes River on Class 1 and Class 2 trail. There was some bushwhacking through the riparian zone on the south side of the river. Those not wanting to walk could have waited for the hikers at the river.

If time allowed, a short walk of the town of Grizzly Flat would end the tour.

Guide was Dee Owens.

### **WEST PASS HIKE ON THE CARSON RIVER ROUTE**

This 1-day was offered September 20 – Beginning elevation 8200', highest elevation 9600' at West Pass; 9800' at Melissa Coray Peak.

This **very strenuous** hike offered a unique experience with spectacular views and an appreciation of what the emigrants might have experienced during their five-month journey to the gold fields of California.

The 5-mile round-trip hike, with an elevation change of 1,400' in 2.5 miles, reached the highest point wagons ever traveled during the opening years of the gold rush.

The hikers gathered at the Kirkwood Mountain Resort, car-pool, then drove about 3 miles to the beginning of the hike by way of a rough dirt service road. Kirkwood gave permission for the tour to use this private road. Only people in good health and physical condition were allowed to participate in this tour.

Needed were sturdy hiking boots, a day pack, clothing for variable weather, lunch, water, and a camera.

Guide was Frank Tortorich



Come home with a story.

**KIRKWOOD MOUNTAIN RESORT**  
Lodging 1-800-967-7500  
Conditions 1-877-KIRKWOOD  
[WWW.KIRKWOOD.COM](http://WWW.KIRKWOOD.COM)

Get ready for **#KirkwoodDeep**

**KIRKWOOD**

## CONVENTION BUS TOURS

**Mountain weather is ever-changing and there is a slight possibility of snow in September. Be prepared for just about anything. Wear sturdy shoes – no sandals or flip-flops.** <sup>4</sup>

Each bus tour will:

- be an all-day tour, leaving at staggered times.
- have a main tour guide, a navigator for the bus driver, and a tour assistant on the bus, and be followed by a "chase" vehicle.
- have a working microphone for the guide to use off the bus, when deemed necessary.
- provide snacks, drinks, water, and lunches.
- have a handout for that tour. (Handouts for other tours will be for sale on Thursday.)

### **Tour A: Carson-Johnson Loop** Highest elevation 8600'

The Carson River Route, opened from west to east in 1848, is called by some the Gold Rush Trail. More people followed the Carson Route than any other route over the Sierra.

This bus tour will follow the Carson Route so closely that at times the bus will be on the trail. There will be an opportunity to walk in the swales and hear of the struggles of those going up the Devil's Ladder and viewing the Elephant (West Pass).

The Johnson Cutoff (U.S. 50) was opened in 1852 and became an alternate to the Carson Route. This tour will visit the two locations where the Johnson Cutoff splits off from the Carson Route. These two closely-related trails show the choice of trails to arrive at the gold fields.

On this tour you can view historic areas, take photos, or walk around, depending on the available parking and timeframe allotted. Places to see/things to do include Woodfords Pony Express Station (CA 88), Snowshoe's Cave, Hope Valley where there is a junction of three emigrant routes, Devil's Ladder with optional hiking, lunch at Caples Lake with a view of West Pass, Tragedy Spring, then onto to Leek Springs (via Mormon-Emigrant Trail – Iron Mountain Road) driving along the trail. There will be a short photo stop at Union Hill, a famous trail junction. A short rest stop at Fresh Pond store (U.S. 50) before heading back to Harveys.

### **Tour B: Coloma/Placerville Museum** Highest elevation 7600'

The tour will include visits to the El Dorado County Historical Museum in Placerville, CA, and the Marshall Gold Discovery State Park in Coloma, CA.

The route will travel U.S. 50 west, following the general route of the 1852 Johnson Cutoff emigrant road. Many features on the Johnson Cutoff will be visible.

The bus will travel through Old Hangtown (Placerville), and the towns of Diamond Springs and El Dorado, both on the Placerville-to-Sacramento emigrant road.

The tour at the county museum includes indoor and outdoor displays, with a short talk at the Shay (logging) locomotive and a tour of the Research Room containing thousands of primary documents pertaining to the Gold Rush and El Dorado County history.

---

<sup>4</sup> NV – Nevada State Route; CA – California State Route.



The lunch stop will be at the Coloma picnic grounds along the river.

A quarter-mile walk is required in Coloma. Transportation will be arranged with previous notice.

At the state park in Coloma, we will visit the remodeled museum and mercantile, and take a guided tour of the town with an emphasis on wagons and trails, Sutter's mill replica, and the gold discovery site on the South Fork of the American River.

**Tour C: Donner/Truckee River Route** Highest elevation 7100'  
– with optional hike segments

This tour will travel to Truckee to see the Donner family campsite at Alder Creek. At this location John Grebenkemper will present a demonstration of his trained historic-human-remains dog.

Next, the tour goes to Donner Memorial State Park to see where the remainder of the Donner party camped during that severe 1846-1847 winter.

After a tour of the area, lunch, and a trip through the visitor center, the tour travels west up old U.S. 40 towards Donner Summit.

At Donner Pass (Rainbow Bridge) we will see where the Donner party was turned around by the heavy snows. While there, we will see the China Wall and remains of a number of early transportation routes.

The tour also includes driving along the east and north shores of Lake Tahoe with interesting narration of local and trail history.

**Tour D: Hawley Grade – Luther Pass** Highest elevation 7740'

This all day hiking tour includes two separate hikes. These hikes, both downhill, are classified as **moderate**. Parts of the trails are graded and some parts are rocky and on uneven ground, so wear sturdy shoes, dress in layers, and you need to carry bottles of water.

The morning hike begins with Hawley Grade, which is a historic stretch of the trans-Sierra Pony Express route. It is one of the most interesting sections of the old route that carried mail from Missouri to California in 1860-61. The grade was built by Asa Hawley in 1857 and was the first graded wagon road in the Sierra. Even today you can still find parts of the original retaining wall and cobblestone road.

The bus will take you to the top of Echo Summit, elevation 7596', where the hike will be downhill for 1.5 miles with a drop of about 900' to Christmas Valley (CA 89) where the bus will meet the tour with lunch, after a drive by the historic Celio homestead.

The afternoon hike is on the Luther Trail, which linked the Carson River Route in Hope Valley (CA 88) with the main Johnson Cutoff (U.S. 50). Luther Pass is named after Ira M. Luther, one of the "Irish Brigade" described by Mark Twain in *Roughing It*. In 1854, Luther traversed the pass by covered wagon; he was also involved in later efforts to use the pass as the route for the Central Pacific Railroad.

This hike begins at the pass and is downhill with a drop of 630'. For the first half, the hike takes you through the trees. Suddenly it surprises you with an awesome view of Hope Valley.

The hike is 2.2 miles, ending at an OCTA interpretive sign at the handicap fishing area and restrooms in Hope Valley where the bus will take you back to Harveys.

## **SPEAKERS FOR THE 2015 OCTA CONVENTION**

**KEYNOTE SPEAKER Gary F. Kurutz**

### **ON THE EXTREMITY OF CIVILIZATION: THE GOLDEN WORDS OF THE ARGONAUTS**

When James Wilson Marshall's "eye was caught with the glimpse of something shining in the bottom of the ditch" at Coloma 167 years ago, he not only set off a worldwide rush to California but also touched off the greatest writing and publishing frenzy in our nation's history prior to the Civil War. Newspapers, guidebooks, maps, diaries, and letters all spread the word about a land where golden dreams could be realized. As one gold seeker put it, "California was on the extremity of civilization."

But all that changed in a blink of the eye.

This Gold Rush historian and bibliographer will cover the colorful and sometimes humorous words of the Argonauts as they saw the elephant and developed a remarkable treasure trove of American literature.

Included will be amazingly eloquent accounts of those who braved the overland trek as well as one schemer who promised leaping across the continent by air.

Kurutz (pronounced Kertz) is principal librarian emeritus of the Special Collections Branch of the California State Library in Sacramento. He served in that position from 1980 to 2012. He currently works part time at the State Library. Special Collections includes the Library's Rare Book and California History Sections. Previously, he held positions as Head Librarian, Sutro Library (San Francisco; Library Director, California Historical Society; and Bibliographer of Western Americana at the Henry E. Huntington Library Pasadena, California). Additionally, he currently serves as Executive Director of the California State Library Foundation, chairs the Collections and Exhibitions Committee of the California Historical Society, and is on the faculty of the California Rare Book School at UCLA.

He has received awards and fellowships from the Bibliographical Society of America, Book Club of California, Commonwealth Club of California, Huntington Library, San Francisco Historical Association, and UCLA's Young Research Library.

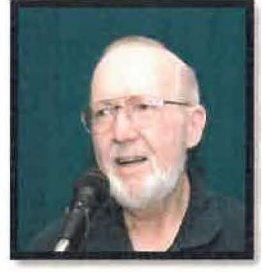
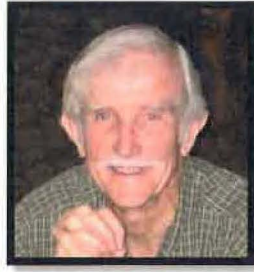
Kurutz is an honorary member of the Society of California Pioneers and the San Francisco Corral of the Westerners and member and past president of several bibliophilic and historical organizations.

Most importantly, he worked with OCTA members Don Buck and the late Richard Davis in establishing a library branch of OCTA at the California State Library.

Kurutz has written several books and over 150 articles concerning California history and Western Americana including the award winning, *The California Gold Rush: A Descriptive Bibliography of Eyewitness Accounts*, and an online Gold Rush exhibit, "California as We Saw It."



## PANEL – A BONANZA OF TRAILS



**Darrel Cruz, Don Buck, Dee Owens, John Winner, and Moderator Frank Tortorich**

Most pioneer trans-Sierra wagon routes were originally Indian trade and hunting routes, which in California date back some 10,000 years. Of the several trans-Sierra crossings by non-Indian adventurers who left some written information of their crossings, not all resulted in wagon routes over the Sierra Nevada.

**8000 BC** – Trans-Sierra Indian trade and hunting routes; **1844** – First wagons over the Sierra – Truckee River Route; **1846** – Applegate connecting the California Trail to Oregon; **1848** – Second trans-Sierra wagon trail – Carson River Route; Lassen, off Applegate; Burnett Cutoff, off Applegate; **1850** – Nevada City Road; Georgetown; **1851** – Beckwourth; **1852** – Johnson Cutoff; Walker/ Sonora; Volcano; Nobles, off Applegate; Yreka, off Applegate; Henness; Grizzly Flat; Placer County Emigrant Road; **1854** – Luther; **1856** – Big Tree-Carson Valley Wagon Road.

Darrel Cruz - Indian Trade routes over the Sierra (Carson River Route) and items of trade. He is director of the Cultural Resources Department, Tribal Historic Preservation Office, and Language Program for the Washoe Tribe. Responsibilities in Nevada and California include working with Federal, State and local agencies including other non-governmental organizations and educational institutions, anywhere within the ancestral lands of the Washoe tribe. Mission statement "Protect, Preserve, and Promote the Washoe Culture"

Don Buck - Truckee River Route, Henness Pass Road, Southern Trail, Lassen Trail off the Applegate, and Nobles Trail off the Applegate. He is an 1982 OCTA Charter member and Emigrant Trail researcher since 1980. He is known for his on-the-ground discoveries and mapping, his diary collection, and research on the western emigrant trails.

Dee Owens - Grizzly Flat and how OCTA verifies trail under the direction of U.S. Forest Service. She is an OCTA member and Emigrant Trail researcher since 2003.

John Winner - Johnson Cutoff, Georgetown Pack Trail, Beckwourth Trail, and Yreka Trail off the Applegate Trail. He is an OCTA member and Emigrant Trail researcher since 1990.

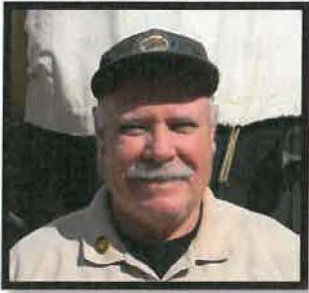
Frank Tortorich, moderator - Carson River Route, Big Tree Road, Volcano Road, and Walker River–Sonora Route. He is a Charter and Life OCTA member and Emigrant Trail researcher since 1978.

After the trail presentations, there will be a discussion among the panel members on OCTA's role in trail preservation. At the break for lunch, the panel will remain for questions.



## **Steve Beck**

### **THE DONNER-REED WAGON PARTY**



The story of the Donner-Reed Wagon Party of 1846 is more than an experience of survival and cannibalism; it is an adventure with heroes and villains, romance, intrigue, murder, sacrifice, great wealth and abject poverty, nefarious swindlers, generous benefactors, lost treasure, compassion, spirituality, familial devotion, despair, and relief. It is a microcosm of the best and worst of the human condition. Even though many have researched and documented the “when and where” of the Donner Party, it is the “how and why” that are most intriguing.

Sutter’s Fort was the source of rescue and relief for the survivors and the volunteers who assisted in their rescue, as well as the staging area for less altruistic individuals bent on profit. Sutter’s Fort may still hold the answers to many questions about “The Donner Experience.” The Fort is the largest repository of original source Donner Party material anywhere. It consists of multiple collections, dominated by the Patty Reed-Lewis Collection. This presentation will present many rarely, or never, seen documents, letters, notes, and pictures from these collections and will address some barely touched upon “Donner-Reed subjects,” and shed new light upon others.

Since 1997 Steve Beck has worked in a variety of positions at Sutter’s Fort State Historic Park. He is currently the “Director of History and Educational Programming.”

For 12 years Beck directed the Environmental Living Program, which involves an overnight living history field trip for schools to Sutter’s Fort. Beck was also the archivist for the Sacramento Historic Sites Association for several years and is still extensively involved with the Fort collections.

Beck holds degrees in Anthropology and Geology from California State University Sacramento.

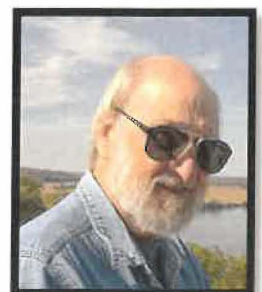
NOTE: There is a DVD that contains Beck’s presentation that is used in classrooms throughout Northern California and Nevada. It won a cable television WAVE Award (Best Documentary) for a 40-minute show.

## **Chuck Dodd**

### **CALIFORNIA GOLD RUSH DRAWINGS OF J. GOLDSBOROUGH BRUFF**

J. Goldsborough Bruff is as central to the emigrant trails as South Pass. His more than 500 drawings of scenes along the trail illustrate the context for all those who traveled overland on the California, Oregon, and Mormon trails.

An unwritten law evidently commands authors of trail books to include at least one of Bruff’s drawings—one of his full-color drawings if possible. His drawings of Chimney Rock and the Sweetwater from atop Independence Rock are familiar. His drawing of South Pass is just as



striking, though totally unfamiliar because it requires an understanding of how Bruff drew to put it together from four separate parts. Bruff's drawing of his camp in St. Joseph has been published, but his drawings of a buffalo being skinned and of meat being jerked have not. He left no drawing of the Scott's Bluff we today photograph, but he thoroughly illustrated the historic Scotts bluffs: the range of nature's sculptured monuments along the North Platte from Ash Hollow to Roubidoux Pass.

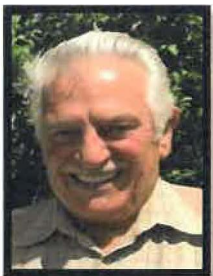
Bruff's diaries and journals dominate our understanding of the trail. It is time now that we bring into the full light his drawings, which have never before been interpreted.

I have been working on publishing Bruff's gold rush adventure drawings. The paper I am proposing will provide a sampling of these Bruff's drawings--focusing on the drawings themselves, with, as necessary, a little information about how Bruff went about making the drawings. It most certainly cannot include a showing of all 676 of Bruff's drawings, but should expand the understanding of the emigrant experience of those in the audience. Photos of the scenes Bruff drew will be included with the drawings, to illustrate the accuracy of Bruff's on-the-site drawings as well as to relate the drawings to what we can see today.

*Gold Rush: The Journals, Drawings, and other Papers of J. Goldsborough Bruff, April 2, 1849 — July 20, 1851* edited by Georgia Willis Read and Ruth Gaines, is the 800-pound gorilla in the field of published trail diaries and journals. It includes quite a few of Bruff's drawings, but far from all of them. More importantly, it just *includes* the drawings; it does not "interpret" the drawings by explaining them and putting them into the context of Bruff's gold rush adventure, including the trail he followed to California. Whereas some of Bruff's drawings need no "interpretation" other than a title, date, and place, others are complicated and/or important enough to demand more. The interrelationships between many of the drawings also demand an interpretation.

**Dr. Jack Fletcher with Pat Fletcher**

## **CHEROKEES AND ARKANSANS IN THE GOLD RUSH AND SETTLEMENT OF CALIFORNIA**



In 1839 Cherokee Jesse Chisholm "headed an expedition to California via the southern trails...." In 1843 Capt. Dan Coody led a Cherokee fur-trading expedition to California via Fort Bridger and Fort Hall, proceeding to California via the Humboldt River and Truckee route, wintering at what was later Johnson's Rancho.



In 1849, individuals and groups of Cherokee joined whites to form wagon trains and pack companies striking out for the California gold fields. One group from Cherokee Nation and Arkansas under Dr. Jeter Lynch Thompson united with Judge Tully's group from Missouri and proceeded via the main California Road as noted by J. Goldsborough Bruff in the Sierra. Company member Senora Hicks played a vital role in the rescue of emigrants caught in the early snows of that 1849 winter on the Lassen route.

In 1849, the Cherokee-Mississippi pack company, 38 strong, followed the southern route via Santa Fe. Capt. Evans' Cherokee/Arkansas Wagon Company was the largest, pioneering what became recorded as the Cherokee Trail, from Fort Gibson, Cherokee Nation to Fort Bridger. Evans' was the first wagon train over the Hastings route after the 1846 Donner party, arriving via the Truckee, Lassen, and the Carson routes in company with Chief Truckee's group. The 1850 Cherokee Trail Cherokee travelers produced two newspaper editors, a long-time sheriff, author and poet laureate, and owners of businesses and many ranches, including the Sheep Ranch, from which mine George Hearst made his fortune.

Dr. Jack Fletcher is a retired University Professor. Jack and his wife Pat are both native Coloradoans who have coauthored three books on Colorado History. Twenty-two years were spent locating, mapping, and documenting what became known as the Cherokee Trail from Fort Gibson to Fort Bridger, producing their first book, *Cherokee Trail Diaries 1849-1850*. Two additional years of documenting travelers over the trail from 1851 produced their second book entitled *Cherokee Trail Diaries 1851-1900*. They are among the foremost authorities on this trail. They are presently writing a book on the Overland Mail and Stage. Jack and his wife are both former OCTA national board members (serving six years each). Jack is presently president of the Southern Trails Chapter of OCTA.

**Jim Hardee**

### **HOW THE FUR TRADE INFLUENCED JOHN SUTTER, SUTTER'S FORT, AND THE CALIFORNIA TRAIL**



*From the Hudsons Bay Company I received likewise great supplies, and particularly Powder, lead, and Shot, Beaver Trapps and Clothing (on Credit, to be paid for in Beaver and Otter Skins).*

John Sutter's Diary, March 6, 1844

Johann August Sutter's settlement in the Sacramento Valley was a well-known final destination for emigrants on the California Trail. Sutter's reputation for hospitality was frequently cited in the diaries of early travelers to the Golden State, many of those entries extolling Sutter's Fort as having been a much-needed place of recovery after the long, arduous journey across the continent.

However, if Sutter had carried through on his original intent to make his way to California via the Sonoran Route, his *New Helvetia* settlement may well have been in Southern California, thus unavailable to those following the California Trail across the Sierra Nevada.

Providentially, Sutter encountered mountain men on his trip west who influenced his decision to make Northern California his destination. During his nearly month-long stay at the 1838 rendezvous on the Popo Agie River, he interacted with numerous mountaineers who had been to California. These men lauded the land and its potential, prompting Sutter to reevaluate his earlier idea to drive California cattle north to Oregon's Willamette Valley.



On the westbound trip from Missouri, Sutter visited five integral fur trading posts, gaining first-hand experience of how business was conducted in the west.

Once Sutter selected land along Alta California's American River, his economic viability derived from his own fur trade involvement. In a very real sense, previous fur trade expeditions by trappers from the Hudson's Bay Company, based out of Fort Vancouver, paved the way for Sutter's emporium at such a prime, central valley location.

This paper examines these and other topics that demonstrate the profound impact mountain men and the fur trade had on Sutter. Ultimately, if not for the fur trade, Sutter's Fort would not have been the haven of comfort at the end of the California Trail that it was.

Jim Hardee is Editor of *The Rocky Mountain Fur Trade Journal*, a publication of the Museum of the Mountain Man, Pinedale, Wyoming, and is the current director of The Fur Trade Research Center. He received a BA from University of the Pacific in Stockton, CA. He has given many conference presentations, including three for past OCTA conventions. He is author of several books and articles.

**Mark McLaughlin**

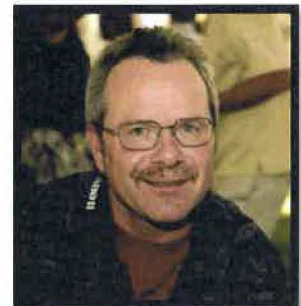
### **EXCEPTIONAL WOMEN PIONEERS & OTHER CHARACTERS ON THE CALIFORNIA TRAIL IN 1841, 1844, AND 1846**

Many of the emigrants that attempted overland travel to California in the early 1840s were a cut above the typical farmers of the era. In 1841, a 21-year-old named John Bidwell helped lead a small group of young men to the Humboldt River. Bidwell went on to become a leading politician, military general and philanthropist.

Demographically, males dominated the pre-Gold Rush migration, but women who took on the challenge were exceptional indeed. Nancy Kelsey, the only woman in the Bidwell Party, chose to follow her husband Ben into unknown territory instead of remaining on the Oregon Trail. They ultimately abandoned their wagons, so Nancy walked carrying her baby girl. She became the first American woman to cross the Sierra into California. The 32 men she traveled with agreed: "She showed patience, heroism, and kindness."

In 1844, a Paiute Indian helped a wagon train of 50 people reach the Truckee River. Sarah Montgomery, an uneducated 18-year-old farm girl, was a member of that group known as the Stephens Party. They were the first to cross Donner Pass and open the California Trail. Sarah later became a staunch advocate for women's rights. These stories and others open a window into the personalities of those who changed the country.

McLaughlin is an award-winning, nationally published author, professional speaker, and photographer with six books and more than 650 articles in print. He has been a Tahoe local for over 30 years and has spoken to hundreds of groups, large and small, offering a taste of western history, served up fresh and exciting. web: [thestormking.com](http://thestormking.com)





**THROUGH OUR EYES  
HISTORY OF THE EMIGRANT TRAIL  
FROM THE NISENAN INDIAN PERSPECTIVE**



**Shelly Covert – (Nisenan descendant)**

**Dr. Sheri J. Tatsch – (linguist)**

This presentation will bring to the audience a lovely blend of academic accounts and Native American oral history.

Linguist Dr. Sheri J. Tatsch partners with Nevada City Rancheria Tribal Council Secretary and Nisenan descendant, Shelly Covert, to share an intriguing perspective of the trails that brought settlers and pioneers through now-Nevada County prior to the Gold Rush.

Shelly Covert will share accounts of her family history and Nisenan perspective through stories passed down to her by her family.

Dr. Tatsch will use her original maps of Nisenan territory, superimposing the trails to provide visuals that will give a sense of place to the Nisenan stories that survive in the culture today.

A character featured in one of the oral stories is Betsy Westfield who was born in Nevada City, California. Betsy tells how as a very young child she heard a strange noise approaching their Nisenan town of Oustomah. She then saw the approach of an ox-pulled wagon driven by non-native men in strange attire. News spread quickly through the families and towns telling of the newcomers to the land.

The audience will gain a sense of what it was like for Nisenan Indians during times of emigration.

Shelly Covert serves as Tribal Council Secretary and Cultural Outreach Liaison and Spokesperson for the Nevada City Rancheria Nisenan Tribe. She is also the Executive Director of C.H.I.R.P. (California Heritage: Indigenous Research Project) a non-profit cultural organization. She is of Nisenan and Miwok descent. Shelly is an advocate for the Nisenan people and is a direct, lineal descendant of the Nisenan families that were here in the Foothills of California for countless generations before the Gold Rush.

Dr. Sheri Tatsch serves Californian Indian communities through her firm, Indigenous Consulting Services. She is a former faculty member of the Native American Studies Department at UC Davis and was Executive Director of the Native American Language Center.

Dr. Tatsch works with Native communities throughout California on language revitalization efforts, along with ethno-historical and cultural research, incorporating traditional territorial boundaries.

## Ellen Osborn

### JOHN CALHOUN JOHNSON AND THE JOHNSON CUTOFF

The Johnson Cutoff emigrant route, ever changing on its way to becoming modern U.S. 50, is known as one of the most storied and romantic roads in American history.

Beginning with the story of the young attorney from Ohio, John Calhoun Johnson, who first opened it to emigrant traffic in 1852, let us travel through time and meet some of the famous and infamous who walked or rode into California following Johnson's footsteps, and learn why this route was so popular.



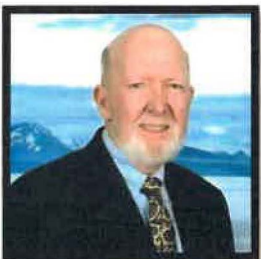
Ellen Osborn is a direct descendant of John Calhoun Johnson. She has published historical articles in *Sierra Heritage* and *Overland Journal*. Her unpublished book, *A Fractured Pane of Glass*, is a history of El Dorado County, CA. For the Placerville (CA) Shakespeare Club, she helped research and write "El Dorado's True Gold, Notable Women's Stories," in 2013.

OCTA's California-Nevada Chapter presented the Senior Trail Boss Award to Ellen and her husband in 2011. In 2013, the Daughters of the American Revolution recognized her with their Historic Preservation Award.

Ellen is a fourth generation Californian. A graduate San Francisco State, now retired, she lives in Pollock Pines, CA. Her new book, *\*A LOVELY AND COMFORTABLE HERITAGE LOST, A Unique History of Early El Dorado County, California*, is at the publishers at this publication's printing.

## Frank Tortorich

### THE CARSON RIVER ROUTE



The proposed presentation is on the subject of events leading up to the opening of the Carson River Route branch of the California Trail in 1848.

The Carson River Route was the main "Gold Rush Trail," as more people, animals, and wagons came over the Carson River Route than any other trail during this time. Except for the short-lived Sonora route, a bit over 10,000', the Carson Route took the early gold seekers over the 9,600-foot West Pass, the highest point wagons traveled during the early gold rush.

The Carson Route was opened, west to east, by a small group of Mormon Battalion soldiers. This unlikely group came to California with the U.S. Army of the West to fight the Mexicans. They were discharged in California and left to their own resources to seek a way to their recently established church home in the Salt Lake valley.

Frank submitted two different format presentation to the Speaker Committee: A traditional lecture style and as a first person interpretation of William Coray, who, as a young man knew Joseph Smith, became a Sergeant in Company B of the Mormon Battalion and a member of the



group opening the Carson River Route in 1848. It will be interesting which he chooses to tell the story.

Tortorich has been a volunteer historian working with the Eldorado National Forest, Amador Ranger District, on researching and searching for the Carson Pass segment of the California Trail since 1978. Presently he is a seasonal employee for the USFS; summers will find him at Carson Pass Information Station on CA 88, right on the Carson River Route. He has written two guide/history books about the Carson Pass segment of Carson River Route.

He has appeared on Public Television System (PBS) with Tom Bodett on the "America's Historic Trails" series, on the "California Trail" produced by Little Big Horn Production in Salt Lake City and on the Food Channel leading a hike on the Carson Trail eating gourmet sandwiches.

Frank, a native of Jackson, California, retired from education in 1994 to take on trail research full time. His third book, *JOHN A. "SNOWSHOE" THOMPSON, Pioneer Mail Carrier of the Sierra*, is at the printers at this publication's printing.



*Your all season resort in the Sierra Nevada*

(800) 423-9949 (530) 694-2203

*OCTA's Friends of the Trail 2015*

14225 State Route 88 Hope Valley, CA 96120

*www.sorensensresort.com*

*OCTA Members*

*Operating on a Use Permit granted by*

*Humboldt-Toiyabe and Eldorado National Forests*

A dessert evening **Welcome Reception** will be held Monday to feature the Book Vendors, Authors, and Exhibitors.

## **BOOK ROOM**

The **Book Room** is a grand place to shop for books, new, used, and rare, from dealers or publishers, private collections, and single book sellers.

There will be four tables of OCTA Book Store books and other store items.

The schedule is posted outside the Book Room and in the personal schedule inside your neck wallet. This room is located to the right of the entrance to the main meeting room.

## **BOOK ROOM VENDORS**

Robert A. Clark, Washington State  
University Press

Karen Dustman, Claritage Press

Jack and Pat Fletcher

Kathy Franzwa

Jim Hardee, Museum of the Mountain Man

Marge Harding

Ken Johnston

Carl Mautz, Mautz Publishing

Oregon-California Trails Association

Ellen Osborn

Ed and Kathy Otto

Orrin Schwab, Orrin Schwab Books

Gene Serr

Trails West

## AUTHORS' NIGHT PARTICIPANTS

**Authors' Night** is held Monday evening during the dessert Welcoming Reception in the main meeting room. The authors will be at tables to enable attendees to meet and visit with authors and have them autograph their books.

Dave Bigler  
Chuck Dodd  
Karen Dustman  
Jack and Pat Fletcher  
Kathy Franzwa  
Jim Hardee  
Marge Harding  
Stafford Hazelett  
Bill Hill

Melissa Shaw Jones  
Ken Johnston  
George McClellan  
Ellen Osborne  
Gene Serr  
Marlene Smith-Baranzini  
Tom Sutak  
Frank Tortorich  
Martha Voght

## EXHIBITORS

The **Exhibit Area** is in the Pre-Function Area leading into the main meeting room. Federal, state, county agencies, historical societies, and other nonprofits offer information displays and handouts. Some offer items for sale. Be sure and visit this year's host, the CA-NV Chapter of OCTA.

Discover what events and activities the 2016 OCTA Convention hosts, the Idaho Chapter of OCTA, are planned for next year at their chapter table.

California-Nevada Chapter of OCTA  
California Pioneer Heritage Foundation  
California Trail Center Foundation, Elko,  
Nevada  
Carson Valley Trails Association  
Chuck Dodd, J. Goldsborough Bruff  
Project  
El Dorado County Historical Society

Eldorado and Plumas National Forests  
Idaho Chapter of OCTA  
John Marsh Trust  
National Park Service  
Nevada County Historical Society  
OCTA's Education Committee  
OCTA's 2015 Teacher of the Year

**All participants listed as of this publication's printing.**



## Suggested Reading List

- An Archaeology of Desperation: Exploring the Donner Party's Alder Creek Camp* – Kelly J. Dixon, Julie M. Schablitsky, and Shannon A. Novak, eds.
- The Archaeology of the Donner Party* – Donald L. Hardesty
- Bigler's Chronicle of the West* – Erwin G. Gudde
- \**The California Gold Rush: A Descriptive Bibliography of Books and Pamphlets Covering the Years 1848-1853* – Gary Kurutz
- The California Trail: An Epic with Many Heroes* – George R. Stewart
- \**California Trail: Voyage of Discovery: The Story Behind the Scenery* – Chuck Dodd, et al
- \**The California Trail: Yesterday and Today* – William E. Hill
- \**Cherokee Trail Diaries: Vol. I 1849 & Vol. II 1850* – Patricia K. A. & Dr. Jack E. Fletcher and Lee Whiteley
- \**Cherokee Trail Diaries: Vol. III 1851-1900* – Dr. Jack E. & Patricia Fletcher
- \**Chuck Dodd's Guide to Getting Around in the Black Rock Desert & High Rock Canyon* – Chuck Dodd
- Days of Gold: The California Gold Rush and the American Nation* - Malcolm J. Rohrbough
- The Donner Party: Weathering the Storm* - Mark McLaughlin
- Empire Express: Building the First Intercontinental Railway* – David Haward Bain
- The Expeditions of John Charles Fremont* – Donald Jackson & Mary Lee Spence
- From the Desk of Truckee's C. F. McGlashan* – M. Nona McGlashan and Betty H. McGlashan, eds.
- \**Ghost Trails to California* – Thomas H. Hunt
- \**The Gold Discovery Journal of Azariah Smith* –Azariah Smith & David L. Bigler, ed.
- \**Gold Rush Trail – A Guide to the Carson River Route of the Emigrant Trail* – Frank Tortorich
- History of the Donner Party: A Tragedy of the Sierra* – C. F. McGlashan
- History of the Sierra Nevada*– Francis P. Farquhar
- John Sutter: A Life on the North American Frontier* – Albert L. Hurtado
- \**Legendary Truths: Peter Lassen and His Gold Rush Trail in Fact and Fable*– Ken Johnston
- The Life Story of Bill Meek, Stagecoach Driver* – David Lawler & Leland Pauly
- \**A Lovely and Comfortable Heritage Lost: A Unique History of Early El Dorado County, California* – Ellen Osborn
- \**Melissa's Journey with the Mormon Battalion* – Norma Baldwin Ricketts
- \**The Mormon Battalion U.S. Army of the West, 1846-1848* – Norma Baldwin Ricketts
- Mountain Men and Fur Traders of the Far West* – LeRoy R. Hafen, ed.
- The Old Iron Road* – David Haward Bain
- \**Obstinate Hope, the Western Expeditions of Nathaniel J. Wyeth, 1832-1833, The Rocky Mountain Fur Trade Journal (Volume 5)* – Jim Hardee
- Ordeal by Hunger: the Story of the Donner Party* – George R. Stewart
- \**Pierre's Hole! The Fur Trade History of Teton Valley, Idaho*– Jim Hardee
- The Plains Across: the Overland Emigrants and the Trans-Mississippi West, 1840-1860* – John David Unruh
- The Pony Express Rider (Ronnie Campbell Series Book 1)* - Ron Bell
- \**The Road From El Dorado: The 1848 Trail Journal of Ephraim Green* – William Bagley, ed.



*Roughing It* – Mark Twain

*Sierra Stories: True Tales of Tahoe Vol. 1 & Vol. 2* – Mark McLaughlin

\**Sierra Stories: Tales of Dreamers, Schemers, Bigots, and Rogues* – Gary Noy

\**Sonora Pass Pioneers: California Bound Emigrants and Explorers 1841 – 1864* – David H. Johnson

\**They Saw the Elephant. Women in the California Gold Rush* – JoAnn Levy

\**To the land of Gold and Wickedness* – Lorena Hays and Jeanne Hamilton Watson, ed.

\**Trail of the First Wagons Over the Sierra Nevada (A Guide)* – Charles K. Graydon

\**Branch Canyon Segment of the Truckee Trail: Finding the Trail Where the Emigrants Themselves Said it Was*

*A Trail Sleuthing Experience on the South* – Charles H. Dodd

\**Wagon Wheel Kitchens, Food on the Oregon Trail* – Jacqueline Williams

*The Wake of the Prairie Schooner* – Irene D. Paden

*What I Saw In California* – Edwin Bryant

*Winter of Entrapment: A New Look at the Donner Party* – Joseph A. King

*Women of the West* – Cathy Luchetti and Carol Olwell

*Women's Diaries of the Westward Journey* – Lillian Schlissel

*The Year of Decision 1846* – Bernard DeVoto

\* Denotes OCTA member

For more suggested readings, see the 2015 convention registration booklet, page 18.

You are most welcome to visit the Book Room to find treasures of the authors, publishers, and new and rare collections

## Emigrants on the Overland Trail The Wagon Trains of 1848

Michael E. LaSalle

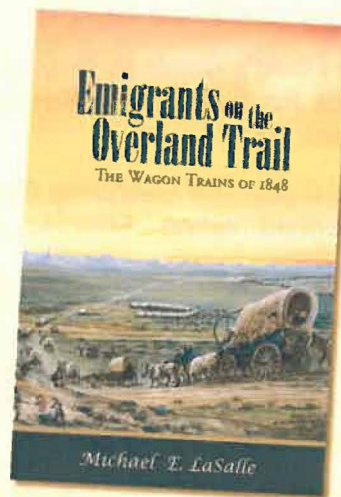
Presenting the "lost" year of the overland emigrants in 1848, this volume sheds light on the journey of the men, women, children, and the wagon trains that made the challenging trek from Missouri to Oregon and California. These primary sources, written by seven men and women diarists from different wagon companies, tell how settlers endured the tribulations of a five-month westward journey covering 2,000 miles.

As a tireless researcher, dedicated trail hound, keen observer, and lively writer, Michael E. LaSalle provides an engaging and useful look at an extremely interesting year in the story of America's overland wagon roads. His brisk narrative vividly evokes the landscape's sounds, smells and characters, and its landforms, rivers, canyons, desert basins, and ranges. His perspective is refreshingly unorthodox and fearlessly challenges established interpretations.

— *Western Historical Quarterly*

Dipping into newly discovered archival sources, Michael LaSalle enriches our understanding of the westward movement through his painstaking reconstruction of the experiences of eighteen wagon trains that took to the Oregon and California Trails in 1848. Richly illustrated with photographs, artwork, and maps, his narrative weaves the various "voices" of these pioneer reporters into a compelling day-to-day trail experience that provides insight into this great American adventure.

— Willis M. Coatsworth, Professor Emeritus, University of Scranton



\$40.00 pb • \$29.99 ebook  
536 pp. • 6x9"  
23 illus; 20 maps

800-915-6802  
100 East Normal Avenue  
Kirkville, MO 63501

TRUMAN STATE UNIVERSITY PRESS

15% off & FREE SHIPPING online at [tsup.truman.edu](http://tsup.truman.edu)

## **AWARDS DINNER, CELEBRATION, AND LIVE AUCTION**

Each year the purpose of the OCTA Awards Committee is to identify and seek nominations for those persons who have made exceptional contributions toward the furtherance of OCTA's mission and objectives.

### **Gregory M. Franzwa Meritorious Achievement Award**

The highest award OCTA can give to recognize long-term and significant contributions to OCTA. Only members can qualify

**David Welch Preservation Award** - For special efforts toward Preservation

### **Elaine McNabney Distinguished Volunteer Award**

Bestowed upon OCTA members who contribute significantly to achieving OCTA goals and projects. Only OCTA members qualify for this award.

### **Distinguished Service Award**

Granted to organizations, businesses, government agencies, individuals, or others, who contribute or participate in furthering OCTA's programs directly, or provide substantial support in a non-affiliated way to trail preservation and education.

### **Friends of the Trail Award**

Presented to honor groups, individuals, or organizations that have direct ties to lands over which historic trails pass. Emphasis is placed on preservation of trail remnants, education of the public about their historic resources, and allowing responsible public access to the historic resources.

### **National Certificates of Appreciation**

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

## **SPECIAL PRESIDENTIAL AWARDS**

### **Past Presidential Award**

### **Certificates of Appreciation**

Presented to outgoing officers and directors

### **Resolutions of Thanks**

Presented to the current year's convention chairperson

## **LIVE AUCTION**

Following the Awards presentation, a live auction will be led by OCTA's new president, and our own OCTA Auctioneer, John Winner.

Proceeds are evenly split between the convention hosting chapter (California-Nevada Chapter) and the national organization.

Program coordinators, Dick Nelson, OCTA Awards Chair and John Winner, Auctioneer, have promised to conclude the evenings activities by 9:00 p.m. so that you may get a good night's rest for Wednesday's tours and activities.

Thank you for sharing your evening with us and,  
please, congratulate the award winners during the convention.

And thank you for your support.

## EVER WONDER HOW THE SILENT AUCTION, LIVE AUCTION, OR RAFFLE WORKS?

### WHO GETS THE MONEY?

Everyone knows what a **Raffle** is. You buy tickets from those people in the halls, on the bus, and other places you had no idea they would be. Then check your numbers on the display easel to see if your number has been drawn and visit the Raffle/Silent Auction Rooms across from the Registration/Information Desk to collect the treasure you have won.

**Silent Auctions** are a little more interactive. In the Raffle/Silent Auction Rooms there are tables with bid pages next to each item. That page has the item description, the value of the item, the beginning bid, and bid increments.

Now this is just the beginning. During the convention check to see if someone else out bid you. Do you go higher? Or not?

The bidding ends on Thursday around end of the lunch break. Watch for the time posted in the entrance to the Raffle/Silent Auction Rooms.

A **Live Auction** is more intense. After the Awards are bestowed upon worthy winners, OCTA's own auctioneer, new OCTA President, John Winner begins to entice all of us to bid on items especially chosen for their live auction popularity.

The bidding is very entertaining as the assistants walk around the room holding the item up for bid so you can see it. The proud winner is handed the bid sheet by an assistant and you Pay for the item at the table by the stage. Cash, check, and yes, even credit cards are accepted.

**All the funds** with the Silent and Live Auction and Raffle are split half and half between the hosting chapter and national.

However, this year, CA-NV member, Don Buck, is hosting a separate **Silent Auction of donated books**. They are on display in a alcove in the Executive Boardroom of the Silent Auction Rooms. These books were donated for the express purpose to raise money for the **California State Library**. Don Buck and the late OCTA member, Richard Davis, helped to establish a library branch of OCTA at the California State Library. None of these funds will be given to OCTA or the CA-NV Chapter. The form will clearly state this information and be a different color than the other silent auction forms.

Both of the Silent Auctions end their bidding Thursday around end of the lunch break. Watch for the time posted in the entrance to the Raffle/Silent Auction Rooms. You can pay for all of your Silent Auction items at the same time.

**Thank You to All of You Who So Graciously Donated Items to Make This Activity a Success.**

**Together we'll go far**



**Thank you to Wells Fargo Bank  
for donating  
the convention tote bags**



## 2015 OCTA NATIONAL CONVENTION WORKSHOPS



### TRAIL RESEARCH SUGGESTED METHODS

OCTA is "dedicated to the preservation and protection of overland emigrant trails and the emigrant experience." This task is challenged daily by pipeline, road, transmission line proposals, recreational /

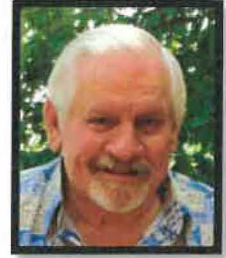
commercial development, and timber salvage sales.

Trail preservation can only occur when the specific trail path is identified, mapped, and validated with documented research. Sitting in front of a computer scanning Google Earth will not suffice. Until such time as Google Earth has the resolution to see rust stains on rocks and is supplemented by a Lidar type technology that can see through foliage or an infrared or other capability that can distinguish differences in soil compaction, extensive archival and field research is required.

The workshop will consist of four segments:

- The various forms of documentation and map resources that can identify the areas in which to conduct the field research to locate new trail segments, or correct past trail location errors.
- Field research do's and don'ts on both private and public lands; the tools available and techniques employed.
- Standardized methods of documentation and mapping.
- Future challenges and work to be done.

**You may purchase the OCTA mapping manual at the OCTA table in the bookroom**



**Tom Mahach**

### INDIAN BASKET PRESENTATION



Life was not easy for the Newe (Shoshone)<sup>5</sup> living in the Great Basin 500 or so years ago. They moved seasonally from food source to food source. These hardy natives did not have horses, but made their way across the high desert on



foot, carrying their few possessions in baskets. **Jan Petersen**

Willows growing along the creeks and Humboldt River were the primary materials used in making these baskets with uses from backpack style to cooking to cradle baskets. Creative and intricate weaving methods were used. It was a harsh life, but these natives were ingenious at making do with what materials were available from the land.

Join California Trail Interpretive Center's Jan Petersen, as she tells of the many uses of the versatile Shoshone basketry of the Newe. She worked at the Northeastern Nevada Museum

<sup>5</sup> Shoshones called themselves **Newe**, meaning "People," who lived in Nevada and Utah as high as 10,000" in elevation in the Wind River Range, dating from 700 to 2,000 BCE.

for 13 years and is now the site historian and store manager at the Trail Center. She credits her dad, Bob Pearce, for her passion and interest in the California Trail and western history.



**Sharon Dennis**

## COOKING ON THE TRAIL



**Jacqueline Ball**

The Oregon-California Trail Association is “dedicated to the preservation and protection of overland emigrant trails and the emigrant experience.”

Trail interpreters Jacqueline Ball and Sharon Dennis will share their passion for trail cooking as a window into this **emigrant experience** of the westward journey in a relaxed outdoor presentation.

Through “little theater,” cooking demonstrations, conversation, and of course, with a bit of tasting for attendees, Jacqueline and Sharon share their passion for trail cooking.

Their workshop will include

- The difficulties of cooking in the open due to weather; intermittent availability of water and fuel sources.
- First person quotes from period journals that speak to the experience of cooking on the Oregon and California Trails.
- The evolution of the experience of cooking on the trail evolving from one of excitement and pride to one of daily tedium and fatigue.
- The common cast iron and tin cooking implements used on the trail.
- The common food supplies used on the trail.
- On-site cooking demonstrations with a bit of “modern adaptation” out of respect for the high wildfire risk in California and Nevada this fall.

Interpreting history from the  
Yokuts and Miwok through  
Captain Charles Weber,  
the founder of Stockton  
and first farmer in the area.

11793 N. Micke Grove Road  
Lodi, CA (209) 331-2055  
[www.SanJoaquinHistory.org](http://www.SanJoaquinHistory.org)



## END OF THE TRAIL "SOUTH OF THE BORDER" DINNER CONTINUOUS ENTERTAINMENT

An OCTA tradition on the last evening of the convention, attendees are invited to celebrate another successful convention.

It is a time to visit with each other before the final farewell to new and old OCTA friends for another year.

Come as you are or dress in your favorite period clothing to relax while sharing a meal, meeting historic figures, listening to music, and enjoying a movie.

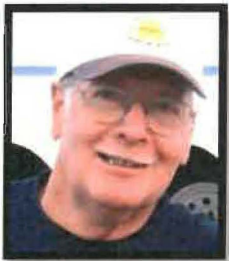


A familiar member of the OCTA Band, **Jim Allison** is gathering any musician wishing to play along to offer lively music.

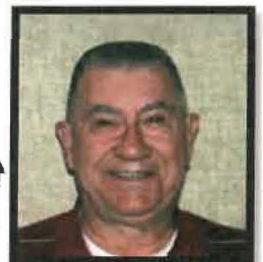
Jim hopes you brought your instrument for the evening to join in the fun.

No loud amplifiers will be used so folks can visit at the tables without a problem.

During the evening, your table will be visited by "characters" from the exploring, emigrant, and Bonanza periods. A few of these folks are:



The **Cartwright men** may take time to stop on their way to the Ponderosa. **Ben Cartwright (John Winner)** is the patriarch of an all-male Nevada ranching family. Set during and after the Civil War, "Bonanza" is the story of life on the family's thousand-acre spread, known as the Ponderosa, near Virginia City. Ben has his three sons, each with a different (and deceased) mother. Serious eldest son Adam (**Dick Waugh**) hopes to follow in his father's footsteps; middle son Hoss (**Dave Smythe**) is a gentle giant -- physically strong, but sometimes naive; and youngest son Little Joe (**Howdy Hoover**) is the most impetuous and romantic of the offspring.



**Charles Pruess** – Mark Wilson: Born in 1803 in Prussia, he was a surveyor and cartographer who accompanied John C. Fremont on his exploratory expeditions of the American West. One such notable expedition documented that he and Fremont were the first to record seeing Lake Tahoe from a mountaintop vantage point as they traversed what is now Carson Pass in February 1844. He committed suicide in 1854.







**Ronnie Campbell, Pony Express Rider** - Ron Bell; He will talk about his problems dealing with a string of horses. The horses, purchased in Eastern Nevada, had to be delivered to Buckland Station during the Paiute war. He will talk about how two men were killed at Dry Creek Station, and the gun fight heading east to Ely. Find out the answer to the question: Why did many of the Pony Express Stations not have any roofs on them?

**Sam Brannan** – Jerry Gardner; He was leader of the first Mormon settlement in Yerba Buena (San Francisco), bringing a group of Mormons and supplies, including a printing press, around the horn from the east coast in a ship called the "Brooklyn." A very colorful and enterprising person that became California's first millionaire, but died without leaving enough money for his funeral.



**Phoebe Brown** – Audrey Gomm; She came into southern California with the U.S. Army of the West as one of the four Mormon laundresses for the Mormon Battalion. Ask her about her experiences of walking and working for and with the battalion, and where she eventually settled down.

**Sgt. William Coray of Company B, Mormon Battalion** – Frank Tortorich; With his wife, Melissa, one of the Mormon laundresses, William joined the battalion and journeyed from Council Bluffs, Iowa, to San Diego and San Francisco, California, and settled in Salt Lake City, Utah. They were part of the group of discharged members of the battalion who opened the Carson River Route that became the "Gold Rush Trail."



**Alison "Eilley" Oram Bowers** – Sue Knight; Eilley was born a farmer's daughter in Scotland in 1826, and became an early Nevada pioneer, farmer and miner. Once worth over \$4 million due to the Comstock Lode mining boom, and owner of the Bowers Mansion. She married as a teenager; she actually married and divorced two times; she married a third time; became a mother of three children, but outlived them all. She died penniless in a care home in Oakland, California in 1903.

A silent movie, ***The Covered Wagon*** is a 1923 American silent Western film released by Paramount Pictures. It will be shown on a screen in the dining area. It is 93 minutes long and will be played twice, in case you want to see it a second time.



Director James Cruze revived the western genre and presented audiences with the first western epic in the spectacular 1923 film, *The Covered Wagon*, chronicling the largest wagon train to ever cross the valley of the Platte River. The film takes place in 1848, when two wagon trains converge at what is now Kansas City, and combine for the westward push to Oregon.

On their quest the pilgrims will experience desert heat, mountain snow, hunger, and an Indian attack. To complicate matters further, a love triangle develops, as pretty Molly must choose between Sam, a brute, and Will, the dashing captain of the other caravan. Can Will overcome the skeleton in his closet and win Molly's heart?

Thomas McWilliams [tgm@netcom.com](mailto:tgm@netcom.com)

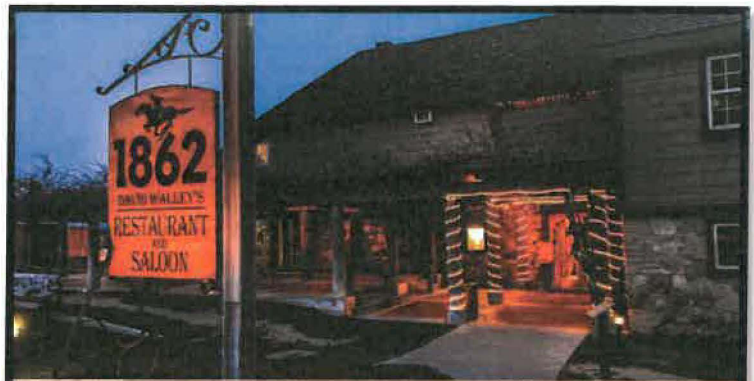


## COVERED WAGON

### Interpretation and Demonstration

Sharon Dennis and Jacqueline Ball have arranged for OCTAn Dick Smythe to trailer Sharon's restored 1850s covered wagon from California. You no doubt have seen it on display at the entry to Harveys. These talented women are leading a workshop on pioneer cooking.

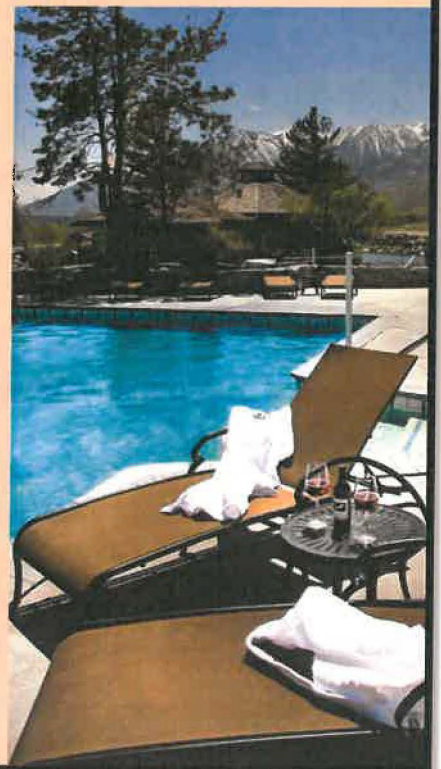
A Wagon "Drop-in" Interpretation will be offered at the wagon camp for convention attendees and the public: Monday - 12:30 to 4:00; Wednesday - 10:30 to 2:30; Friday - 10:30 to 2:30.



David Walley's Hot Springs Resort has offered patrons the ultimate in relaxation and health benefits from its mineral rich waters since 1862. Featuring five hot spring pools, heated and non-heated swimming pools, a spa, and two restaurants. Find out about our rates by calling 775-782-8155 or book online at [www.davidwalleys-resort.com](http://www.davidwalleys-resort.com).

  
**1862**  
 DAVID WALLEY'S  
 HOT SPRINGS  
 RESORT AND SPA

Our spa special for September is a 50 minute Detox Mud Wrap for \$90 normally \$125. Includes full day use of our mineral hot springs, swimming pool, sauna and steam room.





## SUGGESTIONS FOR TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THE LAKE TAHOE AREA

Suggestions from many people

SEPTEMBER is often the loveliest time of the year at Lake Tahoe. Summer crowds have diminished, golden leaves (brown during this year's drought) color the aspen trees, days are warm, and nights are brisk. The lake level is 6,229'. The autumn weather is mostly sunny, but come prepared for sudden changes with layers of clothing and a variety of sturdy footwear. If you plan to explore the Lake basin during the Convention or can stay an extra day or two, here are some suggestions of things to do and see:

The communities of Stateline, NV, and South Lake Tahoe, CA, are side by side, separated only by the border and gambling laws.

The town of SOUTH LAKE TAHOE has a community college, a unified school district, a library, Barton Memorial Hospital, campgrounds and many services and shops (including thrift shops) to choose from down the 7-mile stretch from Harveys to the junction of U.S. 50 and CA 89<sup>6</sup> (Old timers refer to this intersection as "The Y"). Edgewood Golf Course is the site of the annual Celebrity Golf Championship and is located right behind Harveys on the lakeshore. Even if you are not a golfer, the views of the lake are refreshing.

Urgent Care is 2 miles north of Harveys. ASK AT THE DESK FOR DIRECTIONS!

Ride the HEAVENLY MOUNTAIN GONDOLA from HEAVENLY VILLAGE. It is a short walk west from Harveys. The fee is \$45 adult or \$35 seniors to ride the 6- or 8-passenger Gondola, and the view from the observation platform (elevation 9,123') is spectacular. Cafe Blue is a high altitude lunch and souvenir stop. Continuing upward the Gondola reaches the Tamarack Express chairlift. On the same ticket you can continue to Tamarack Lodge and Bar for more breathless views and short hikes. The mountain's summit is 10,067'.

Visit the LAKE TAHOE HISTORICAL SOCIETY MUSEUM at 3058 Lake Tahoe Blvd. (U.S. 50) at South Lake Tahoe. It is just beyond the first view (Lakeview Commons) of the lake. Managed by the Lake Tahoe Historical Society, there is a fine collection of early Tahoe photographs as well as a history of the Washoe Indians, early settlers, farms, and logging in the Tahoe Valley. Two Pony Express monuments exist in Tahoe Valley, and the museum has a 6-pocket mochila. In the gift shop, Tahoe history and a Tahoe mystery series are for sale. In addition, the oldest standing structure in Tahoe Valley, the Osgood Tollhouse, built in 1859, is being refurbished, and the Log Cabin, furnished in period artifacts, was built in 1931. Admission is free. Days and hours are limited in fall. Call ahead for the schedule, or to request a private tour. 530.541.5458

### TAKE A ONE-DAY AUTO TOUR AROUND LAKE TAHOE

Check at the Convention Registration/Information Desk for area maps.

This 72-MILE TRIP is on well-paved highways, but involves many twists and turns and has a fair amount of traffic congestion. However, it is definitely worth the effort. Traveling in a clockwise direction, you will loop on highways U.S. 50, CA 89, NV 28, and back on U.S. 50.

---

<sup>6</sup> NV – Nevada State Route; CA – California State Route.



Starting from the convention headquarters at Harveys, follow U.S. 50 west into California, viewing the South Lake Tahoe community along the way.

(Ask at the information desk for details on where to shop in South Lake Tahoe.)

Seven miles from Harveys, at the “Y,” turn right onto CA 89. (Raley’s Supermarket, Starbucks, and other shops are in this area.)

The next 16 miles are the windiest and most scenic of the trip. No tour buses allowed.

CAMP RICHARDSON is a great old recreation resort, open year-round, with a general store and deli fronting the highway. The Beacon Restaurant with indoor and outdoor seating is a short drive to the beach. Take a lake-view stroll on the extended pier.

Ask at the Convention Information Desk for a map to visit the TALLAC HISTORIC SITES. These sites are along CA 89 on the lake and are a collection of three turn-of-the-century rustic mansions. Open Memorial Day through September, the mansions (Baldwin, Pope and Valhalla) are nestled in a large grove of old-growth trees. There are many walking trails around the sites and along the beach.

Nearby Kiva Beach is dog-friendly and includes a picnic area.

TAYLOR CREEK VISITORS CENTER AND STREAM PROFILE CHAMBER, just past the Tallac Historic Sites off the highway, is a “must see,” especially in September and October when you can view the Kokanee Salmon swimming upstream to spawn. Taylor Creek is the outlet stream from Fallen Leaf Lake. Self-guided tours begin at the Visitors Center. The Stream Profile Chamber is quarter mile away on the Rainbow Trail. Open Memorial Day through October, the facilities are wheelchair accessible. There are restrooms and picnic tables.

You now climb around the turns to get past Emerald Bay, the most photographed view of Lake Tahoe. There are several good turnouts. These include Inspiration Point (restrooms), Eagle Falls Trailhead (restrooms), and Vikingsholm. A longer walk down to Vikingsholm will give close-up views of a “castle” built by Lora Knight in 1929. **Warning! The hike back up is strenuous.**

SUGAR PINE POINT STATE PARK welcomes visitors year round. It offers walks through the tall conifers, 2 miles of beach front, picnic facilities, and the historic 1903 Hellman-Herman Mansion (also known as Pine Lodge) with a Nature Center next to the mansion. Parking is free.

THE TAHOE MARITIME MUSEUM, on the west shore at 5205 W. Lake Blvd. (near Homewood Ski Resort,) is open year ‘round with varying hours for summer and winter. If you love boats and boating, you will enjoy the excellent displays featuring early Tahoe boating history — everything from small parts to fully restored boats. Check [www.tahoemaritime.org](http://www.tahoemaritime.org) for hours. Come back in winter to ski at Homewood. THINK SNOW!

LAKE TAHOE’S NATURAL OUTLET flows into the Truckee River, named after Paiute Chief Truckee of westward emigration fame, and continues its easterly trek via Reno to Pyramid Lake, a remnant of ancient Lake Lahontan. The lake is dammed so that the natural level can be increased for downstream use. The dam is capable of increasing the lake level by 10’. It was reported by the Reno Gazette Journal newspaper in June 2015 that “recent rains have Lake Tahoe lapping at its natural rim and while it may stay there for a time, the lake should soon start dropping again during this (the fourth) year of drought.” There are often fish circling under the bridge, possibly wondering when the lake will rise again.

THE GATEKEEPERS MUSEUM, on the east side of Fanny Bridge (so named for the many visible fannies of those hanging over the bridge rail to view fish), is open Friday and Saturday after Labor Day. The exceptional collection of Marion Steinbach Indian basketry is definitely worth a visit. Additionally there are good displays of early Tahoe artifacts, a small library of materials and a museum shop. The North Tahoe Historical Society and the Tahoe Historical Society operate the museum and also the Watson Cabin Museum, which is located in the heart of Tahoe City. Check hours at [www.tahoemaritimemuseum.org](http://www.tahoemaritimemuseum.org).

BRIDGETENDERS is the place for great hamburgers. It is a unique restaurant as you approach Tahoe City. Downstream on the Truckee River, it is across the street from the Gatekeepers Museum. Weather permitting; you may eat outdoors on big wooden tables along the river bank.

TAHOE CITY, situated beyond where the outlet of Lake Tahoe flows into the Truckee River, is a bustling community with a variety of businesses to intrigue you. To enter the town from the south, cross over Fanny Bridge and turn right at the intersection onto CA 28.

(Remaining on CA 89 would take you past Squaw Valley Ski Resort, site of the 1960 Winter Olympics and on to Truckee on I-80. Truckee became a lumbering town as a result of the building of the Central Pacific Railroad in the 1860s. It has reinvented itself as an upscale shopping and restaurant haven. Beautiful CA 89 eventually ends at I-5 in Mt. Shasta City.)

Back on CA 28, KINGS BEACH, along the north shore of the Lake, has a wide, sandy beach with easy parking near the beach. Spread your beach towel, take off your shoes, walk in the sand, and put your toes into Tahoe's clear, icy water! Nearby are more places to buy a snack.

CAL/NEVA AT CRYSTAL BAY is Ol' Blue Eyes former hangout. The California-Nevada state line runs right through the casino/hotel. CA 28 changes to NV 28 there.

INCLINE VILLAGE is a community of year-round and summer homes, with many elaborate "cottages" along the lake shore. The town offers shopping, dining, schools, a library, golf courses, and other recreational facilities. Just south of town, the Ponderosa Ranch, now closed, was famous as the site of the Bonanza TV show. It was a favorite tourist destination for this area.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, DAVIS, TAHOE CENTER FOR ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES is located at the Sierra Nevada College, 291 Country Club Drive, in Incline Village. Researchers are monitoring the Tahoe environment below the surface of the lake and on the surrounding land. You can visit their education center which includes hands-on displays. For further info: Website <http://terc.ucdavis.edu>.

SAND HARBOR, located three miles south of Incline Village on NV 28, has 55 acres of beaches, coves, and forested areas with lake views. It is open 8:00 a.m. -- 7:00 p.m. after Labor Day. This area offers a beautiful respite. Operated by the Nevada Division of State Parks, its undeveloped and pristine surroundings are protected as part of the George Whittell, Jr. estate.

THUNDERBIRD LODGE HISTORIC SITE is the former Tahoe home of the mysterious and enigmatic George Whittell, Jr. His stone mansion, built here along the lake, includes 600' of tunnels and numerous special rooms. Tours are by reservation only, 755.832.8750. Website: [www.thunderbirdlodge.org](http://www.thunderbirdlodge.org).

NV 28 merges into U.S. 50 towards Stateline and Harveys.

CAVE ROCK contains a tunnel through which U.S. 50 passes. It comprises 25 yards of solid stone, the plug of an ancient volcano, and is a "sacred site" for Washoe Indians. The history and early pictures of Cave Rock can be found at Lake Tahoe Historical Society's Museum at South Lake Tahoe, CA.

ZEPHYR COVE is another "old Tahoe" resort. It includes an historic Tahoe lodge with restaurant, a lovely wide beach and cove, and is a launching berth for tour boats. The M.S. Dixie II leaves from the Zephyr Cove dock.

CRUISING on the M.S. Dixie II lets you see Lake Tahoe from an entirely different perspective. The Tahoe Queen, at Ski Run Blvd in South Lake Tahoe, is another cruise option. It may not be running due to low water. Both are "paddle wheelers" and will take you across the lake and back. And back at Tahoe City you can take Tahoe Gal which tours along the north end of the lake. For cruise information call 800.238.2463 or [www.LakeTahoeCruises.com](http://www.LakeTahoeCruises.com).

BICYCLE TRAILS are another way to travel along Tahoe's shores. There are good, paved, off-road trails and businesses where bikes may be rented. At South Lake Tahoe there is a good bike trail beginning at El Dorado Beach extending 10 miles. A gentler trail of 3.4 miles, called the Pope-Baldwin Bike Path, parallels CA 89. On the west shore is a 9-mile bike path with moderate grade along the shore from Tahoe City to Sugar Pine Point. Bring your bike helmet or rent one with the bike.

SOUTH TAHOE VISITOR'S CENTER is located at 169 U.S. 50, Stateline, Nevada. Maps and tourist information are available. An URGENT CARE facility is in the same complex.

HARVEYS was originally opened in 1944 and was operated by Harvey Gross and his wife. They opened the first high rise tower, 11 stories high hotel, in 1963. The old logo showed a standing wagon wheel, a steer skull, and their resort hotel name.

Now That You Have Toured Beautiful Lake Tahoe,  
Welcome Back To Harveys Stateline

Return Some Day When You Can To Visit the Places You Missed the First Time Around



## LAKE TAHOE STATISTICS

Lake Tahoe, being on the western edge of the Basin and Range region, resulted from north/south faulting along its western edge, with partial damming of its northerly draining by minor volcanic activity. The lake is 22 miles north to south by 12 miles east to west, with a maximum depth of 1,645', second deepest in North America. The surface is 6,225' elevation. It has 72 miles of shoreline and 191 square miles of total surface area. The average August surface temperature is 65° to 79° F. If emptied, it would submerge California in 15 inches of water.

Check the Promenade area for the chart of Lake Tahoe's daily level.



## Who Made It Happen?

California-Nevada Chapter  
President Mark Wilson

2015 Convention Chair Dick Waugh

### Advisory Committee

Bob Evanhoe  
Dave Smythe  
Mary Ann Tortorich  
John Winner

### Convention Chairs

Awards Lee Black

Book Room & Exhibits Anne and Kirke Wilson

### Bus Tour Lead Guides

Tour A Carson-Johnson Loop - Frank  
Tortorich  
Tour B Coloma/Placerville Museum –  
Dee Owens  
Tour C Donner/Truckee River Route –  
Howdy Hoover  
Tour D Hawley Grade – Luther Pass  
Hike - Kathy Lewin

Entertainment Mary Ann Tortorich

Food Kathy Koester and Mary Ann Tortorich

Catering Dave Hollecker

### Preconvention Lead Guides

Johnson Cutoff – John Winner

Opening of the Carson River

Route- Tom Mahach

Footsteps of John C. Fremont –  
Mark Wilson

Grizzly Flat Cutoff – Dee Owens

West Pass Hike on the Carson

River Route – Frank Tortorich

Program Kathy Koester

Publications Bob Evanhoe

Raffle/Auction Susie Winner

Registration Phyllis Smith

Risk Management Carol and  
Hugh March

Speakers Ken Johnston

Tours Coordinator Mary Ann Tortorich

Transportation Dave Hollecker

Volunteers Coordinator Mary Ann  
Tortorich

Workshops Coordinator Mary Ann  
Tortorich

Doff your hat to the over 100 individuals who worked thousands of hours,  
donated thousands of dollars,  
generously provided items for the raffle and auctions  
and who bid and bought raffle tickets in support of this convention

OCTA thanks you for all these gifts of time and treasures  
to the benefit of OCTA and its goals

The Publications Committee acknowledges all who provided their knowledge and information, wrote articles, helped to write this information in a form for the editors to build upon, and for all the many editors, not only for this Convention Book, but for handouts for workshops, preconvention and convention bus tours, risk management, and the list goes on.

Bob Evanhoe  
Publications Chair

# **FORT HALL: CULTURES AND CHANGES**

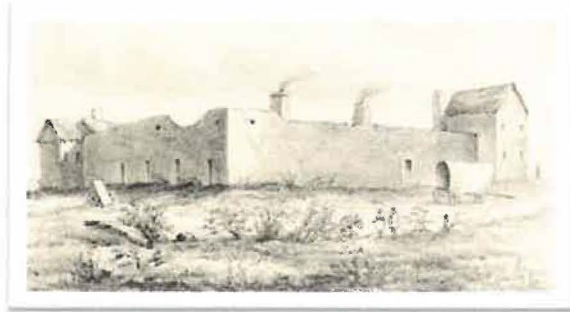
## **OREGON-CALIFORNIA TRAILS ASSOCIATION**

### **2016 ANNUAL CONVENTION**

**AUGUST 1-5, 2016**

**SHOSHONE-BANNOCK HOTEL  
AND EVENT CENTER**

**FORT HALL, IDAHO**



The Idaho Chapter of OCTA invites you to join us  
as we proudly host the OCTA convention at Fort Hall, Idaho

This convention will focus on the Native American history and culture in the Fort Hall area  
and how the influx of fur trappers and Oregon/California Trail emigrants  
changed their lives forever

Active participation by the Fort Hall Shoshone-Bannock Tribe  
will be a key component of the convention

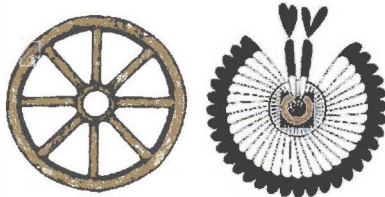
Speaker topics will include  
Tribal history and cultural changes, fur trapper history,  
and excavations at Fort Hall

Pre-convention tours will include  
the Oregon Trail through the Fort Hall reservation and the Hudspeth Cutoff

Convention bus tours will include early trapper sites in Idaho  
and Oregon Trail sites around Fort Hall

Post-convention tours include Goodale Cutoff and the California Trail through Idaho

*Oregon-California Trails Association*  
NATIONAL CONVENTION 2016



FORT HALL, IDAHO  
*Cultures and Changes*



IDAHO CHAPTER OF THE OREGON-CALIFORNIA TRAILS ASSOCIATION [www.idahooccta.org](http://www.idahooccta.org)  
OREGON-CALIFORNIA TRAILS ASSOCIATION [www.octa-trails.org](http://www.octa-trails.org)

Convention Email – [IOCTA2016@hotmail.com](mailto:IOCTA2016@hotmail.com)  
Idaho Chapter OCTA, 2908 Whitehaven Place, Eagle, ID 83616