

NEWS FROM THE PLAINS

Newsletter of the Oregon-California Trails Association



Pilot Peak

Fall 2021

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Saluting a Successful 2021 Elko Convention

In spite of a seemingly endless series of roadblocks introduced by the Covid pandemic, convention leaders Helen Hankins, Duane Jones and their crew planned and executed a terrific OCTA gathering this September. When it couldn't be held in 2020, Helen and company

responded with "we'll just move it to 2021." This 'can-do' attitude was pervasive and empowering from the initial planning through the closing moments of an excellent gathering.

Old friendships were rekindled, new bonds formed, presentations given and tours taken.

The Board of Directors got off to an early start on Sunday, covering a huge agenda in a (relatively) short time. New officers and board members were confirmed and welcomed, old business handled and new business brought forward. The in-depth board report is available online at <https://octa-trails.org/octa-bylaws-policies-strategic-plan/>. New officers include John Briggs, President; Steve Allison, Vice President; Jo Johnston, Secretary; Jerry Mogg, Treasurer. Lee Black becomes Past President and John Winner will remain at his post as National Preservation Officer. New members of the

Board of include Mark Howe, Helen Hankins, Jerry Mogg and Pat Traffas.

Monday featured an opening ceremony, welcome and short business meeting in the convention center auditorium. Lee Black and Travis Boley covered the

current state of the organization and highlighted upcoming plans and activities.

Dr. James Armstead delivered an excellent keynote presentation on the socio-political origins of the westward migration. Shoshone Master Weaver and author Leah Brady spoke on

"The First Encounter", a recounting of stories passed down through her family from their first sighting and interaction with emigrants in the Ruby Valley. White Knife Shoshoni tribe member Norm Cavanaugh covered a local history of Shoshone Sites in Northeastern Nevada. Afternoon sessions included a talk by Dr. Peter Meyerhoff on the genesis of the Hastings Cutoff, followed by Loua Speulda-Drews speaking on "Fort Ruby at the Crossroads" and Pat Fletcher on "Cherokees Travel T. H. Jefferson's Valley of Fountains 1849 and



1850." Individual chapter meetings and in the evening members visited the California Trail Interpretive Center just west of Elko.

Tuesday and Thursday tours were run to Long Canyon gold mine, Wells, Fort Ruby and an ancient pronghorn antelope trap site. Historic trail sites, markers and landscape features were pointed out and visited along the way. One of the tour highlights was a visit to the Williams Family Museum, with a personally guided tour by Jeff Williams of his extraordinary historical gun collection, blacksmith shop and grounds.

Wednesday's presenters included OCTA 2019 Outstanding Educator Award Winner Jill Jones, speaking on "Making Trail History Come Alive", Andrew Beckman on the Studebaker Wagon, Dr. Sarah Keyes on "Sarah Winnemucca's Temporary Grave on the California Trail" and Frank Tortorich on "The Mormons on the California Trail." Afternoon speakers included Bob Crowley and Tim Twietmeyer on rediscovering and hiking the Forlorn Hope trail. Dave Vixie wrapped up the presentations with "Teaching Students the Trail" by hosting a live video interview introducing his students

and displaying his wagons outside the convention center. His drive to teach the life lessons of the trail was tangible and his students reflected his influence as they spoke about their trail experiences on screen.

A number of excellent activity centers were stationed in the area just outside the auditorium. Displays of basketweaving, native plant foods, flint knapping, pioneer travel supply boxes, tools and clothing were manned by experts in each field, all with excellent information and several with pieces available for purchase.

The Awards Dinner was held Wednesday night, hosted by Dr. Phil D. Graves (Roger Blair) with presented by outgoing President Lee Black. Thursday evening we wrapped things up with a Silent Auction and Raffle followed by the End of the Trail Dinner and the Period Clothing Parade. You may recognize some of these pioneers in the accompanying photos.

The 2021 OCTA Convention at Elko marked a rich and refreshing, though cautious return to our group activities. The fact that it unfolded so well despite countless obstacles speaks volumes about the character of our members and leaders. Congratulations all!





2020-2021 Award Recipients

Gregory Franzwa Meritorius Achievement Award

John Winner 2020
Camille Bradford 2021

Distinguished Volunteer Award

Dennis Larsen

Distinguished Service Award

Steve Owens

Merrill Mattes Award

2020 Richard Reich
2021 Jerry Eichhorst

Outgoing President

Lee Black 2019-21

Young OCTAn Award

Battle Born Youth ChalleNGe Academy
National Guard program

National Certificates of Appreciation

Outgoing Board of Directors Members

John Briggs (2018-21)
Duane Iles (2015-21)
Matt Mallinson (2015-21)

Convention Co-Chairs

Helen Hankins and Duane Jones

Friend of the Trail

Steve and Valerie Wines

President's Special Recognition Certificates

Outgoing OCTA Secretary
Sandra Wiechert

Former OCTA Treasurer
Marvin Burke, deceased

Former OCTA Treasurer, IAC Committee Member
Jim Budde, deceased



John Winner receiving the 2020 Meritorius Achievement Award



Camille Bradford receiving the 2021 Meritorius Achievement Award



Steve Owens receiving the Distinguished Achievement Award



Jan Pearce accepting the Friend of the Trail Award for Steve and Valerie Wines



Jerry Eichhorst, recipient of the Merrill Mattes Award alongside Publications Chair Bill Hill and Overland Journal Publisher Bob Clark



Sallie Riehl accepting the Distinguished Volunteer Award on behalf of Dennis Larsen



Gina Mele of the BLM accepting the Young OCTAn Award on behalf of the Battle Born Youth ChalleNGe Academy



Outgoing Secretary Sandra Wiechert accepting a President's Special Recognition Certificate

FROM THE PRESIDENT



Preserving the Legacy of Our Forefathers

Thank you OCTA members for the privilege of serving as your President during these unprecedented times. Special appreciation is extended to Past Presidents Bill Martin and John

Winner for not accepting my nomination reluctantly and then aiding at every turn. OCTA has long been led by capable men and women. My deepest gratitude to our leadership, Travis Boley - Association Manager, Kathy Conway- Headquarters Manager and the very competent members of the OCTA Board and Officers. Thanks too, to the many faithful Committee Chairs.

WSU, Press, in their review of *Saving the Oregon Trail*, Ezra Meeker's *Last Grand Quest*, the marvelously complete history of Ezra Meeker's passion, authored by OCTA member Dennis M. Larson, shared the following description: The first Mayor of Puyallup and one-time "Hop King of the World," wanted to mark the fast-disappearing Oregon Trail with monuments and preserve the memory of a generation that came West via the overland route. Aren't we glad he was passionate to see the task through? Where would we be today but for Ezra Meeker and his determination.

OCTA was founded on the principle of Preservation! Save the Trail has been our mantra for years. Credit goes to the many Chapter Preservation Officers and the extraordinary commitment and sacrifices of OCTA National Preservation Officers, John Winner and those who served before him.

Today one of the greatest challenges before OCTA membership is preserving the authentic history of our forefather's determination and commitment as recorded in their diaries, maps and papers. With the dedicated commitment of highly qualified and skilled professionals like Collections Committee Chairman (retired President and CEO Nebraska Historical Society), Archivists, Researchers and Educators, we

are determined to preserve written treasures held by OCTA members and our office. We seek to assist members digitize their precious documents and enable the placement of same in appropriate repositories.

Like Ezra Meeker, we are on a mission to secure funding necessary to digitize all manner of legacies left to OCTA. Theirs will not be a history forgotten by future generations. As OCTA member Ken Martin once wrote, "The Emigrants planted the stars in the field of blue on the American flag."

Looking forward, our mission is to reach the global community through every means available to us. Employing various platforms we will share our stories in retirement villages, senior centers, civic clubs and classrooms. We will utilize every electronic technology known. As our digital library grows, with rich stories of trail experiences, OCTA members will have the tools best suited to meet opportunities. Chapters will be able to video the best stories along their trails.

As the sun rises on a new day in OCTA, excellent leadership is poised to achieve the 2020-2025 Strategic Plan goals and objectives you desire and approved. President-Elect John Briggs and Vice-President Nominee Steve Allison (Crossroads Chapter President) bring a wealth of experience, knowledge and skilled leadership to OCTA. We will be in extremely capable hands.

Looking to the horizon the challenges before us are merely hills not insurmountable mountains. Considering the opportunities to achieve unprecedented advances in historic preservation on the ground, in written and electronic forms, my hope is that you who value our heritage and legacy will join us as we provide the financial means necessary to complete ***The Journey of a Lifetime!***

It is said, "If we neglect our future, no one will ever thank you for the present." Those of you who brought us to this place today, we owe you a huge debt of gratitude! THANK YOU!

Lee Black, President

Oregon-California Trails Association

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FROM THE ASSOCIATION MANAGER



In the Winter 2020 issue of *News From the Plains* I reported about OCTA's Board of Directors updating its five year strategic plan in 2015 and setting numerous goals and objectives with specific action plans to ensure that the organization had a clear vision on how to set itself up for the 2020s. Our marketing and PR

committee had set some clear goals related to our online environment, so I reported that over the next several issues of *News From the Plains*, I planned to report on our online offerings. This will be my final column discussing the contents of our websites.

My Winter 2020 column told you how to use www.octa-journals.org, so please refer back to that issue if you missed the update. On the Journals website you will find hundreds of digitized diaries, back issues of the *Overland Journal* and *News From the Plains*, past convention books and tour guides, and even an interactive trail map.

In the Spring 2020 issue, I focused on our main website at www.octa-trails.org. I touched on how you can report your volunteer hours via our website, how you can find our online publications, how to donate online, OCTA's Hall of Fame, our regional chapters and their websites, educational resources (including *In Pursuit of a Dream*), interactive maps, trail facts, people and stories, our speakers bureau, and the section on awards.

The Summer 2020 issue featured the launch of our YouTube Channel (please go subscribe!) as well as our new Instagram and Twitter feeds (please subscribe to both of those as well @octa_1836). For those of you who follow our Facebook page, you have likely noticed a huge uptick in offerings, especially a "This Day in History" post. These posts have gained us new members, donors, and store customers, so we know they are working. In fact, we have grown from 2,200 followers to 2,900 followers since the Yuma Symposium. It took eleven years to get to 2,200 followers and only six months to add 700 more. We believe our increased presence has made our page a popular destination with people wanting to see pictures and learn stories from the trails in bite-sized doses. We hope that you, our long-time members, appreciate all of this increased awareness we are

drawing to trails as well. As a reminder, all back issues of *News From the Plains* are archived at www.octa-journals.org, so if you missed these earlier stories, go back and get caught up now.

In this issue I want to discuss our other website found at www.paper-trail.org. Paper Trail is, in a nutshell, an index to trail diaries. As a member, you get free access to this website as long as your membership remains current (a \$75 annual value!). OCTA established a committee to create a computer database from information found in original emigrant writings. That committee began work in 1986 and was called the Census of Overland Emigrant Documents Committee, or simply COED. The COED committee members were trained to find and survey original emigrant documents, extracting from each one information on names, locations, Indian encounters, modes of travel, routes, and other interesting details. The information from over 3,500 document surveys form the COED database. A PDF scan of each survey is included in the database and is searchable for subscribers.

The 19th Century migration is illuminated by the writings of thousands of the people who went to Oregon, California, or Utah seeking land or gold or religious freedom, and they wrote of their experiences in diaries, letters, remembrances, and newspaper articles. These pioneers recorded their travels in documents that have survived in libraries and private collections. Whether you are interested in family genealogy, original research, or just an entertaining read, this database can help guide you in the right direction. And remember, we have spent years digitizing actual diaries, hundreds of which can now be searched for free at www.octa-journals.org or at www.gateway-octa.org (our Gateway Chapter website in St. Joseph features diaries of people who jumped off from Northwest Missouri). The Paper Trail website works hand-in-hand with the Journals and Gateway websites.

So how do you set up your free Paper Trail subscription? First, go to www.paper-trail.org and click on "subscription." Fill out the forms and then pick a password to meet the criteria of eight characters long with at least one number. Next, copy "form above" respecting upper case letters and click on "register." This will advance you to a payments page which has a space for the code for members. Fill in the code **OCTA720183** to activate your free account. To use the account after your initial visit, you will need to remember your username and password when you use the login prompt.

And that is it! If you have any additional questions, do not hesitate to contact us at OCTA HQ at 816-252-2276. We will be happy to walk you through it, and we truly

hope you take the time to dive deep into all we have to offer online. And as always, thank you for being a member of the Oregon-California Trails Association! *Travis Boley*

Partnership for the National Trails System

The Partnership for the National Trails System (PNTS) is sponsoring a Virtual National Trails Workshop Monday, November 1, through Thursday, November 4.

Registration is now open by visiting www.pnts.org and clicking on the Workshops tab. Cost is \$75 for OCTA members. Registration will include access to all Workshop sessions.

Highlights of the Workshop include themes of trail land conservation, collaboration and engagement, and strengthening organizations and partnerships.

Sessions will include trainings, topical discussions, and presentations on emerging land conservation policy, advancing land conservation on trails (with separate tracks for beginners and more advanced participants), working with Corps programs, moving

beyond land acknowledgments, ethical storytelling, and more.

The Workshop begins on November 1 with a presentation by Anapama Joshi on "Let's Tell a New Story," with a focus on using narratives to tell stories in different ways to help reach new allies and funders.

Other Workshop sessions will include land conservation discussions with federal partners, a presentation on the proposed new Conservation Corps, and sessions on telling Native American stories, including a focus on tourism and using indigenous voices in collaborative activities, and a session on Ethical Storytelling featuring Caliopy Glaros of Philanthropy Without Borders.

For more information, visit www.pnts.org.

Bill Martin, PNTS Liaison



Photo Credit: Bob Wick

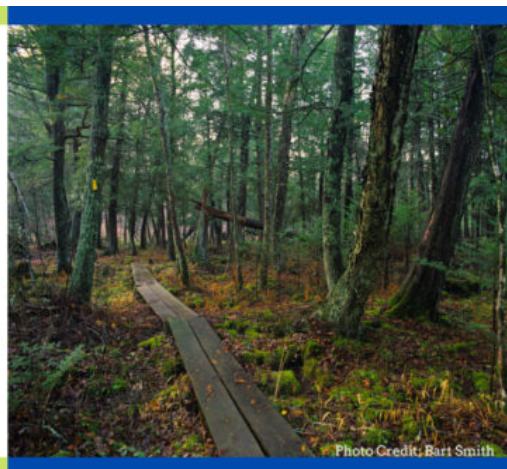


Photo Credit: Bart Smith

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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.

Beckwourth National Historic Trail: Lassen Trail:

Nobles Trail: In 2020 California had a catastrophic year for fires. While fire may expose traces of emigrant trails, preservation becomes a nightmare. In the fall of 2020 the "North Complex" fire burned a massive area of the Beckwourth NHT. OCTA member Dick Waugh has been a team leader in mapping and marking the Beckwourth NHT for many years. Dick and his team spent several months on damage control working with forest personal, private timber companies and a host of others in an effort to preserve segments of the Beckwourth NHT. A collaborative effort between public and private land managers and knowledge of trail location through OCTA's mapping program has kept some pristine trail segments safe.

In August 2021 another massive forest fire, the "Dixie" fire in Plumas and Butte Counties has burned over other portions of the Beckwourth Trail, the Lassen Trail and the Nobles Trail.

I cannot emphasize enough the importance of mapping emigrant trails. You can't preserve it if you don't know where it is. Richard Silva, long time OCTA member, historian and mapper has spent a life time researching, mapping and classing emigrant trails, including the Lassen and Nobles trail, using guidelines set forth in OCTA's MET (Mapping Emigrant Trails) Manual.

While the Dixie Fire continued to burn in areas of the Lassen and Nobles trails, Ryan Wimmer a Forester with Cal Fire contacted Richard for assistance. Here was his request: *"A Senior State Archaeologist and myself are working on the Dixie Fire trying to identify known cultural sites for avoidance. Can you please share data for emigrant trails in this area so we can make sure they are protected? Shapefiles are easiest to work with, but if you can send them as a KMZ we can make that work as well."* Richard's response: *"I have a flashdrive for the shapefiles, one from Feather Lake to Duck Lake to Lake Almanor. Other is west of Lake Almanor to Lassen's Rancho."* This is the response from Ryan Wimmer from Cal Fire: *"Hi Richard, What you provided to us is exactly what we*

needed and the Shapefile format worked perfectly to get it into our mapping program. We located portions of the trail yesterday between Lake Almanor ('Big Meadows' in 1851) to Deer Creek Meadow along Highway 32. Much of the trail in this area was difficult to locate but we are confident and pleased to report that the fire lines stayed well away from what appear to be trail swales and sections otherwise indicated on the map of being located elsewhere." A good example of a collaborative effort.

B2H: This is the 300-mile 500Kv transmission line in Eastern Oregon crossing the Oregon National Historic Trail 7 times. Next step, preparing for the Contested Case. OCTA member Gail Carbiener continues to coordinate an OCTA team in their preparation for testimony before the Administrative Law Judge. The Administrative Law Judge ordered the following:

"Each party/limited party shall submit a list of their expert witness(es) and the exhibits to be offered as direct testimony and evidence at hearing on or before September 3, 2021, i.e., at least 14 days prior to the September 17, 2021, deadline for submitting the direct testimony and evidence and proposed site certificate conditions"

In addition to witness testimony a visual simulation of the line and towers is being prepared to illustrate the indirect visual effect to the trail viewshed. Then there will be rebuttals, with arguments and responses. The ALJ ruling is due in May 2022. Much more to come...

Gravelly Ford Conservation Easement: We are still waiting for the draft language of the Conservation Easement being drafted by Nevada Land Trust. Conceptually, the landowner, Nevada Gold Mine, the BLM and consulting parties, including OCTA agree; however until you see the draft language *"the devil is in the detail"*

This began as part of the mitigation discussion for the Long Canyon Mine Project, an open pit mine in Northeast Nevada on the Hasting Cutoff, a branch of the California National Historic Trail. What was thought to be agreed upon mitigation included, mapping of the Hastings Cutoff, protection of the Settlers Cabin at Big Springs and the establishment of the Gravelly Ford Conservation Area to include protection of the California National Historic Trail leading to and including the Gravelly Ford site. Protection of the GFCA would be through a conservation easement or similar legal instrument. According to Elko, Nevada BLM, this all changed when the Department of Interior issued *Instruction Memorandum 2019-018* on Compensatory Mitigation. The BLM cannot require compensatory mitigation on private land or on offsite improvements,

however, may consider voluntary proposals for compensatory mitigation.

That said, OCTA has continued to have discussions directly with the landowner, Nevada Gold Mine (NGM) and Nevada Land Trust (NLT) to move forward with a conservation easement to protect the pristine trail segments and the Gravelly Ford Site. In October 2020 OCTA mapped and marked the proposed sites and in May 2021, at the request of NLT, OCTA along with NGM conducted an onsite tour. The legal staff of Nevada Land Trust is currently drafting language for a conservation easement for review.

Greenlink West Transmission Line Project: This project would be constructed and operated by Nevada Power Company and Sierra Pacific Power Company (dba NV Energy). The project would be a system of new 525-kV, 345-kV, and 120-kV electric transmission facilities. The proposed system, approximately 469 miles of new transmission lines in western Nevada from Las Vegas to Reno. The proposed Direct Area of Potential Effects includes two segments of the California National Historic Trail and the Visual Area of Potential Effects contains three segments of the California National Historic Trail. OCTA will be working with BLM and others as a consulting party as this project works its way through

the various stages.

The R-Project: Nothing new to report at this time. The R-Project is a 225 mile, 345 kV transmission line proposed by Nebraska Public Power District (NPPD), in Nebraska that crosses the Oregon-California and Mormon National Historic Trail. When the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service issued an Incidental Take Permit authorizing this project to move forward, a petition for review of agency action was filed in the United States District court by the law firm of Eubanks and Associates. The Oregon-California Trails Association was one of the plaintiffs. The case argues that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's choice to issue the ITP violates portions of the Endangered Species Act, the National Environmental Policy Act and the National Historic Preservation Act.

In June 2020, U.S. District Court Judge William J Martinez vacated the ITP issued to NPPD and remanded the matter to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for further review. That's where it stands.

Epilogue: This is just a snapshot of a few of the preservation issues being monitored. While it may be impossible to preserve and protect all known trails, we still need to be proactive. Your keen awareness in your area is greatly appreciated. *More to come...*

Welcome New Members

Andrea Blair Port Townsend, WA	Raymond Stine Grand Junction, CO	Robert Mumford Acworth, GA	Lara Aho Henderson, NV	Jay Jensen Boise, ID
Raymond Kanter Encinitas, CA	Timothy Murphy Spring Creek, NV	Curtis Heimback Commerce City, CO	Kenneth Isaacs Walla Walla, WA	Dr. Eric Nielson Spirit Lake, IA
Jennifer Helber North Kansas City, MO	Lisa Carle Kailua, HI	Dee Churchman Covina, CA	Doug Newton Oro Valley, CA	Ronald Barnett Sandy, UT
Frank Sadlon Salem, OR	Scott Nowlin Morgan, UT	Richard Wagner Oxford, MD	Peter Berquist Shoreline, WA	Hank Tapia Lodi, CA
Judy McGhee Johnstown, CO	John Higgins San Francisco, CA	Kelly Kraft Medford, OR	Roger Weber Temecula, CA	Dirk Steinhour Colorado Springs, CO
Sarah Price Boise, ID	Robert Bachmann Centennial, CO	Jerome Gabriel Philadelphia, PA	Charlie Teall Boise, ID	Dan Ray Davis, CA
Timothy Lord Hancock, NH	Eugene Romanski Elko, NV	Greg Christofferson Lehi, UT	Cindy Pierce Blair, NE	Tim Twietmeyer Auburn, CA
Judy Christensen Grants Pass, OR	Karen Hall Ault, CO	Kay Scott Valdosta, GA	Debra Jane Cawlfild Pueblo, CO	Bob Crowley Fair Oaks, CA
Gregory Gress Oakland, CA	Paul Ferguson Casper, WY	Ed Goetz Cheyenne, WY	Amber Oldenburg Brownsburg, IN	Mark Goddard Moscow, ID

Welcome New Ezra Meeker Life Members

Andrea Blair • Lisa Carle • Dr. Vincent Correll • Raymond Kanter

Publication News



Just when things seemed to be going well, I noticed a little glitch in my last column. Not exactly an error, but an omission for which I apologize. One of the students whose artwork was selected for the 2022 calendar “Emigrant and Indian Foods” was left out

of the list. Fourteen students’ artwork is included in the calendar, but I listed only thirteen. The student who was not included was Devin Sanchez, 5th grade, from Canyon Rim Academy, Salt Lake City, UT.

The calendar has been printed and is available through headquarters and at the convention. (*) Be sure to purchase your copy for only \$10.00. The topic for 2023 calendar is “Mountain Men, Indians, & Emigrants - Trading & Trade Goods.” Information about the contest is now available on OCTA’s website.



The selection of the recipient of the Merrill Mattes Award has been completed, and the award was presented to Jerry Eichhorst at the awards dinner during the convention in Elko, Nevada. The award is named after one of OCTA’s founders and eminent historian. The award is presented to the author of the article in the previous year’s Overland Journal that best reflects the high standards set by Merrill in his own writing and historical research about the westward migrations and the goals of OCTA. Merrill died August 6, 1996, and the first award in his honor was presented in 1997. Following is a partial list of the previous articles and recipients. The second, later portion will be listed in the Fall edition. If you didn’t read the articles when they first appeared or don’t remember the article, you are encouraged read them now. You can find them through OCTA’s website.

- 1997 Richard L. Dyer, “Jedediah Strong Smith: Trails West,” (Fall 1996, v. 14:3)
- 1998 Kyle D. Kauffman and Jonathan J. Lichowitz, “Draft Animals on the United States Frontier,” (Summer 1997, v. 15:2)
- 1999 Margaret Walker, “A Woman’s Work is Never Done: Or, the Dirt on Men and their Laundry,” (Summer 1998, v. 16:2)
- 2000 Todd Guenther, “The Burnt Ranch Saga: A History of the Last Crossing of the Sweetwater” (Winter 1999, v. 17:4)
- 2001 Michael L. Tate, “From Cooperation to Conflict: Sioux Relations with the Overland Emigrants, 1845–1865” (Winter 2000, v. 18:4)
- 2002 Jim Tompkins, “The Law of the Land: Claiming Land at the End of the Oregon Trail,” (Fall 2001, v. 19:3)
- 2003 Todd Guenther, Erin Hammer, and Fred Chaney, “The Women Who Carried the Star of Empire Westward: Eliza Spalding & Narcissa Whitman Catalyzed the Great Migration & Launched the American Future [(Winter 2002-03, v. 20:4)
- 2004 Rodney Staab, “Sutter in Westport: Prelude for a Pioneer,” (Summer/Fall 2003, v. 21:2/3)
- 2005 Frank Tortorich & James M. Carman, “The Big Tree Carson Valley Wagon Road: A Branch of the Carson Valley Route, (Fall 2004, v. 22:3)
- 2006 Roy Tea, “‘The Limitless Plain:’ The Great Salt Lake Desert—The Trail Location and the Trials and Tribulations of the Emigrants While Crossing This Desert on the Hastings Cutoff, Part 1 and Part 2,” (Spring and Summer 2005, v. 23:1-2)
- 2007 James McGill, “Irreparable Damage on the Jeffrey/Goodale Cutoff: Responsible, Active, and Continuous Preservation Efforts Are Necessary!” (Spring 2006, v. 24:3).
- 2008 Charles Barrett, “Stony Point: Nevada’s Bloody Landmark on the California Trail” (Spring 2007, v. 25:1)
- 2009 Kristin Johnson, “Survivor, Sarah Graves Fosdick” (Spring 2008, v. 26:1)
- 2010 Will Bagley with Rick Grunder, “‘I Could Hardly Hold the Pen’: Phebe Ann Wooley Davis’s Hard Road to Utah and Back, 1864–1865,”

Bob and Jay, our editors, were at the Elko convention and were pleased to hear your comments and critiques. I hope you introduced yourself to them. It was a pleasure seeing you all there. *Bill Hill*

News from the Chapters

CROSSROADS

It has been a long, hot, dry summer here at Crossroads. But we still got together in May for a field trip and a work detail day. Meetings and socials, however, have not yet resumed.

Our May field trip was well attended with over thirty joining with us. We gathered at Horseshoe Springs (Skull Valley) for a Hastings Road exploration out as far as Greyback Hills. Ray Kelsey, trails expert from the BLM, gave us a description of the road through Skull Valley and beyond over Hastings Pass and up on Greyback where the trail can be seen snaking its way onto the salt desert. A continuation of this trip is planned for the fall, and it will be from Greyback to Donner Springs.

We had a work detail on July 31 to plant a T-Post in a Layton, Utah, park to mark the 1846 Lienhardt Camp. It is in a nice park with hiking and bike trails. Those who showed up were Jesse Petersen, Jeff Pashley, Katherine Smith, Craig Fuller, Victor Heath,



and myself. It was only a couple of hours of work.

I had a trip myself with a couple of like-minded friends to do some exploring in Wyoming wherein we spent a day at South Pass and Parting-of-Ways trails. We found both sites. However, a rock that was marking Parting-of-Ways in 2002 was gone (more vandalism). The site is still marked, however. These two sites made for a nice day's outing.

We must recognize the people who have passed away recently. Marvin Burke, who was treasurer, would come from Colorado with his wife to attend our field trips. We lost our own George Ivory and member Taylor Kipp. And, just this week, we lost long-time member and bookseller, Curt Bench of Benchmark Books. Perhaps many of you have purchased books from Curt. We are truly saddened by the loss of these friends. We extend our sympathy to the families.

More later. Stay tuned. – A. Oscar Olson

NORTHWEST

Dave Welch and Sam Pambrun led a special tour from Pendleton to Fort Nez Perce on June 26-27th in the unanticipated "heat dome" temperatures. 10 members gathered on Saturday morning in five cars at Whitman Mission to begin the tour. They made their way from the base of the descent from the Blue Mountains to Cayuse on the Umatilla River. They traveled back roads mostly along the original route of the Oregon Trail that went by way of the Whitman Mission to the Columbia River. The second day saw a reduced number of members (due to the 110 degree temperatures) who followed the route all the rest of the way to the Columbia River. It was a fine experience and gave us all insight into how difficult it must have been to travel the route.

Jenny Miller was awarded the Richard and Trudy Ackerman Meritorious Achievement for 2020 in Pendleton by Roger Blair. We haven't met in person since March 2020, and so we couldn't give her the award in a timely manner. Jenny has contributed many hours in placing signage along the Trail, and in working with the Eagle Scouts of the Hermiston area.

The Scouts have placed 7 T-Rail signs along the Trail in the last 2 summers with her guidance.

Roger Blair attended a meeting at Headquarters in Independence on National Trail Day, June 5, 2021. The meeting was held to celebrate the dedication of a Memorial Bench to OCTA's founder, Greg Franzwa. Roger was instrumental in raising funds over the years to honor Greg. The bench is inscribed "In Memory of Gregory Mathew Franzwa. Founder of the Oregon-California Trails Association, February 27, 1926- March 29, 2009. And the Bench sits in an alcove between OCTA Headquarters and the National Frontier Trails Museum in Independence, Missouri.

The Chapter is pleased to welcome a new member. Dawn Alexander lives in Redmond and has family that came to Oregon in 1852. She is finishing her 36th year as a classroom teacher and will retire at the end of the school year. She plans to substitute teach but will have time to participate in Chapter events.

The Chapter is planning a general meeting in Centralia, WA on Oct 9th. We hope that we will meet in person, at last. *Sallie K. Riehl, President*

GATEWAY

Gateway Chapter took part in two co-sponsored events during the late spring and early summer. Of course, Covid has had an effect on our attendance. Due to the size of our chapter, we set a goal of working with like-minded groups to increase our audience and awareness.

On June 12, Gateway co-sponsored a program on the Historic Missouri River in Northwest Missouri with the Remington Nature Center. The center sets on the bank of the Missouri River with an impressive view. Remington Director Sarah Elder hosted and spoke about the fur-trade on the Missouri River. Staff member Shelly Cox talked about how the river had changed since the 1700s. Gateway members Jackie Lewin spoke about impression of the river through journals of the early travelers, Carole and Karen McClellan spoke about the problems faced by the emigrants to Oregon and California as they prepared for their journey and crossed the Missouri River.

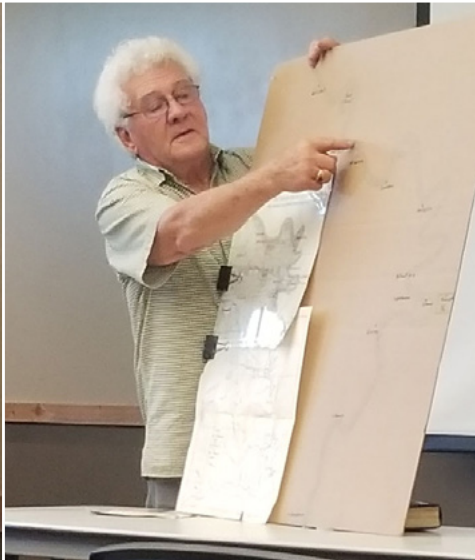
Corky Smith provided a map and recognized the various crossing sites in northwest Missouri. Music greeted the guests as they entered with guitarist Krista Kiger.

On August 7, Gateway had the wonderful opportunity to meet Trails Head members with a picnic at Lone Elm campground. Lila Aamodt and Mary Conrad told of the significance of the campground and why it was called Lone Elm. Ross Marshall led a walking tour of the campground area and told of the Trails Head efforts in getting the site recognized and made into a large 40 acre park. The day was in the 90s, but all who took the short hike felt rewarded.

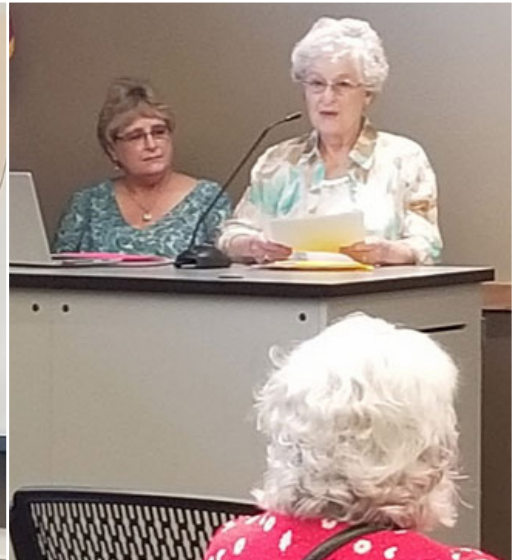
Our next planned event is a bus tour of the Santa Fe Trail in the Kansas City area. Our bus tour last year was cancelled, so this is a test to see if people are willing to get out again. All must be vaccinated and masks are required to take part. *Jackie Lewin*



Karen McClellan speaks about the trials of crossing the Missouri River



Corky Smith points out on the map the various crossing sites in northwest Missouri.



Carole McClellan tells of what it was like to be in St. Joseph in the mid-1800s as an overland emigrant.



Sarah Elder, Manager of the Remington Nature Center, visits with Mary Conrad at the refreshment table.



Lila Aamodt and Jean Coupal-Smith welcome Gateway members to Lone Elm. Lila orients the group with a map.



Ross Marshall points out the Lone Elm Campground on a hike of the area.

IDAHO

We're back! After a year and a half of being dormant, the Idaho chapter resumed activities with a smashing success – a 3-day outing at City of Rocks (COR) and the California Trail. We have been working regularly with the COR for several years and were happy to be able to resume our activities with a Thursday afternoon search for graves with three cadaver dogs. We started with the intent to verify two graves found two years ago and ended up finding four more graves. On Friday we had a great trip up to Granite Pass and an extremely rough trip down to Birch Creek. On Saturday we drove nearly 100 miles of gravel roads following Goose Creek to Record Bluff and on towards Wells, Nevada. The outing was an opportunity to train Don Wind and Paul Dinwiddie on the areas and confirm the route for the upcoming pre-convention tour which they will be leading. We had lots of people who had never seen those areas and picked up two new members in the process. The new members were guests of other members and enjoyed themselves so much that they are joining OCTA and the Idaho chapter.

The Idaho chapter came out in force to help clean up the Canyon Creek stage station in June. We pulled out a chain link fence, cut down old trumpet vines, and cleaned up bricks, blocks, and other rubble. A number of members also attended the reopening of the Rock

Creek and Stricker Homesite park south of Twin Falls. The buildings have been cleaned up and restored with additional interpretive signage added.

I am looking forward to the OCTA convention next month in Elko, Nevada. It will be good to see many friends again. The Idaho's Heritage Conference to be held at Pocatello in late September has been postponed until next year due to COVID concerns. I am in the process of rebuilding the chapter website which will

have a fresh, new look soon, if I ever get the time to finish the website.

I am extremely proud that our own John Briggs will be the next OCTA President. John



joined OCTA and the Idaho chapter 9 years ago at a City of Rocks outing and has been actively involved since. He did a wonderful job in leading the Fort Hall convention and has a brilliant business and organizational mind which I believe will be great for OCTA. I wish him much success in his new role.

Hope you see you on the trails soon. *Jerry Eichhorst*

CALIFORNIA-NEVADA

Looking back on 2020, the California/Nevada Chapter of OCTA began to feel some relief from the Covid 19 crisis that brought almost all trail activity to a halt. With the promise of vaccine immunity, we were beginning to resume our planning and activities. Then news of the Delta variant and its effects began to cause some concern. But with caution, social distancing, and wearing masks, we continue to be actively involved in OCTA's mission to protect the Historic Emigrant Trails legacy by promoting research, education, preservation activities, and public awareness of the trails, and to work with others to promote these causes. Our chapter remains strong with 385 members and financial security.

Last year, Bill Holmes led several one-day trips to the Johnson Ranch and Camp Far West military site at the end of the California Trail to do metal detecting in

order to confirm authenticity of the trail's suspected route, with a great deal of success. More work will be resuming when the weather again becomes more conducive to the work of walking and digging artifacts.

In June of this year, we had planned to hold our annual Spring Survey with Trails West and BLM archaeologists to metal detect and confirm a newly discovered alternate emigrant route to the Truckee River. But we had to cancel due to problems getting permission to cross some private property and some Native American Reservation land. Jon Nowlin is working on getting permission, and we hope to do the survey later this year or early next.

Also in June, we led a group of eleven members on a fun tour of the Nobles Emigrant Trail from the Black Rock Desert through Smoke Creek Desert and

Smoke Creek Canyon, by Lassen National Park, where we camped for a night, and then on to Old Shasta City where the trail ends.

Under Helen Hankins leadership, we are actively working on plans for the national OCTA Convention in Elko September 13-16. We have an excellent list of speakers, presenters, and tours planned. All attendees will be required to show proof of having been vaccinated for Covid-19.

Following the convention, Roger and Karen Gash will lead a fun trip on the Hastings Cutoff on September 20-21.

The end of September, we will have another group tour of the Applegate/Lassen Trails from Rye Patch Reservoir on the Humboldt River, through the Black Rock Desert and High Rock Canyon to Goose Lake in California. The tour is designated the "Chuck Dodd Memorial Tour" because he led a similar tour after the 2010 national convention in Elko. Chuck passed away this past year.

This fall, we will be working with Dave Freeman at Peter Lassen's Rancho Bosquejo site. It was the end

of the Lassen Trail to California. Some 8,000 – 9,000 Forty-Niners (a third of the 1849 Gold Rush) came over this trail, as the other trails had been depleted of grass for oxen by previous hordes of emigrants and their oxen by the time the last of the emigrants were arriving in Nevada. The Lassen Trail was longer but provided grass and a lower and less dangerous entrance into California. We will be doing a metal detecting survey to confirm trail routes coming into the ranch.

CA/NV OCTA is also planning our 2022 Spring Symposium to be held beside the Nobles Trail at the Gaia Hotel and Spa in Anderson, California, which is near where people on the trail ferried across the Sacramento River. We will have The Voices of The Golden Ghosts do historical enactments and historical presentations about the African American influence and contributions during the Gold Rush in Northern California. Much of the history of their involvement in the Gold Rush has been lost, and this group is doing an excellent job in reviving it.

Peace and Happy Trails. *Ken Johnston*

SOUTHERN TRAILS

The Southern Trails Chapter (STC) has been busy and had events for all to join (virtually) until we get outside again. Various events have been happening in the STC.

As for June, we planned to send new By-Law revisions of the STC to the membership as they were approved by the Board of Directors (BOD) and STC is holding monthly Zoom lectures. We decided to reprint the STC information brochures to hand out at various conferences and travel locations to help advertise OCTA and the STC as we were running low. This is great advertising and a good membership tool.

In July, we had some changes. I had moved to Pueblo, Colorado and am working for the U.S. Forest Service on the Pike-San Isabel National Forests and Cimarron and Comanche Grasslands as the Heritage Program Manager. As for upcoming events, Kevin Henson of the Mormon Battalion will be in the Silver City, NM area on 10/8 and 10/9/2021 for talks and meetings. Miss Charlie Dodge was introduced as a new intern for OCTA. She will be concentrating on social media and Chinese immigration. She has agreed to give a talk in August on the monthly Southern Trails monthly zoom lecture. She will be talking on the Chinese history (trail and trade) to our western coast (CA & MEX). Note: Charlie was changed to October to speak. Our July talk was on "The Manila Galleons" by

Father Greg Adolf and was very well received. Information on upcoming talks are posted on our webpage at <http://southern-trails.org/> or can be found on Facebook at Southern Trails Chapter of OCTA.

The new By-Laws approved last month at our Board meeting will be sent to membership for approval. Desert Tracks is aiming at an August publication for the next issue. The second half of this issue will have an emphasis on West Texas. As a note, there is a large donation to the Southern Trails Chapter of back issues of both the Overland Journal and Desert Tracks. The Overland Journals were donated by Carol and Vern Osborne and the Desert Tracks by Jere Krakow. These donations come from long time members of OCTA and the Southern Trails. STC will need to find a permanent location for these journals so that they are completely accessible at all times. Many university collections will not accept journals. If you know a repository, please contact any STC BOD member of which emails can be found on the website.

In August, we had an update of the Mormon Battalion meeting of which the STC will help sponsor both the visit and talk. After a generous donation for this meeting, we approved to pay for two days of Kevin Henson's hotel for this meeting and his talk. As for the Monthly STC Zoom talk, this was changed and was presented by Gil Storm on "Traveling the Devil's Road." As for Desert Tracks, the

issue is about done at this time and half of it covers the Southern Trail in West Texas. We also continue to have a large presence on Facebook as Jan Iwashita continues to post informative information daily. Please send her anything you might have on the Southern Trails and we hope to get it posted.

Our By-Laws came back from the membership with

no objections and we voted to accept to make them official as of the August BOD meeting. We also heard the sad news that longtime member and active support Tom Sutak passed away and STC sent a card to his family.

In conclusion, many thanks to our leadership and members (YOU!!) for donations to STC, OCTA and keeping the memory of the trails alive!! *Mark Howe*

COLORADO-CHEROKEE

The Colorado-Cherokee Trail Chapter is continuing its series of Zoom events. Our event on August 28th was a presentation by Dr. Jeff Broome, historian and author of books and articles on the Plains Indian wars in Colorado, Kansas and Nebraska. On September 25th we had the Emigrant Trails Hall of Fame presentation by the national organization's Hall of Fame Committee on the new inductees for 2021. Upcoming events include:

- October 16: The Oregon Trail is Big Business - Roger Blair
- November 20: Finding the Oregon Trail Route to the Whitman Mission - David Welch

- December 11: Go West, Young Man: A Father and Son Rediscover America on the Oregon Trail - A visit with B. J. Hollars, professor at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, author of this new book.

Chapter board members Bruce Watson and Sharon Danhauer gave a presentation, Mapping the Cherokee Trail Through Colorado at the Loveland Museum in July, a joint event with the Loveland Historical Society. *Camille Bradford*

KANZA

It has been an inactive period for KANZA Chapter. Due to the concerns about the virus we have essentially put all events on hold. This does not mean that the chapter and its members have not been engaged. Many individuals have shown the flag in participation at area events. There was a presence at the Beach Boys concert at Alcove Spring. Many have taken advantage of the zoom programs offered by Colorado/Cherokee Trail Chapter and the Southern Trails Chapter. We are co-hosting with a couple of Colorado/Cherokee on programs. This is one of the most effective benefits to OCTA membership that is available. Members have taken active parts individually with other historically oriented organizations.

We will be co-sponsoring the Oregon Trail Trek, a run/bike/walk event on the trails of Alcove Spring Historic Park. A one mile

walking tour is included led by one of our member historians that connects all the historical aspects

of the park. We hope to have a driving tour of trails in our area and investigate the status of our carsonite markers. We will repair and replace missing or damaged markers.

Members of our chapter are working closely with the Alcove Spring organization to remodel a building that will be home to a trails museum and research library. It will also be the Alcove Spring headquarters and museum/archive. We recently received an additional five hundred history volumes from our generous donor, Professor Michael Tate. He has donated the research materials as well as about a thousand related books. Many can be

loaned out, the rest available to research. This will be a real treasure. *Duane Iles*

OREGON TRAIL TREK

Run the Oregon Trail! 

Follow in the footsteps of travelers on the Oregon and California trails: run, walk, or bike the Alcove Spring Park trails and experience history for yourself...

Sunday, October 17, 2021, at 9 AM
Parking area of Alcove Spring Park, Blue Rapids, Kansas

1.5 Mile Run/Walk
3.1 Mile (5K) Run/Walk/Bike
6.2 Mile (10K) Run/Bike

Participation in this event on the Oregon and California National Historic Trails is free. Donate \$20 or more to Alcove Spring's upkeep to receive a race t-shirt. Snacks and water will be provided. Unique, handmade finisher awards for all participants!






Event sponsored by the Alcove Spring Preservation Association, Alcove Spring Historical Trust, Maysville Health & Fitness, the National Park Service, and many other supporters.



For more information or to register:
Maysville Health and Fitness
pamtrains@bluevalley.net, 785-562-2424
Registration form is on the reverse.

WYOMING

There's lots to report from Wyoming this summer, with four out of five trails treks completed and one yet to come, planning going strong for the national 2022 convention here and some interesting developments around a possible grave site just east of Casper.

In cooperation with the staff of the National Historic Trails Interpretive Center in Casper, Wyoming OCTAns and others have gone on four great **treks** this year—on May 29 to Avenue of Rocks, Willow Springs and Prospect Hill west of Casper, on June 5 to Rocky Ridge, on July 17 to grave sites east of Fort Laramie plus Register Cliff and the trail ruts near Guernsey, and on August 28 up the Seminole Cutoff to South Pass. On Sept. 25, we plan a trip to Independence Rock and Devil's Gate. Special thanks to Jason Vlcan of the Trails Center staff and to Randy Brown, Wyoming OCTA preservation officer, for leading the treks. For more information, contact Jason at the Trails Center.

On the way back to Casper after Rocky Ridge, we stopped at the McIntosh ruts on private land along the Sweetwater west of Jeffrey City—a place most had never seen and some of us have not seen for decades. They are wagon ruts in hard rock. There's a photo of trails pioneer and, later, avid trails publicizer Ezra Meeker sitting with his feet in them in the 1920s or so; they aren't so deep now. Still, they're nearly as amazing as the much better-known ruts near Guernsey.

For the **2022 convention**, Travis has signed a contract with the Ramkota Inn in Casper for rooms, meeting rooms and catering services from Sunday Aug. 28, 2022 through Saturday, Sept. 3. Our planning committee has sketched out a schedule similar to the Elko schedule this year, with an icebreaker Sunday evening, keynote and other talks Monday, bus tours and probably a barbecue Tuesday, talks and an awards banquet Wednesday and bus tours Thursday, plus pre- and post-conference tours for private vehicles.

The four bus tours include: 1. From Casper, Oregon Trail/Natrona County road 319 past Avenue of Rocks, Willow Springs and Prospect Hill to Independence Rock and Devil's Gate; 2. Casper sites including Reshaw's Bridge, Red Buttes, Red Buttes battle site and Emigrant Gap, with afternoon activities at Fort Caspar or the National Historic Trails Interpretive Center; 3. Bozeman Trail and Fort Phil Kearny sites north of Casper; 4. Hembree grave (if accessible) and sites from there east to Casper. Pre-trek, limited to 10 vehicles, on the Seminole Cutoff. Post-trek to sites from Fort Laramie east to

Register Cliff and the Guernsey ruts. Jack and Pat Fletcher have expressed interest in leading a trek on the Cherokee Trail along the Colorado-Wyoming line. We could also make that available as a pre- or post-conference trek; both ends of it are far from Casper and it would probably require spending an extra night in Rock Springs.

We've gotten a quote of \$800/bus/day from a local bus company that has a mixed reputation. There may also be a separate option, supported by the City of Casper, available by the time of the convention. We've also drawn up a long list of possible speakers and will start contacting them once we have a better idea of our budget for the conference. We've also got a logo, attached to this email, and we've got a save-the-date rack card which we expect back from the printer this week. We should have them in time for inclusion in the Elko conference packets. PDFs are attached to this email.

For some years we've been tracking the likelihood that Evansville, a small town immediately east of Casper, would build a dirt road along the north side of the North Platte immediately opposite the town, ostensibly to give emergency vehicles better access to the town. The planned route intersected some long, beautiful swales on state and private land there immediately adjacent to the Wyoming State Veterans Cemetery. Some of these swales lead right up from where the trail crossed the river at Reshaw's bridge, heavily used in the 1850s.

Randy Brown some years ago discovered a diary entry describing the death and burial of a pioneer named Louise Lithgow, who was buried on a rise just "a few rods" north of the bridge in the summer of 1853. We had feared the road construction might disturb her remains. That did not happen, though the existence of the new road greatly increases the possibility of future property development or subdivision there.

In July of this year, however, Randy got in touch with a four-person rescue crew from Cheyenne. They handle **cadaver dogs** and they met us one morning near the site.

Three of the four dogs showed clear signs of the likelihood of human remains at two different spots north of the bridge. Randy marked the spots with his GPS. The fourth dog had to have hip surgery recently and was off his game. Wyoming State Archeologist Spencer Pelton tells us that's strong enough evidence that more investigation is in order. He hopes to find time this fall to drill into the two sites with an augur, and see if it would make sense to excavate. Who knows? Maybe we've found Louise Lithgow's grave. *Tom Rea*

TRAILS HEAD

On National Trails Day, we helped celebrate the **200th Anniversary of the Santa Fe Trail** near Baldwin City, KS (west of Gardner) with a dedication of a new walking trail around the Black Jack Ruts. Those deep wagon swales are adjacent to the Black Jack Battlefield where locals say the Civil War began June 2, 1856 when the abolitionist John Brown led a free-state militia in an attack on the camp of a pro-slavery militia encamped along the Santa Fe Trail. We also participated at OCTA headquarters in Independence with a **dedication of a bench remembering Gregory Franzwa**. Gregory was a founder of OCTA in 1982 and passed away in 2009. Trails Head member and past OCTA president **Ross Marshall** gave remarks.

We have a full bus planned for a September 3 tour: **Following William Becknell in September 1821: The Osage Trace/Original Santa Fe Trail**. It will be led by our trail historians **Craig Crease** and **Ross Marshall**. We will travel from Independence to Arrow Rock and return.

In August we held a joint **picnic meeting with**

Gateway Chapter at the Lone Elm campground. **Jackie Lewin**, president of Gateway Chapter, brought us greetings and summarized the many projects they are involved with. **Ross Marshall** traced the long history of Lone Elm from its use in the early 1820s when it was called Round Grove through heavy use that reduced its moniker to the single tree. **Travis Boley** gave an impressive overview and perspectives of OCTA activities and read a report from Preservation Officer **Pat Traffas** of an upcoming review of trail signage in Douglas County, KS. Lastly **Gary Hicks** talked about the many ways we partner in our lives and among our trail groups. In spite of the heat and humidity, we ended with a walk along Cedar Creek where the pioneers would have camped.

Trails Head Chapter again sponsored **OCTA's calendar contest** for first through fourth grade classes at the John Paul II school with the theme of "Wild Creatures Encountered by Indians & Emigrants." We were blessed with **five winners**. Calendars are available at Convention. *Lila Aamodt*

We planned on giving back...

The fun of finding history in real time is that it keeps the old stories going and a chance to remember the past. We travel the Interstate Highways and on occasion stop for a respite. Exit 71 on Interstate 5 in Oregon offers the chance to visit the Applegate Museum and see how many trails led to the Oregon Territory. On this given trip, the museum was closed, but they hope to reopen in healthier times. It's located just down from this Historical Covered Bridge and a heartwarming acknowledgement

to a grave for Martha Crowley – a young girl of about 14 who died about October 19, 1846. All of our groups and organizations value history and work to preserve it and mark it so others will be able to appreciate it are important to our society. We appreciate your efforts to help OCTA and our EmigrantTrailsWest.org group as we mark the trails for others to follow. We appreciate your support today and tomorrow through planned giving and conscious giving. Thank you. *Melisa Shaw, CFP®*



REMEMBRANCES



Curtis Allred Bench

Salt Lake City, UT
Our husband, father, grandfather and brother passed away unexpectedly on August 17, 2021. Curtis Allred Bench was born on November 17, 1952,

the son of Gordon and Verdon Bench in Los Angeles, California. Growing up, one of his favorite things to do was to read the dictionary. When friends would go to the beach to surf he'd take a book instead. He was definitely born with a "why" chromosome that lasted throughout his life. Curt served in the Alabama-Florida mission. This is where he began his LDS book collection. Curt worked for and later managed stores for Deseret Book and in 1984 he opened the rare book department there. In 1987, Curt opened his own store, Benchmark Books, which continues today and has become a gathering place for Mormons of all stripes. Curt envisioned a religion that included beliefs across the spectrum, a true "big tent" proponent.

Curt's wealth of knowledge and accomplishments are too numerous to count but he was passionate about words, books, limericks, humor and laughter, turquoise and especially people. He loved unconditionally and built bridges and offered his hand to any that struggled, with a listening ear and no judgment. We will miss him every time we look at a sunset, and miss his texts telling us to go look at the sky. Curt graduated from BYU, where he met and fell in love with Patricia Gaffney Bench. They married and completed their eternal family with four children: son, Christopher Bench (Wendi), daughters, Brittany

Poulton (George), Emily McLean (David), son, Landon Bench (Lex) and later came nine grandchildren with whom he was incredibly involved and devoted to: Rylie, Qhloi, Senator, Annapurna, Jasper, Eve, Poppy, Noah and Bliss. "Papa" will always be remembered for pushing them on the swing in the backyard, reading to and giving them an endless supply of books. They will miss coming through the door and having their Papa sneak up on them and giving them a big surprise. He encouraged his children to be educated and work hard. He often joked all of his children worked for him or at least were employed by him to help them earn their way through college.

Also survived by his brother Dennis G. Bench (Aileen) and his mother-in-law Betty Glad. Curt was a member of the Utah Westerners, Mormon History Association, Sunstone Education Foundation, John Whitmer Historical Association, Utah Historical Society (Honorary Life Member) as well as his beloved Friday lunch group, The Latitudinarians. He was preceded in death by his parents, his brothers, Ken and Al Bench and his father-in-law, Bruce D. Glad.



Taylor Ewald Kipp

Taylor Ewald Kipp born May 20, 1935 a long-time resident of Magna, Utah passed away June 13, 2021 in Vancouver, Washington at his daughter's home. Sailing, camping, motorcycle racing and restoring cars were among his many interests and talents. He

was preceded in death by his parents Ewald and Dawn Kipp, his sister Susan James and his son Taylor E. Kipp (Teko). He is survived by his brother Reif Kipp of Arizona and his daughters Stacey Kipp- Roberts (Dave) and André McLaren (Brett) both of Vancouver, Washington.

NEWS FROM THE PLAINS

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James E. Budde

James E. Budde, longtime OCTA Treasurer and advocate for OCTA endowment funds, passed away on Monday, July 12. He was 81.

Budde served as OCTA Treasurer from 1989 to 1998 and was instrumental

in establishing OCTA's initial endowment funds with the Greater Kansas City Community Foundation. He also served for many years on OCTA's Investment Advisory Committee, where he was a strong protector of the endowment funds.

Valued at just over \$400,000 in 1998, OCTA endowment funds today are valued at more than \$2 million, a tribute to Jim's vision and initiative.

Jim and his wife, Judy, were familiar faces at OCTA conventions for many years, until he was slowed by age. In addition to his wife, he is survived by daughters Jean Marie Dawson, Julie Ann Bolton and Jana Lynne Land and their husbands, along with three granddaughters.

He was born July 18, 1939, in Cincinnati, Ohio and was a U.S. Air Force veteran. Professionally he was a pharmacist.



Photo courtesy Larry Boerio



Will Bagley

1950- 2021 Will Bagley — a historian who wrote clear-eyed and detailed accounts of Utah's past, particularly in a comprehensive and controversial book about the Mountain Meadows Massacre — has died.

Bagley died Tuesday in Salt Lake City at age 71 after suffering a stroke, according to his brother, Pat Bagley, the Salt Lake Tribune's editorial cartoonist.

Will Bagley's best-known book was *Blood of the Prophets: Brigham Young and the Massacre at Mountain Meadows*, published in August 2002. The book updated Juanita Brooks' legendary 1950 volume, *The Mountain Meadows Massacre*, about the murders of 120 California-bound Arkansas settlers crossing southern Utah, killed by Mormon militia men Sept. 11, 1857.

Among the most incendiary points in the book is Bagley's argument that Young, then president and prophet of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, likely

orchestrated the slaughter from Salt Lake City.

Bagley didn't explicitly say Young ordered the attack. But he insisted that "claiming that Brigham Young had nothing to do with Mountain Meadows is akin to arguing that Abraham Lincoln had nothing to do with the Civil War."

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Thank You!

Thanks to the 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:

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Debora Champagne,	Julian & Diane Holt	Allen & Nancy Morrisette	Charles & Mary Weickert
Tony & Reighlyn	Robert Hovey on behalf of	Dick & Ruby Nelson	David & Wendy Welch
Virgel Clark	the Trails Head Chapter	Virginia Nelson	Nelson S. Weller
Stephen Clark	Mark Howe	Virginia O'Connell	Joseph Whitehorne
Don Clark	Lu Ann P. Hunter	A. Oscar Olson & Nate Olson	Dr F. Michael & Leslie Rae
& Nancy Henson-Clark	Patrick Hussey	Dr. Shannon E Perry	Williams
William B. Colvin	Jim Johnson	Jesse G. & Nancy Petersen	John & Susie Winner

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:

Blue Mountain Diagnostic Imaging

1100 Southgate, Suite 700, Pendleton, OR (541) 276-2431

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227-B East College St. Independence, MO (816) 836-0219

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1405 Center St., Marysville KS 66508 785-619-6110

Special Thanks to OCTA's Life Members

OCTA is grateful for the support of many Life Members whose contributions mean so much to the organization. Life memberships are available for \$1,000 and credit card payments can be made in installments. Life Members receive an Ezra Meeker Life Member pin, and a 15 percent discount in the OCTA Bookstore. Plus, all revenues from Life Memberships go directly to OCTA's Heritage Endowments, so your purchase will have a long-term impact on trails preservation. For more information about becoming a Life member, contact OCTA headquarters at (816) 252-2276. Current and recently deceased Life Members include:

Lila Aamodt	Phillip L. Foremaster	Janet Kanter	Stanley W. Paher
Ivan Baker	Mrs. Kay Forsythe	Raymond Kanter	M. Lethene Parks
Dr Thomas R. Bales	Kathy Colyer Franzwa (Deceased)	M. F. Kiber	Betty J. Pfaff
Jacqueline Ball	Amanda Gibbs	James King	Mrs. E. W. Puckett
Wayne G. Basler	Mrs. Billie Gray	Ormie Lamson	Carlyle Jones Raine
Nick F. Behrens	Jay Greene	Brian Larson	Donald & Dee Reinhold
Lee & Sandi Black	Randell & Mary Jane Guyer	Ross M. Leibold	Jack Root
Andrea Blair	Chris Hammond	William & Cynthia Leutzinger	Bill Rupp
Roger P. Blair, M.D.	Helen Hankins	Brenda Lozier	Fred Sawin
Camille Q. Bradford	Koichiro Harada	Al Lustig	Ben S. Scherbel
John & Nancy Briggs	Glenn & Carol Harrison	Lute Family Foundation	Warren Schmidgall
James (Deceased) & Judy Budde	Mark Headley	Dr. Eugene I. Majerowicz	Randolph W. Seed
Marvin Burke (Deceased)	Warren R. Higgins	Ross & Shirley Marshall	Donald L. Siebert
Dr. & Mrs. B. R. Cahill	William & Jan Hill	Bill & Diana Martin	Calli Smith
Cheryl Cardoza	Elaine & Eugene Hill	Helen Martin	Judith Space
Thomas Cardoza	Cheryl & Gilbert Hoffman	Carolyn & Gordon McGregor	Leslie Joan Steuben
Lisa Carle	Chuck Hornbuckle	Kendall McNabney (Deceased)	Michael Strodman
Kay, Milt & Rylene Coffman	Mark Howe	John & Jacque McVey	William (Billy) Symms
Laura Luack Cole	Thomas Hunt	Dan Miller	Kathryn Tanner
Mary Conrad	Idaho State Archives	Phil Miller	David & Sharon Taylor
James & Kathy Conway	Duane & Carolyn Iles	Margaret Morkowski	Kay Threlkeld
Dr. Vincent Correll	J. C. Isble	Candy & Steve Moulton	Frank & Mary Ann Tortorich
Laurie Davis	George H. Isted	Mary Mueller	Patricia & Levi Traffas
Douglas Co. Libraries:	Robert A. Iverson	Paul Murphy	William L. Trogdon
Shaun Boyd	Jan & Sets Iwashita	Joe Nardone (Deceased)	Dave & Karen Vixie
Susan B Doyle	Neal Johns (Deceased)	Dick & Ruby Nelson	Pennie Lynn Von Achen
Brian L Dukleth	Rollie & Paula Johnson	Dave & Donna Newberry	Wanosik Family
Keith Fessenden	Beatrice Kabler	James Nici	Sandra Wiechert
Jack & Pat K. A. Fletcher		Bob Noll	John & Susie Winner

Founding Members

When OCTA was founded in 1983, a group of men and women who believed in the mission and in the importance of trails preservation decided to join this brand new organization. Anyone who joined during that first year became a charter member, the rocks upon which OCTA was built. The last time we recognized them in these pages, the list had 136 names. Today's list is down to 55 names. If you see a charter member, thank them on behalf of OCTA.

Ruth Anderson	Marshall A. Fey	Lute Family Foundation	Randolph W. Seed
Todd & Betty Berens	Michael D. Gibson	Michael Luther	Art Siverling
Jo Ann Berkenbush	Chris Hammond	Anne Mallinson	John E. Stadler
Roger P. Blair, M.D.	Joanne Hammond	Sharon & Hal Manhart	Leona Stovall
Joyce P. Bolerjack (Deceased)	Norma Haner	Ross & Shirley Marshall	Fran Taplin
Randy Brown	Patrick A. Hearty	Mary Ellen Martin	Frank & Mary Ann Tortorich
Don & Vilma Buck	William & Jan Hill	Kendall McNabney (Deceased)	Ann M. Van Hoff
James (Deceased) & Judy Budde	Jim & Alma Holcomb	Steve Moore	Ron Volk
Jude A. Carino	Thomas Hunt	Mary Mueller	Pennie Lynn Von Achen
Robert Clark	James & Margaret Jenks	Mary Olch	Theodore F. Votow
Laurie Davis	Larry & Pat Jones	Oregon Trail Museum Assoc	Edgar & Caroline Weber
Dr. & Mrs. Ronald O. Downs	Milton A. Jones	Betty J. Pfaff	Sandra & Allen (Deceased)
Dorothy Duffin	Polly N. Kennison	Mrs. E. W. Puckett	Wiechert
	John & Terry Latschar	Raymond E. Schoch	Herman Zittel

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 Lee Black at

leeblack1@hotmail.com

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

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

Visit OCTA on the Internet

OCTA-trails.org

OCTA-Journals.org

Report OCTA
Volunteer Hours at
[octa-journals.org/
octa-volunteer](http://octa-journals.org/octa-volunteer)

Where Will Your Footprints Lead?

They don't have to disappear.

You can leave a legacy that will ensure that your footprints are never erased, while helping to protect emigrant trails from disappearing forever.



Consider joining

OCTA's Trails Legacy Society

Your gift to an OCTA Endowment fund through a bequest or estate gift will help guarantee our ability to preserve and protect the trails.

Visit octa-trails.org/trails-legacy-society

You can make sure that ours are not the last footprints left on the trail.

A Reminder for Ezra Meeker Life Members

If you are an Ezra Meeker Life Member of OCTA and a member of one or more regional chapters, your chapter dues renew on January 1 each year.

For your convenience, you can renew your chapter memberships online by visiting octa-trails.org/why-join-octa/ and following the appropriate links for regional chapters.

You can also call headquarters at (816) 252-2276 for more information.

If you are not an Ezra Meeker Life Member, you can join at that level at any time.

The cost is \$1,000, which can be spread over several regular payments.

Remember, funds from Meeker Life memberships go directly to OCTA Endowments, helping create a legacy of support for trails preservation and education.

Call headquarters to learn more.



OREGON-CALIFORNIA TRAILS ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 1019
Independence MO 64051

In this issue:

Elko 2021 – A special convention
2020-2021 OCTA Awards
Preservation Issues Overview
News from the Chapters



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.

318 W. Pacific • Independence, MO 64050 • www.FrontierTrailsMuseum.org