

NEWS FROM THE PLAINS

Newsletter of the Oregon-California Trails Association

Summer 2020

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– Tales, Trail Traces, and Tours – Join Us in Elko for the 2021 OCTA Convention

By Helen Hankins

Time is a-flyin', daylight will soon be disappearin', – it's time to make plans to attend the OCTA 2021 Convention in Elko NV Sept. 13-16, 2021. Detailed information can be found at: <https://www.octa-trails.org/octa-events/38th-annual-octa-convention-elko-nevada-september-19-23-2020/>

The keynote speakers are Dr. James H. Armstead, who will be discussing "The Socio-Political Origins of the Westward Migration". Dr. Sue Fawn Chung will be sharing recent information in her presentation "Chinese Railroad Workers on the Central Pacific". Information about other speakers is on the OCTA webpage at the link shown above and will shortly be available in the Registration package. Topics are wide-ranging from a knowledgeable and diverse group of subject matter experts. All presentations as well as the Book Room, Silent Auction and Author's Night will be held at the Elko Convention Center.

The four main convention bus tours on September 14 and 16, led by experienced OCTA members and professional archaeologists, are:

1. Fort Ruby and Ruby Valley
2. Guns and Ruts (Wells/Osino area) with a special visit at the Williams Family Gun Museum, blacksmith shop and gunsmith shop
3. Long Canyon Mine area
4. Gravelly Ford

A private vehicle tour on Sept. 14 and 16, led by Roger Gash will investigate why the early emigrants went south when the Humboldt River was north or them.

A van tour of a prehistoric pronghorn antelope trap site is planned for Tuesday, Sept. 14.

Pre-convention events include

- A bus tour of Lamoille Canyon on Saturday, September 11, led by Larry Hyslop, a regionally recognized naturalist and Susan Elliott, a well-known photographer/geologist.

- A six mile hike on the Greenhorn Cutoff on Saturday, Sept. 11, led by Dick Waugh
- An OCTA-led (Paul Dinwiddie and Don Wind) two day private vehicle tour on Friday and Saturday (Sept. 10 and 11) from the Burley area to Wells NV along the California Trail with several historically important and interesting stops.

Details are being finalized for a real western ranch tour.

BLM's California Trail Interpretive Center is hosting a wonderful "Trail Days". Details will be forthcoming soon.

There will also be a welcome reception on Sunday, September 12, 2021 and a reception is planned at Great Basin College featuring the Western Emigrant Trail Collection. Due to current closure of the college, details are still pending.

Efforts are underway to involve students in the convention. Dave Vixie and his students will be coming straight off the Hastings Cutoff to share their experiences mid-week.

Basque dancers and cuisine are planned for Awards Night. The End of the Trail Dinner will feature Western cuisine with a Cowboy Poet and down-home harmonica and spoons entertainment.

Hotel reservations can be made now. (Rates have been reduced from those offered for the 2020 convention!) The information is on the OCTA website. Information about RV parks will be posted to the website by early July.



Special Request: Please stockpile raffle and silent auction items to help support our chapters and the convention. Also, please bring your "period clothing" for the contest at the End of the Trail dinner.

FROM THE PRESIDENT



Hello Trail friends. Here we are in the Spring of 2020. Seems as though a lot of folks have surplus time on their hands. What with having to shelter in place and all. Who could have imagined a time like this? We have all seen the headlines, "Meat Supplies Running Low" and "Paper Products Nearly

Non-existent". Rather reminds us of the 1850's and the conditions those on the trail faced. However, they were not told one day not to wear face masks and then have that decision reversed the next day. These are different and difficult days for many and especially among the age bracket of most OCTA members. Social distancing was practiced back then but for different reasons. Every generation has faced trials but this recent pandemic has impacted everyone in a dramatic way. All in OCTA leadership hope you are well and adhering to best health practices. I have not been informed of a single loss of life due to the virus and we hope and pray that will remain true.

This lull in getting out and about has led some to get started on an early Spring cleaning. A major disposal of accumulated items has been on the agenda in our home for some time. As I was seeking to thin out my library, I came across the first issue of News From the Plains I received. An OCTA welcome letter from President Vern Gorzitze dated January 24, 2007 was included. The feature article in the Winter issue was titled "Construction Begins on Elko Trail Center." And to think, we were all planning to head to Elko this September. Thanks to Helen Hankins and her committee we will be in Elko September 12 - 16, 2021. The Convention will begin on the 13th. Everyone will want to explore the tremendous exhibits in the 16,000 square foot California Trail Interpretive Center when in Elko. We also want to express our appreciation to both the CA/NV Convention planning committee and the good folks planning the Casper, Wyoming Convention for adjusting their plans for hosting the events by one year.

In 2007 President Vern acknowledged the many accomplishments by the members of OCTA and I echo his sentiment. You are the very fabric which seek to identify, protect and preserve the historic legacy given to us by our ancestors. Their courage, endurance and vision are our heritage as much as the trails they made across the western horizons. Your generosity of time,

given toward preservation, and financial resources are a testimony to your conviction that we, in OCTA, have the greatest opportunity to further the legacy given to us. Thank you doesn't begin to express how leadership appreciates each of you.

Since the government mandated shutdown of all activities our Administrative offices have been closed. Staff continues to work from home. Sharon Gregg and Sharon Brown have had reduced responsibilities and hours. At some point, like most of us, they will resume a "normal" schedule. Travis, Kathy, members of leadership and I have held numerous meetings by telephone and the new communication marvel – Zoom. Several factors, including the rescheduling of the Elko Convention, have required a suspension of all discretionary spending. There are continuing financial needs that must be met and 100% of OCTA leadership has stepped up to assist meeting the financial need. They have committed to cover 37% of the lost 2020 Elko Convention budgeted revenue of \$30,000. We are looking to you, our OCTA membership and friends, to help meet the balance needed to complete the mission this year. Thank you in advance for any financial help you are able to provide. Donations may be made using the OCTA website, (Donate to OCTA, found on the home page) or by mailing a check to OCTA, 524 South Osage St., Independence, MO 64050.

Plans are underway to expand communication through the use of Google, Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and Instagram. Sam Sullivan has joined our team as a communication intern. This opportunity was made possible through a generous grant obtained by, Association Manager Travis Boley. Sam began filming stories that will be shared through different media. Ross Marshall was our first presenter filmed telling the story of the Bartleson-Bidwell Party gathering at and leaving Sapling Grove. I hope you have seen the video on the Oregon-California Trails YouTube site titled "This Day in History – May 12 John Bidwell." Travis is posting This Day in History stories daily on Facebook. We have had hundreds of views and expect the numbers to continue to grow as more people discover our sites. You are urged to share the stories and sites with your friends. Staff has reported increased store sales and new memberships. We are attributing both to our expanded web presence. The entire world is connecting in a new way.

On the horizon are plans to explore collaborative

opportunities with organizations that will lead to enhanced revenue for our mission. Every opportunity will be thoroughly researched and ultimately require approval by the OCTA Board. The challenge before us is to deliver our resources, at a fair price, to the public. Reports suggest people are spending considerable time on-line during the past two months. We hope to reach those exploring historical information and completing genealogical research.

You will be receiving information about the membership meeting later this year. A date in August or September will be determined soon. The meeting will be conducted on-line via Zoom or similar format. These are different times and we will continue to do our best to keep you informed and look forward to time out on the trail where the air is fresh, clean and relaxing. Stay healthy and positive.

See you on the trail. *Lee Black, OCTA President*

PRESERVATION



*By John Winner
National Preservation Officer*

OCTA's Mission is to protect the historic emigrant trail's legacy by promoting research, education, **preservation activities** and public awareness of the trails and to work with others to promote these causes.

The R-Project: In Nebraska, a 225 mile transmission line proposed by Nebraska Public Power District (NPPD) that crosses the Oregon-California and Mormon National Historic Trails.

Still waiting for the Federal Judge (Martinez) to issue his opinion on the stipulated case merits. One of the stipulations was that NPPD would not commence any construction activities before April 30, 2020. As that date neared the attorney for the plaintiffs requested NPPD to extend the date since the judge had not issued his decision. NPPD refused. The parties did agree to file a joint motion for a status conference. The judge did not take this lightly, refusing a status conference and admonishing the parties for a frivolous motion. The judge did, however, agree to have a decision on the merits by June 12, 2020.

Oregon/Washington: Following comments are from Gail Carbiener, Northwest Chapter Preservation Officer:

"The virus has slowed down some of the activities in Oregon. Meetings are being held via webinar, which is awkward for most and does not convey emotion. Meetings that were to have been held near the site of project have been canceled. All this tends to diminish the public portion of comments."

The Boardman to Hemingway: No new developments since last newsletter. The (B2H) project, a 300-mile kV transmission line in Eastern Oregon crossing the Oregon National Historic trail seven times

causing both direct and indirect effects to the Oregon National Historic Trail is now in litigation. The lawsuit with BLM/FS that is requesting a Supplemental EIS has December 2020 for a hearing and probably February or March 2021 for a decision.

Expect "Project Order" in May or June from Energy Facilities Siting Council (EFSC).

OPUC: Oregon Public Utilities Commission, PacifiCorp Integrated Resource Plan does not ask for construction acknowledgement, only continued funding for permitting. No word from Bonneville Power. Idaho Power's IRP has just begun to be heard, with lots of questions. Public comments are due and the next meeting will be June 15.

EFSC: At least four Wind/Solar projects have construction start deadlines being affected by Covid-19. Accordingly, the staff has proposed to the council several possible rules change to extend the deadline. One would provide a permanent new rule to apply for any special event, maybe even without public input. EFSC and staff is a developer friendly group!

Long Canyon Mine Project: An open pit mine project in Northeast Nevada. Please refer to the Spring issue of News from the Plains, for the evolution of this project from 2013 with Newmont Mining Corporation, BLM and the consulting parties, including OCTA and the California Trail Heritage Alliance (CTHA) as it relates to what was thought to be agreed upon mitigation in response to indirect effects.

What changed!

In 2019 Newmont Mining Corporation, 38.5% and Barrick Gold Corporation, 61.5% entered into a Joint Venture forming a new company Nevada Gold Mine (NGM). We requested a meeting with BLM to determine the impact on our mitigation efforts. On October 28th, 2019 in a meeting with BLM we were informed that BLM no longer intends to seek any mitigation for indirect effects resulting from the Long

Canyon Project. BLM said they would have to wait and see if NGM would voluntarily agree to the proposed mitigation along with other issues including BLM now reviewing their Instruction Memorandum policy on Compensatory Mitigation.

Along with CTHA we requested a meeting directly with NGM to discuss two of our primary mitigation items that we had agreement with Newmont Mine Corporation, (1) a Conservation Easement on the California Trail leading to Gravelly Ford and the Gravelly Ford site at the Humboldt River. (2) MET mapping the Hastings Cutoff on mine property. On May 18, 2020 we met with NGM representatives, via Zoom. Our discussion was mostly on MET mapping The Hastings Cutoff on NGM owned property. With some restriction's permission was granted.

Idaho, City of Rocks: Sometime between the evening of Friday April 24, 2020 and Saturday April 25, 2020 vandals defaced Camp Rock the emigrant's signatures and prehistoric pictographs in the City of Rocks National Reserve.

A \$5000 Go Fund Me goal was set to obtain the funds necessary to purchase cleaning chemicals and supplies and labor. The Idaho Chapter was a major contributor to the fund.

City of Rocks archeologists are coordinating the restoration effort



with the assistance of the National Park Service. Money from donations above the \$5000 and not used for the current restoration project will be used at the City of Rocks for other emigrant's signature preservation efforts and increased security.

Nevada: Lyon County Wastewater Treatment Facility Expansion: Lyon County, Nevada is proposing to expand their wastewater pipeline to provide additional capacity due to the increase in population in the Dayton Valley region east of Carson City.

Historic Maps depict the presence of historic roads within the project area. In particular, the pipeline would be adjacent to the old Fort Churchill Road a County maintained dirt/gravel road which closely follows an alternate route of the Carson River Route of the California National Historic trail. Since there is little surface evidence of existing trail, a request has been made to Lyon County, upon completion of the project to return the surface area to its natural condition. A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) was signed late May 2020.

Epilogue: As previously stated, it seems as though

the coronavirus pandemic has slowed a lot of activities that may cause threats to our trails. That said, we still need to be proactive. Your keen awareness in your region is greatly appreciated.
More to come...

Draft OCTA Strategic Plan 2020-2025

A draft OCTA Strategic Plan was prepared during a workshop held in Yuma, Arizona on February 20, 2020. OCTA members are encouraged to review and submit comments by August 15, 2020 to Strategic Planning Committee Chairman Dick Waugh at: camalobo@comcast.net

Draft OCTA Strategic Plan 2020-2025

(Note: The text above is an active link. The draft may be accessed at <https://octa-trails.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/OCTA-Strategic-Plan-Member-Review-Draft-06-09-2020.pdf>)

This strategic plan describes a future direction for OCTA. The OCTA mission, vision, and broad goals for future achievement are included.

OCTA to Expand MET Mapping in Northeastern Nevada

OCTA members John Winner, Kevin Lee, and Helen Hankins recently met virtually with key personnel from Nevada Gold Mines to discuss Mapping and Evaluating Trails mapping on private lands owned by Nevada Gold Mines east of Wells, Nevada. Mapping, proposed to occur in the summer of 2020, will be initiated in the Goshute Valley. The mapping will occur within the corridor of the Hastings Cutoff outside of the Area of Potential Effects of the Long Canyon Mine.

Partnership for the National Trails System

The pandemic may have limited our time on the trails, but the Partnership for the National Trails System (PNTS) had an extremely busy Spring from a policy perspective.

Two major initiatives have included working to educate Congress about the importance of the trails to the nation's economy and working for passage of the Great America Outdoor Act.

The PNTS has been that "now more than ever we need our trails, natural areas and public outdoor spaces." The Partnership has promoted both the economic impact of the historic and scenic trails to local communities across the country and the importance of trails to stress management and physical well-being.

The Great America Outdoor Act was passed by the Senate on a bipartisan 73-25 vote on June 17 and sent to the House for final action. The bill fully funds the Land

and Water Conservation Fund and directs \$1 billion a year to address the backlog of maintenance in the nation's national parks, including OCTA's historic trails.

After Congress effectively shut down in March and April, one of the unfortunate impacts was a delay in progress on legislation to add the Butterfield Overland Trail to the National Trails System. Efforts are being led by Senator John Boozman of Arkansas, who has assured OCTA that the legislation is still a top priority.

In addition, work on securing legislation that would add additional routes and segments to the California, Oregon and Mormon national historic trails was also delayed by the government shutdown. It is expected to be a legislative priority for OCTA members during the second half of the year.

Bill Martin, PNTS Liaison

What Is Your Greatest Talent?

Each of us has at least one skill that we truly enjoy exercising. OCTA Leadership is seeking to identify those with skills that would benefit the furtherance of the OCTA mission.

We have 26 Standing Committees. If you are not currently serving on the national level this is your opportunity. There will be a place for you. Please consider where you could best help.

For a listing of Committees go to the OCTA website, octa-trails.org. Under the Members tab select **OCTA Leadership**

Manual, Strategic Plan & Organization Chart, then select **Leadership Manual March 2018**. You will find Committee

descriptions beginning on page 60. Special needs currently include Audit, Collections/Libraries, Education Outreach, Fundraising, History & Archives, Marketing and Membership Committees.

Please contact Pat Traffas at

traffasp@gmail.com

with questions or to share your interest in helping OCTA further our mission. Thank you for sharing your talent. We need you!

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FROM THE ASSOCIATION MANAGER



OCTA brought on its newest intern this spring. Sam Sullivan is a recent graduate of William Jewell College, where he earned degrees in Communications, Digital Media Communications, Applied Critical Thought and Inquiry. He graduated with a very high GPA and also competed on their track &

field team, primarily as a sprinter but also in several field events such as the jumps and pole vault. We have brought him on as a digital media communications intern. In this capacity he will be working with us on all aspects of social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter), helping us to develop our YouTube Channel, working on video productions, and learning how to use Google Ads to greatly benefit OCTA's marketing reach.

Last October, OCTA's marketing team of John Krizek and Bill Martin met with President Lee Black and me in Dallas for two days. Gina Sifers, who handles a lot of our internet content, joined us. During this two-day brainstorming session, we developed a wish list of things we wanted to accomplish over the next several years to help us increase our reach in this digital age. One of the needs we identified was an intern who specializes in digital media communications.

With the help of a grant from the Partnership for the National Trails System, we hired Sam in April and he got to work immediately on his first project. We met with OCTA Past President Ross Marshall at Sapling Grove in Overland Park and created a short 5-1/2 minute video on the Bidwell-Bartleson Wagon Train, which can now be viewed on our YouTube Channel. In short order, we also met with OCTA board member Matt Mallinson in Sugar Creek, Missouri to create a seven-minute film on William Gilpin, and as of this writing have short films on two different cholera cemeteries in Independence in the can.

Sam and I are developing a list of other sites we would like to profile over the course of this summer and autumn. In addition to the wealth of sites in the Kansas City area, we are also talking about sites in St. Joseph, northeast Kansas, Council Bluffs, and Nebraska, as they are easy day trips. Already members of the Idaho and Northwest Chapter have inquired about having Sam come work on projects related to B2H and City of

Rocks. We also will be attempting to reach more diverse audiences with our video content and will focus some of the films on the experience of African-Americans, American Indians, Hispanics, and the Chinese on the trail. In this time of postponed conventions and canceled travel plans, we want to be able to still bring the trail experience to you as well as new audiences. We are literally reaching thousands of people with each social media post and have added forty-eight new members since the Yuma Symposium at the end of February. Most of these new members are finding us because of our increased online presence.

Sam also had a recent training session with Gina on how to use Google Ads. Last year, OCTA was awarded a \$10,000 a month grant from Google to develop ads, in perpetuity. But the process is complex and tedious and has a steep learning curve. Sam will soon have another training session and once he fully understands the process, he will be developing and administering what we hope are ultimately dozens of ads that will put a spotlight on OCTA's publications, awards, events, membership, preservation projects, and merchandise, among other things.

Finally, Sam has already launched for us a new Instagram page and Twitter feed. Both can be found at octa_1836 or by clicking the links at the bottom of our website at www.octa-trails.org. Our YouTube Channel can be found simply by entering "Oregon-California Trails Association" in the search bar. Please like and subscribe to all, as we will be shortly announcing a fun photo contest that will allow you to share your trail photos from all corners of the American West. Most importantly, once we reach 1,000 subscribers on YouTube, we can monetize the channel, which means that we will begin to receive some of the ad revenue created with each click. We're already at over 130 subscribers but we think we can get where we need to be in short order. In addition to the ability to monetize the channel, we will also gain free access to YouTube studios anywhere in the country once we get to that magical 1,000 subscriber mark. As a non-profit, these are special incentives we can acquire at no cost to us and with great potential gain.

I hope many of you get to meet Sam during his course of time with us. He's very likeable and intelligent and a quick learner. Most of all, be sure to use these new tools we are creating for you and share them with your friends and family. This is how we will grow in the 21st century!

Travis Boley

Publication News



There's A Lot Goin' On *Bill Hill - Publications, Chair*

Our editors have been hard at work on our publications. Their work is more important during these times bringing you the OCTA message and information that helps to keep all of us in touch and

“together.” Working at home has a new meaning for most of us. Many of us have “more time,” and I hope that all of us will use part of that time to read every article and column in our publications.

We had hoped to have expanded our footprint with museums, libraries and visitor centers, but with the shutdown our contacts have been cut drastically. While it appears some will perhaps open by the end of June, we are also hearing that the end of July or mid-August will be the earliest for others. Hopefully it will not be later.

We are, however, moving ahead with the Merrill Mattes Award, and that is always a tough one with all the good writers and articles in the *Overland Journal*.

The selection process for our student calendar

“Dangers & Hazards along the Trails” is now completed. The calendar should be printed shortly. The student artists have been notified through their schools. We were initially worried because of the shutdown of the schools but were happy to learn that a few were able to overcome the problems it caused the teachers. Even with fewer drawings it was still difficult for the judges. We are thankful for those dedicated teachers and schools and home schoolers who were still able to participate.

The artists of the artwork selected are: Oliver Graczyk, a third grader from John Paul II School, Overland Park, Kansas; Jenny Danielson and Whitney Metcalf, third graders from Bennion Elementary, Taylorsville, Utah; Mackenzie Bartlett, Madison Paganetti-Dick and Dhruv Prabhu, fourth graders from Golden View Elementary, San Ramon, California; and Beckham Allred, Camille Bird, Brooklyn Evans, Jane Hunter, Grace Leavitt and Scarlett Ransom, fifth graders from Canyon Rim Academy, Salt Lake City, Utah.

We have had to cut back on the number of calendars printed, so if you desire one, please contact Kathy at HQ ASAP. We have a limited number available. The price remains at \$10. *Bill Hill*

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News from the Chapters

SOUTHERN TRAILS

Southern Trails Chapter had a wonderful conference at Yuma with National OCTA in Yuma this past February.

The meeting had several tours led by several STC members on Friday with the main conference on Saturday the 22nd. We had many speakers and improvised with a panel discussion on the trail in the Yuma area.

We had our annual meeting with over 30 members present from all over. Some of the discussion included the progress on the historical sign for Silver City. This sign will talk about Kearny's expedition, Cooke, the Army of the West, and the Mormon Battalion. It will cost a total of about \$3,000.00 with contributions covering from several businesses and historical groups in Silver City as well as \$500.00 from Southern Trails Chapter of OCTA. It will be placed at the Silver City Visitor's Center. The Visitor's Center was asking for a brochure that they could give out to visitors that talks about the trails. The sign will be paid for with the various donations, but we are still looking for money to cover the cost of the brochure.

A historical western history book collection has been donated by the Root family (several boxes of books). The books will be housed at the Western New Mexico University as an OCTA library. The valuable books will only be able to be used in the library. The rest of the collection will be shelved with their general books.

Bill Martin gave us a progress report on getting the Butterfield Trail designated as a National Historic Trail. The National Park Service has completed the feasibility study of the Butterfield Trail.

Discussion on Facebook and its use. Members were encouraged to post pictures and information. Jan Iwashita manages our Facebook account.

The Lawrences have published their last copy of

Desert Tracks. They have written and published it for several years. Dan Judkins and David Miller have made a proposal to the Board to continue writing and publishing the journal. They will be meeting with the Lawrences for a whole day at the end of April to discuss all the nuts and bolts of publishing it. Dan and David plan to continue the same format. The Board and Officers of the Southern Trails chapter accepted this proposal in a conference call on February 5, 2020. Dan Judkins and David Miller are putting out a call for submissions for articles in Desert Tracks. This request will be sent out in an email to all people at this meeting.

John Krizek suggested that the chapter put forth the Lawrences for the Franzwa Award for all their years of writing and publishing the outstanding journal, Desert Tracks. It was moved by Dan Judkins and seconded by David Smythe to put forth their name for the Franzwa or any appropriate award for their service.

Doug Hocking is now managing our website. It was suggested that we list, behind a password (members only) area, the names of all the members and include their expiration date. He is willing to post information on the site, but you need to submit the information in a form that is ready to be posted.

There was a brief discussion of where and when our next chapter conference would be held. There were suggestions in Texas, *i.e.* Alpine area, at Rancho El Chino; California, at Fort Bowie, and also teaming with Camino Real de Tierra Adentro (CARTA) in El Paso.

As of now, many activities are on hold until things start to open up and we get outside again. Please feel free to contact us on our webpage or by email for information and to join us in the future on the Southern Trails!

Mark Howe

KANZA

Due to the virus, our activities have been severely curtailed. Specifically, the Alcove Spring projects and events which were planned in conjunction with KANZA were also canceled. Alcove Spring is owned by a historical trust and is not actually a part of OCTA. Most members of the Alcove Trust belong to KANZA, but they are distinct. We own 223 acres of which perhaps 25%

are historical. In the rest we have created about eight miles of trails for hiking, running, and bicycling. Those trails have seen a lot of use with the pandemic, but that is all individual. It appears the Beach Boys concert in August is still on.

Duane Iles

CALIFORNIA-NEVADA

The California-Nevada Chapter has been in lockdown for the Corona virus crisis like the rest of the country. Many of our members, though, were able to attend the Symposium in Yuma in February, and enjoy a brief spring fling before things got so bad. Then we had to hurry home to self-isolate.

During our downtime, it seems timely for Swale Buffs and Rut Nuts to remember the emigrants on the trails who also experienced a world-wide pandemic of cholera that followed them up the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers to Independence, and on out over the trails to Oregon and California. Historian George Groh wrote, "Gold Rush was to cholera like wind to fire." It is believed to have killed between 6,000 and 12,000 emigrants between 1849 and 1855, and their deaths are recorded in journals and marked as graves along the trails. The number of deaths on the trail are difficult to determine, but it is estimated that up to 5,000 died in 1849. Deaths in 1850 appear to have been even higher, and historian Merrill Mattes estimated that there were up to four graves per mile along the Platte River route.

Kimbal Webster was west of the Big Blue River when he wrote in his journal on June 10, 1849, "That very much dreaded scourge, the Asiatic cholera, is making such a sad havoc among the Californians that almost every camp-ground is converted into a burial-ground, and at many places twelve or fifteen graves may be seen in a row."

President Polk, possibly the most famous victim of cholera, died in Tennessee on June 15, 1849. Many Indian tribes were affected by the outbreak.

Cholera was caused by a bacterium rather than a virus, as is Covid-19. It was spread by unsanitary conditions and feces, which contaminated water. Doctors of the time didn't understand the cause, and common treatments involved blood-letting and purging, which further weakened the victims. Some doctors prescribed calomel, which contained mercury. Numerous people died from mercury poisoning or suffered other side effects from the drug. Face masks probably wouldn't have helped, but hand washing, good hygiene, and just boiling all water would have saved lives.

Until the lockdown, we had been planning for our annual Spring Symposium to be held in Anderson, California, at the Gaia Hotel and Spa, which is located on the Nobles Emigrant Trail. History of the Nobles Trail was to be a focus of our presentations and field trip, in addition to featuring the Voices of the

Golden Ghosts who are reviving the history of African Americans, whose contributions to the mining enterprise

in Northern California during the Gold Rush, have been lost. Unfortunately, we had to postpone the symposium until April of 2021, when we hope it will be safe to resume our trail

related activities. We expect to get as good a turnout of members as we had hoped to this year.

Under the leadership of Helen Hankins, the national convention planning board had nearly completed plans for the 2020 convention in Elko, but again, due to the Corona crisis, it had to be postponed. Fortunately, it has been rescheduled for September 2021. The future national conventions have also been moved back a year, so all of our planning work will not go for naught. All of the great speakers we had scheduled have agreed to come next year.

Our annual Spring Survey was going to check out a newly reported section of the California Trail from Fernley Swales to the Truckee River, but it has also been canceled. However, John Grebenkemper, with his historic human remains detection dog, Kayle, may meet with some of us to try to confirm some emigrant burials near the swales—conditions permitting.

Other activities and work parties have been rescheduled for next year, again with conditions permitting; however, Dick Waugh may still lead his full moon campout on the 40 Mile Desert on October 3 and do some repair work on Double Wells if conditions allow, and if we determine that we can camp and work with safe social distancing.

We were saddened to hear that The City of Rocks on the California Trail had been vandalized by spray paint. We hope the perpetrators will be caught and that the Park Service will be able to do some restoration to this important National Reserve.

As things continue to open up this year, we wish that all will remain safe and healthy and that we can soon resume our trail activities and again gather around the campfire. *Ken Johnston*



Photo courtesy of the California History Room, California State Library, Sacramento, California

NEBRASKA

As in many locations, we along the Great Platte River Road are hunkered down, awaiting developments. One of our proto-members wrote the following, while on the road from Salt Lake City.

"On the 12th of June we encamped at Robidou's Trading Point, by Scotts Bluffs. Here we came into the cholera. Robidou says the Sioux Indians have all gone over to White river, afraid that the while men would bring cholera among them this year as they had last."

"We forded [the South Platte] with our horses and wagons with little difficulty, having to boat our effects about four miles below what is called the Upper Crossing. We felt thankful indeed to get over so easily: our effects secure; and passing down nearly one half mile through camps with many cases of cholera, we encamped on the East bank by sunset."

"[A week or so later,] we were daily meeting and passing right through cholera in its most fearful stages. Graves by the wayside were common; sometimes two side by side, and three, yes five; and as many as seven have we seen side by side, right by the road. Two cases

did we see of bodies, we believed, not interred two feet deep, which the wolves had dug up, and their bones were bleaching in the sun. We noticed it was mostly from Missouri, and some from Illinois, (who were late and generally with oxen) in whose camps cholera had made its most direful ravages."

"Captain Haight bought some tea from a woman who said had just seen her father, mother, and sister interred within a few days. We saw a wagon alone on the river bank ... all reported to have died. The road here runs a couple of miles from the river. Bought some sugar of a gentleman who said he was alone in his [group], his two friends had died. The emigrants had called this, or somewhere in this vicinity, "the valley of death." Graves by the wayside were reckoned at an average of one per mile."

Robert Campbell was reporting 170 years ago this month. To us in 2020, he is saying things could be worse.

"Interesting News from the Plains," The Frontier Guardian, Kanesville, Iowa, 24 July 1850, page 2.

Harlan Seyfer

NORTHWEST

The Northwest Chapter was able to have its Spring meeting on March 7th, just one week before the State went into lock-down.

Our meeting was held in Oregon City at the Pioneer Community Center and we had 28 members in attendance. Our hostess, Marge Harding gave a presentation about three women who traveled on the Oregon Trail and how they felt about being uprooted and moved to the West. Marge wore appropriate clothing for the time period and took us back in time.

Dave Welch presented a map of the Naches Pass Trail in Washington State, and discussed the revitalization of efforts to mark the trail. He also discussed the National Trail Bill that has been sent to Congress for approval. Several members were disturbed that some trails were not included in the document.

Robin Baker gave a presentation on Bill Williams (with original photos) who searched for the Barlow Trail in 1943. The pictures showed areas of Laurel Hill and the slides where the wagons went down. The Barlow was hard to find even in the 1940's due to time and road building. Robin has been hiking and mapping

the Barlow for the last couple of years and is bringing us new information as he works.

Our Awards Chairman, Roger Blair, presented the Richard and Trudy Ackerman Award to Wendell Baskins. Wendell has worked with OHTAC on the remnants of the trail on the Umatilla Army Depot. The property is being turned over to local industry and the bits of the trail left and in need of protection.

Drew Harvey presented the dates for summer outings and asked members to please sign up at this meeting. Rich Herman asked if members were interested in hiking the Oregon Trail at the Umatilla Bombing Range sometime this Spring. Luckily, a good stretch of the Trail has been purchased by the Nature Conservancy and will be protected. We have several T-Rail signs to place this summer in Eastern Oregon. Jenny Miller suggested that some of the Boy Scouts from her area might be able to help in the installation.

We hoped to do all of these things this summer, but we will have to wait and see how the Covid-19 will impact our plans. *Sallie Riehl*

GATEWAY

A few days after the Gateway Board met in March, we were told to shelter-in-place. We had just planned an aggressive year of activities. Unfortunately, we had to cancel a car pool to learn about the trails at one of the upper crossings in Forest City, a bus tour to Abilene, Kansas, and a major activity at Felix Street Square in St. Joseph in celebration of National Trails Day. We are hoping to salvage some activities planned for the latter part of the summer – reschedule of the trip to Forest City and helping the Doniphan County Historical Society with the Big Kansas Road Trip 2020 activities in September. We

were also asked by the St. Joseph Historical Society to provide an exhibit on the trails at Robidoux Row Museum. Then, we are also hoping to be able to continue plans for a program on the Missouri River co-sponsored with the Remington Nature Center and a program on the Iowa Tribe co-sponsored with the St. Joseph Museums. Since these were planned to be inside, other arrangements may need to be made. We know all chapters are facing similar issues in staying safe and healthy during this time.

To help fill the gap, we have been putting short articles of trail history on our Facebook page: Oregon-California Trails Association Gateway Chapter. We are sharing one of those stories with you.

The spring of 1844 came early to northwest Missouri. After a pleasant March, the rains began to fall. Rain

continued constantly, often in torrents, up to the 1st of June, making it impossible to plow the fields or plant the crops. It was in this weather that the first Oregon-bound wagon train on the St. Joe Road crossed the Missouri River at today's Amazonia. It took from May

9 to May 17 to get all of the 84 wagons across the river. In the party were over 325 people, 713 head of horned cattle, 54 horses, 41 mules. Due to rain and sickness, the train moved slowly. Emigrant John Minto said that in their first 2 months of travel, there were only 8 days that it did not rain.



Mural painting on the wall of the St. Joseph Post Office by Gustav Dahlstrom. "Flooded River" and the accompanying murals depicting the town's early history in the Post Office were completed in 1941 as part of the New Deal programs to provide work for artists.

However, if we look forward one year to 1845, we see that in April, the Missouri River was very low with snags so numerous that the boats could scarcely pass between them. Steamboats went aground at many places along the river. Many of the snags were caused because the flood of 1844 cut new channels, leaving limbs, stumps, and sandbars. It was not until May 22 that the Missouri River rose 4 feet at St. Joseph. In May 1845, four Oregon-bound emigrant trains started from the crossings around St. Joseph. The St. Joseph newspaper said there were "954 persons, with 545 firearms, 9,425 cattle, and 108 horses and mules."

Emigrants out-numbered the citizens of St. Joseph. In 1845, St. Joseph was reported to have about 650 inhabitants. *Jackie Lewin*

CROSSROADS

Things at Crossroads have been quiet this spring due to the shutdown of almost all social activities.

We decided to look into any personal achievements that have been made by members. First, from President Steve Allison, news about some junior high and high school students. These students entered into a competition at our Utah State History Day involving the categories of trail rails and Indians. There were six entrants who created displays, research papers, video documentaries, and an original one-act play. All featured an historical event or person. Three presenters received a cash award. The judges were Steve and Penny Allison, Connie Bauer, and Gar Elison. It is nice to see young people interested in our world of trails.

In other news–Crossroads member Bryce Billings is

anxious to get out to some more GPS work on our T-Rail project, and I have been challenged by Crossroads member, Victor Heath, to dig through nearly 30 years of photos of Crossroads activities including field trips, meetings and speakers, work details, and conventions.

He did this as he knows I am a busy photographer at all our events. He thought it would be a good project, at this time, to create a "timeline" of our history through photos and to see photos of people who are no longer with us. I, so far, have sorted out 1993-2002. A few more years to go. I joined Crossroads in 1993 and have always been a "nosey" photographer. I can't seem to help myself.

Always stay tuned. We all hope for better days ahead. *A. Oscar Olson*

IDAHO

Much like the rest of the country and the world, the Idaho chapter is currently in a holding pattern due to the COVID-19 pandemic. All scheduled chapter in-person activities have been canceled or postponed. Everyone is awaiting a safer environment to resume sharing the wonderful Trail resources of Idaho.

Trying to put the COVID-19 environment and associated lockdowns in perspective, the Oregon Trail was approximately 2000 miles long and took roughly 6 months to reach Oregon City. If the lockdown for the current pandemic were a trip on the Oregon Trail, you would be about 1/3 of the way to Oregon now.

The spring chapter meeting was held using a Zoom video conference on Saturday, May 9. Sixteen people participated including OCTA Manager Travis Boley and OCTA President Lee Black. Although I missed seeing everyone in person, the Zoom technology worked great and it was nice to be able to have Travis and Lee talk with us. Our thanks to Travis for obtaining a Zoom license for the chapters to use.

Our guest speaker for the meeting was Tara McClure-Cannon, City of Rocks Archaeologist. The park was recently vandalized by spray-painting on Camp Rock. Fortunately, most of the graffiti was in an area with no names. One significant section was damaged (picture to right). Tara talked about the



damage and the effort currently underway to safely and properly restore the rock. Hopefully the perpetrators will be caught and punished. A GoFundMe page has been set up to help pay for the restoration costs. The Idaho chapter contributed \$1,100 (\$1,000 net) to this effort. I encourage everyone interested in the preservation of the Trails to contribute as this is a real-life assault on historically significant resources. The City of Rocks Restoration Fund GoFundMe page can be found at: <https://charity.gofundme.com/o/en/campaign/city-of-rocks-restoration-fund/friendsofidahostateparksinc>. Any additional funds will be used to



enhance security for these trail sites.

The fall chapter meeting is planned for October 10. It is hoped that the activities at City of Rocks and the California Trail planned for May can be rescheduled for early October.

Stay safe and practice social distancing on the trails.

Jerry Eichhorst

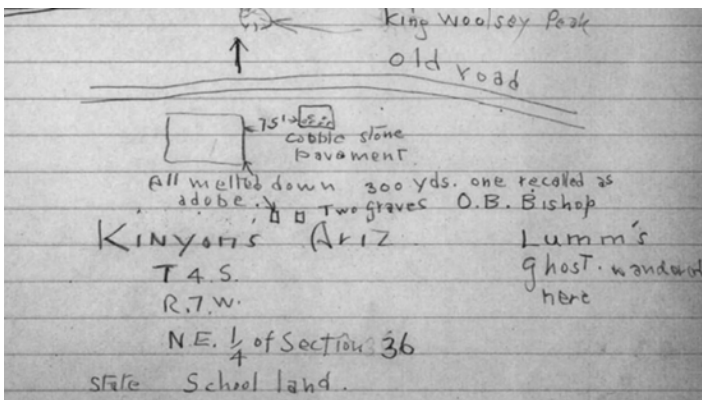
COLORADO-CHEROKEE

Prior to the shutdown we had been planning an event to be held on July 18 at the Loveland Museum, for a presentation by Bruce Watson on the history and mapping of the Cherokee Trail, with particular emphasis on its route through Larimer County. The Museum remains closed as of the end of May and we will reschedule this event later in the year.

Our Mapping Committee remains active in its work

Mapping with the Southern Trails Chapter

Spending our winters in Arizona presents the opportunity to interface with the Southern Trails Chapter of OCTA. In February I was invited to accompany mapping members Tracy DeVault from Prescott, AZ, Mike Volberg from Ramona, CA, Greg McEachron from Seminole, FL, and Dan Talbot from Queen Creek, AZ. This mapping trip was an attempt to locate the Kinyon Butterfield Stage Station along the Gila River. The site is northwest of the town of Gila Bend, in the floodplain behind the Painted Rock Dam. The location was determined by careful research, including diaries and specific measurements from the General Land Office surveyors. These GPS coordinates narrowly defined its probable location.



Sketch from the Conklings' research papers at the Seaver Center for Western History Research in Los Angeles. The Conklings visited the site in the 1930s.

In 1858 the Butterfield Overland Mail selected the Southern Emigrant Trail for its route through much of New Mexico, Arizona and California. In 1849 and the early 1850s the Southern Emigrant Trail saw much emigrant traffic as gold seekers used it to reach the California gold fields.

On February 23 we drove to a spot overlooking the floodplain and prepared to hike the approximate 1.5 miles to the suspected site. It had rained considerably the day before, and the area proved to be quite muddy, a definite drawback. As we descended into the

in Larimer County, and ongoing negotiations continue with the City of Colorado Springs for Cherokee Trail signage.

Bruce Watson, Co-chair of the Mapping Committee, is a winter resident of Arizona and describes a recent mapping trip with the Southern Trails Chapter in the following article. *Camille Bradford*

floodplain every step we took on the muddy ground accumulated heavily on our boots, which made the hike all the more difficult. The floodplain was densely covered with mostly dead brush and stunted trees, which required forcibly pushing our way through almost impenetrable walls of vegetation. It was exhausting and required determination to persist. My biggest fear was becoming a drag on the others, as my stamina didn't match theirs.

We finally arrived at the approximate location of the station, but were unable to locate any discernable evidence of eroded walls, etc. Tracy DeVault had a small foldable shovel and dug a hole about three feet deep. Several metal probes were also carried and inserted into the hole in an attempt to discover the depth of the silt. We hoped the silt might only be a narrow layer and by probing we might discover evidence of the site. Sadly, it appeared the silt was at least four feet deep, and probably deeper. Consequently, we could only approximate the site without further excavation, an impossible task due to the inaccessibility.



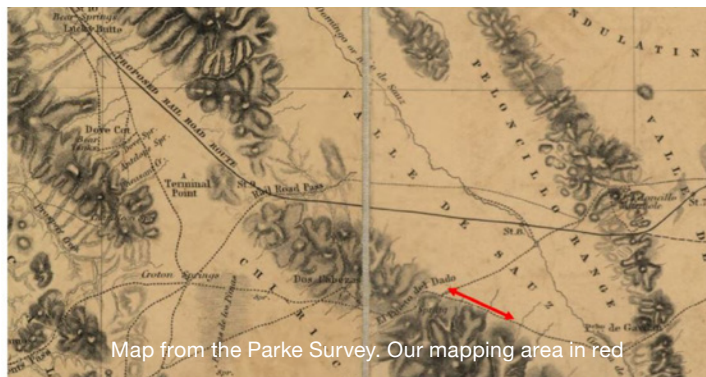
Part of mapping group after returning from the floodplain. L-R: Bruce Watson, Greg McEachron, Tracy DeVault

The next day we drove over 240 miles to a site southeast of Bowie, Arizona to extend the previous

mapping of a trail between Fort Bowie/Apache Pass and Rattlesnake Point. It is not uncommon for Southern Trails Chapter mappers to travel hundreds of miles during a mapping trip. They might start out mapping in Central Arizona and a few days later be mapping in New Mexico.

This location was traversed by Lieutenant John Parke of the topographical corps in 1854. His instructions from the Secretary of War Jefferson Davis, was to explore a possible railroad route between Dona Ana on the Rio Grande and the Pima villages on the Gila River.

The trail that Parke opened was later extensively used by military patrols traveling east from Fort Bowie and probably some emigrants.



At this site I was allowed to use one of the three metal detectors and we quickly discovered many artifacts, including mule, horse and oxen shoes, different calibers



One of many horse/mule/oxen shoes found

Axle skein

of cartridges, and even an axle skein and bushing, either from a wagon or a buggy. Each artifact was documented, GPS coordinates recorded, and then reburied. These mappers are experts at spotting rust on rocks, something I've yet to perfect. At each artifact location, a piece of bright tape was tied onto adjacent vegetation, and soon the location of the trail was obvious. In a day and a half the mapped portion of this trail was considerably extended, a worthwhile effort.

I learned a great deal accompanying these experts and hope to share my new experience and knowledge with our fellow Colorado mappers.

Tracy and Greg documenting an artifact. Rattlesnake Point in the distance.



WYOMING

Since the 2020 national conference scheduled for Elko has been canceled, Wyoming OCTAns agreed in early May to push back the national conference based in Casper, Wyoming to 2022. Nevada will go ahead with plans for a 2021 conference in Elko. Likely dates for the Wyoming conference would be Aug. 28-Sept. 3, 2022. We all agreed postponing the conference for another year will give us time to plan an even better one.

As for this summer, plans we made in collaboration with the National Historic Trails Center in Casper for trails treks are also on hold as of this writing, but we hope a few at least will still be possible.

Meanwhile, Travis Boley has informed us that on his next approach to the National Park Service, he will include a request for funds for a new website for the Wyoming chapter. He will need a rough idea of development costs by the end of the current calendar

year. Besides offering information on local resources and notices of upcoming treks and events, the site could link directly to extensive Wyoming trails content already in place at <https://www.wyohistory.org/travel/oregon-trail>. Application for funds would be submitted to NPS by OCTA's national office early in 2021. Funds, if approved, would be available for spending after September 15, 2021.

We've also been in touch recently with the Lander, Wyoming based Wyoming Outdoor Council. The organization's leadership is looking to assemble a coalition of people and groups concerned about oil and gas drilling on public lands in the Red Desert in south-central Wyoming. The Oregon/California/Mormon trails corridor runs along the northern edge of the desert. We look forward to working more with the people at WOC. Stay tuned for more news. *Tom Rea*

TRAILS HEAD

Our **Ross Marshall** packs a lot of history into a new, under-six minute video about Sapling Grove, one of our local parks on the Santa Fe, Oregon, and California trails. Find it at Oregon California Trails Association YouTube site. Look for *This Day in History, May 12: John Bidwell, Sapling Grove, and...*

The COVID situation was cause for cancellation of our chapter's April meeting as well as a multi-trail group event marking **National Trails Day**. But all is not lost. We will cheer OCTA's Associate Manager, **Travis Boley**, as he makes four 10K runs June 6 through the historic trail corridor from the Missouri River to south Kansas City. Though the event is titled "You Have Died of Dysentery" 40K, Travis says he is in good shape training for a marathon and promises not to drop dead. *Donations will go to OCTA.*

It is a big job to find and edit our chapter history to be included on our **developing website**. But that is what some of our members have been busy with these past few months. **We commissioned a logo** which we are already using on our newsletter. It shows a covered

wagon with two silhouetted people inside being pulled by a yoke of oxen up a hill from the confluence of the Kansas River with the Missouri River.

Our dozen **Marker Monitors** are making their first round of inspecting our over sixty sites that contain nearly 100 wayside exhibits and kiosks. There are also dozens of limestone posts with trail logos and text. The monitors will clean panels with water and report deterioration or damage.

We have two events to look forward to in late July. On **Sunday the 26th** we plan a chapter picnic at Sapling Grove Park that is featured in a recent OCTA YouTube video. On **Monday the 27th**, we will join Kansas City Area Historic Trails Association and the **Missouri River Outfitters chapter of Santa Fe Trails Association** for presentations about five new or replacement wayside exhibits and the process of digitizing the Lee Kroh Quad collection that was integral to developing the *Historic Frontier Trails Map*.

Lila Aamodt

2019-2020 OCTA Board of Directors

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Chuck Milliken, West Jordan UT
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Candidates for OCTA National Board of Directors

Three candidates have announced candidacies to serve on the OCTA National Board of Directors. They are Chuck Milliken of West Jordan, Utah, who is seeking a second three-year term, Jerry Mogg of St. Joseph,

Missouri, and Pat Fletcher of Sequim, Washington.

Members should use this “clip and return” ballot for your convenience. Elected Directors will take their positions in September 2020 for a three-year term.

Chuck Milliken retired from 40 years of service with the National Park Service. Early in his career he spent time at Yellowstone, Everglades, Bent's Old Fort, Mt. Rushmore, Chiricahua National Monument and Redwoods National Park. In the 1990s he spent 10 years writing and developing publication guides and auto tour route brochures on the history of the Jersey Shore before joining the NPS Long Distance Trails Office in Salt Lake City, where he enjoyed the last 10 years of his career.



Chuck worked with a variety of chapters and individuals from the Oregon, California, Pony Express and Mormon Pioneer trail, as well as state and federal agencies and museums helping develop interpretive media including the auto tour route state interpretive guides, outdoor wayside interpretive exhibits, museum exhibits, a variety of brochures and traveling exhibits for use and display at meetings and fairs.

He is an active member of the Crossroads Chapter and currently serves as its newsletter editor. “I am confident that I can work with OCTA’s members, chapters, and management team as we pursue efforts to preserve, protect, and interpret the experiences of the pioneers who blazed pathways across more than 2,000 miles of untamed wilderness, their entanglements with the land, travel conditions, and interactions with native people and environments,” Chuck said. Chuck has completed a three-year first term and is seeking election to a second term on the Board of Directors.

Endorsed by: Jerry Eichhorst, Camille Bradford, Steve Allison

Jerry Mogg is a retired CPA with over 50 years of experience in various roles in public accounting for firms ranging in size from International, National, Regional and Local. He worked also as a professional



Financial Planner, CFP, and is licensed so he could make recommendations for using securities and insurance in his financial plans. Jerry was proud of working with his clients on recommending solutions for their financial goals. He has worked in the past with a number of other Community Foundations in the Kansas City area as there was no local Northwest Foundation. He has worked with many nonprofit groups during his long career in public accounting. He currently serves as Treasurer of the John Whitmer Historic Association and is a member of OCTA’s Investment Advisory Committee. He is a board member of OCTA’s Gateway Chapter.

Jerry has an undergraduate degree from Graceland University and a graduate degree from the University of Kansas with expertise in Accounting, Auditing, and Tax. Jerry loves history. He took classes in church history and religion. Jerry participates in a number of local historic groups in the St. Joseph, Missouri area relating to the Pony Express, the St. Joseph Museum, the Patee House, and the History of Accountancy.

Jerry and wife Sandra have lived in St. Joseph, MO, since 1965. They have two sons and four grandchildren. He serves as a Lay Minister in The Community of Christ and in leadership roles at World, Mission, Camp, and Local levels. He supports many other organizations within his church.

Jerry is an active member of the Gateway Chapter and has attended National OCTA conventions and OCTA activities in the region.

Endorsed by: David Welch, Jackie Lewin, David Berger

Patricia K.A. Fletcher

Statement for OCTA National Board nomination

Just becoming an OCTA member in 1993 doesn’t qualify me for anything much. We [husband Jack and I] had been researching a rather obscure and largely unknown trail to California for ten years – the Cherokee Trail. OCTA gave us our first opportunity to bring that research to the attention of the public. Roy Tea, Utah chapter,



befriended us, looked over our research and maps, especially across the Salt desert west of Salt Lake – the Hastings Cutoff, his specialty. The next year we gave our first presentation to OCTA at Salt Lake and found OCTA was a perfect match for our work.

Since then, our knowledge of and participation in the many and varied activities of both chapters and the National has grown – in the field, in the boardroom, in meetings, at Headquarters, in mitigation. Joining with federal, state and local agencies and the many essential and enjoyable partners all over the western emigrant trail routes we have mutually benefitted from the contacts-and the friendships.

OCTA has grown, not nearly as exponentially as the nation's needs to covet those hallowed historic routes

as “perfect” places for energy companies-windfarms, gas drilling, fracking, transmission lines. Luckily we have had protection from intrusion; but not enough, and not if we don't keep watch. The list of attempts increases.

Brave and bold ancestors gave their all to find better opportunities for their families. Too many gave their last agonizing breaths to the dusty earth along the way.

It is up to us in OCTA to change with the times, keep watch, and make sure those dangerous journeys were not made in vain. And to encourage those who follow us to do the same. We need many others to join us, but we cannot wait for them or lament their absence. We must face outward and forward.

Endorsed by: Duane Iles, Chuck Hornbuckle, and Bruce Watson

Official 2020 Ballot for the Election of Directors to the National Board of the Oregon-California Trails Association

All current members are eligible to vote. Membership levels with two members listed have two votes. (Check the mailing label to see if multiple names are listed for your membership, or contact Headquarters at 816-252-2276.)

Vote for no more than TWO directors for three-year terms (2020-2023)

	Member 1 Vote	Member 2 Vote
Jerry Mogg	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Chuck Milliken	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pat Fletcher	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Write In Candidates: _____

(Please cast ballot before July 15, 2020)

An unplanned stop on the Trail!

It's a strange thing to think that a virus can shut down the whole world practically all at once. Who would have thought that the small things we can't see could be such a big deal? We may never shake hands again, and I'm missing it already. I love to exchange energy and touch through the shaking of hands.

When the Indians held up their hand and said “How!” as a greeting, what he was really saying was let's not touch. Was it the measles outbreak that caused the Whitman party to be slaughtered after they infected the local Indian population? The Indian Nations faced threats of destruction through white-carried illnesses, and the natives had no immunity to these new infectious diseases.

We know that in the beginning, it was all about the land and the water. Clean water is the life-giving force we have come to expect from our civilized society. We're all attached to our running water and flushing toilets. Electricity brought us lights and refrigeration and the

steam engine and internal combustion engine got us there faster.

Now with the Internet and our new Zoom technology we don't even have to be together to get things done. We're teaching old dogs' new tricks and the good news is you can learn new things.

We don't really want to turn the clock back, even though we were able to slow the World down. The good news is that people will want to take more road trips and fewer airplane rides. The trails are still there, and history is asking us to continue to teach others how to find it. OCTA does so much good across the Country, and we connect the States with trails that run through them. Interstate travel is alive and well on the trails and we look forward to being able to travel once again. So for now, heed the warnings and stay safe. We will get through this too.

Melissa Shaw, CFP®



2021 OCTA CONVENTION

ELKONV

SEPTEMBER 13-16



BUS TOURS

Long Canyon

Fort Ruby (including site tour) and Ruby Valley

Wells/Osino area (including Gun Museum)

Gravelly Ford



SPECIAL HIGHLIGHTS

Trail Days at the

California Trail Interpretive Center

Basque Dancers and Cowboy Poetry



**FOR HOTEL RESERVATIONS
AND MORE INFORMATION**

www.octa-trails.org

Welcome New Members

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Omaha, NE

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Bear Flag Engineering, Inc
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Kyle Robbins
Cheyenne, WY

Nancy Walton
Tulare, CA

Walt & Marlene Goddard
Spring Creek, NV

MaryLouise LeVeen
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Otis & Pat Durham
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Rhonda Pastori
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Ray Kelsey
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Teri Clarke
Phoenix, AZ

Ronnie Allen
La Grande, OR

Thank You!

Thanks to many donors who support OCTA's preservation work through gifts to our annual fund drive and memorial gifts to those who have passed. Recent gifts include:

Merle Anderson
Della Bauer

William Bieber

Lee and Sandi Black
John Boley

Alan Bushman

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Linda J Cook

Dr. Ronald O Downs

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Harry Smith

Marlene Smith-Baranzini

Dave Stamey

David and Sharon Taylor

Dick Waugh

Evan and Patricia White

Max Willard

Joan Young

Important Dates and Deadlines

Award Nominations – June 1

Budget Development – Budget Request – May 23 (Per OCTA Procedural Manual)

News from the Plains material – Spring issue: February 25; Summer issue: May 25; Fall issue: August 25; Winter issue: November 25

Nominating and Leadership – Announcement of election and number of vacancies on the Board of Directors: November 25 News from the Plains Deadline; Bio and ballot: April 1

Outstanding Educator Award Application – March 31

Calendar Art for Western Calendar – April 15

National Park Service Volunteers-in-Parks (VIP) – October 1

Volunteer data (Hours, Expenses, Mileage) to Partnership – Report hours on the website at <https://www.octa-journals.org/octa-volunteer>. They can be reported as they are accumulated. If you track your hours on the paper form (available at <https://www.octa-trails.org/activity-forms/>), please report them to HQ by December 31.

Overland Journal – Spring issue to membership: approximately May 20; Summer issue to membership: approximately August 20; Fall issue to membership: approximately November 20; Winter issue to membership: approximately February 20

Thanks to Our Business Sponsors

For \$50 a year, OCTA Business Sponsors receive a listing on the OCTA website and in *News From the Plains*, a window decal, a framed wall certificate and an OCTA trail map. To learn more, contact OCTA headquarters at (816) 252-2276. Current business sponsors include:

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Scotts Bluff Area Visitors Bureau

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Wagon Wheel Café

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OREGON-CALIFORNIA TRAILS ASSOCIATION

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Independence MO 64051

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NATIONAL FRONTIER TRAILS MUSEUM

The **National Frontier Trails Museum** in Independence, Missouri brings the pioneer experience on the trails to life. The only museum in the nation certified to interpret the Lewis & Clark, Santa Fe, Oregon, California and Mormon Pioneer trails, the National Frontier Trails Museum offers:

- A unique collection of original artifacts and special exhibits
- Firsthand written accounts, travel diaries and journals
- Interactive displays, audio guides and gallery walks
- Children's programs and activities
- A robust research library
- A gift store with the region's largest selection of trails books and merchandise

Pack your provisions, circle the wagons and saddle up for a visit to the **National Frontier Trails Museum** where the West welcomes you, the journey begins and your adventure awaits.

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