

NEWS FROM THE PLAINS

Newsletter of the Oregon-California Trails Association

The Missouri River in Saint Joseph, Missouri as viewed from a footpath near Riverfront Park

Spring 2023

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FROM THE PRESIDENT



At the end of January, I had the opportunity to attend the Southern Trails Symposium in Tombstone, Arizona. The symposium was held in historic Schieffelin Hall, built in 1881 and the largest standing adobe structure in the U.S. southwest. Attendance was excellent with people from states

as far away as Illinois and Arkansas. Presentations and tours were focused on the local Trails, especially the Mormon Battalion and the Butterfield Overland Trail. The latter was recently signed into law as a National Historic Trail.

Among the places we visited was Slaughter Ranch. This was an important resting place on the trail given the presence of water from natural springs. The ranch here was originally known

as San Bernadino ranch and it traversed what is now the U.S./Mexico border.

The improved attendance is attributable to several factors, such as the interesting location and the excellent program, but another contributor is

undoubtedly the promotion the event received from Facebook (FB), FB groups, YouTube, and Google ads. Social media marketing is a subject unto itself and a huge recent change in the way organizations market themselves and their brand. Thanks to the work that the marketing committee has done we now (as of Feb 20th) have 1,010 subscribers and more than 4,000 watched hours in the last 365 days. This qualifies us for monetization of our channel.

As a reminder, the YouTube channel is <https://www.youtube.com/@octatrails>, and the FB page is <https://www.facebook.com/OCTA1982/>

We will learn more about the effectiveness of these promotional capabilities as we move to the National Symposium in St. Joseph (March 30 – April 2nd) and the National Convention in Gering (July 25th – 29th). Both are being promoted on social media. Please plan to attend.

The good news on the social media front is offset by the first-quarter financials. The loss was greater than expected and unless it can be reversed, we will need to take



funds from the Heritage Foundation to balance the books. Fortunately, those endowment funds, while still off from their highs, have recovered some of the lost ground. You will find more information on our current position in the Treasurer's report within this

newsletter. One thing you can do, if not done already, is please donate to the year-end fund drive.

At the Board meeting in St Joseph, we will present information on our brand refresh project. A little over a year ago we, with external help, started to look at the way we present ourselves. The study concluded that our brand was getting 'old and tired'. We have an exciting, fascinating, and important story to tell but we were failing to communicate it. Additionally, our brand was not being applied consistently (and in some cases not at all) across all our media outlets. Through social media, we are now reaching a broader audience but there is still more we can do.

There is never a dull quarter when it comes to Preservation and it takes a lot of effort, in most cases, to make progress. An opportunity arose in this quarter near Hermiston Oregon. The Umatilla Army Depot has been closed for some years but is now in the process of being handed over to various local communities. There are two Oregon Trail cutoffs on the site and an opportunity to provide information boards and documents describing them is being actively worked on. Other projects can be found in the Preservation section of this Newsletter.

February is 'Hike the Hill' time and Matt Mallinson with Travis Boley traveled to Washington. Hike the Hill is a joint effort between the Partnership for the National Trails System and others, to bring together the trails communities to advance shared trail priorities. Matt and Travis were able to meet with congressional and federal agency leaders and discuss subjects such as trail funding, preservation, public lands management, and conservation.

On another note, I recently came across this homage to OCTA.

Sing to me, Muse, of the Oregon-California Trails Association, whose mission is to preserve the memory of the pioneers who dared to journey across the vast expanse of the west. Like the heroes of old, these pioneers set out on a perilous journey, facing hardship and adversity at every turn.

Through their valiant efforts, the Oregon California Trails Association seeks to keep alive the spirit of adventure and courage that motivated these pioneers. They seek to honor the memory of those who braved the unknown, forging a path across the untamed wilderness.

Like the gods of Olympus, the members of this association stand as guardians of history, preserving the legacy of those who came before. Their tireless efforts ensure that the stories of these pioneers will be passed down through the ages, inspiring generations yet to come.

So let us pay homage to the Oregon-California Trails Association, who in their quest to honor the brave pioneers of old, have themselves become heroes in their own right.

You probably guessed – this ode in the style of Homer (the Greek one) came from the Open AI language model, ChatGPT. It can process and analyze vast amounts of historical data and information from multiple sources. This could lead, ultimately to a better understanding of history. While we in OCTA have only just managed to come to grips with social media here come the foundation models of Artificial Intelligence. They can write, compose music, solve mathematical problems, write computer code, and do their own search in a fraction of the time we can do it. Be prepared!

John Briggs, President

Oregon-California Trails Association

Nominations Sought for OCTA National Board

Nominations are being sought through April 15, 2023 for election to OCTA's National Board of Directors. Directors serve for three-years and may serve no more than two terms.

Members of the Board are responsible for setting policies and priorities for the organization. They also elect the organization officers. Two Board positions will be filled at the Annual Meeting in July. In order to be a candidate all that is required is being an OCTA member in good standing, a short statement of qualifications, a photo and the endorsement of three members of OCTA.

Candidacy papers should be sent to the Nominating Committee care of Kathy Conway, OCTA Office Administrator. Requested information can be sent by email to kconway@indepmo.org or mailed to 524 S. Osage St., Independence, MO 64050. For additional information you may contact Nominating Committee member Roger Blair at rblair@oregontrail.net, Pat Traffas at traffasp@gmail.com or Lee Black at nobletr1857@gmail.com. Additional information may also be found in the Members area of the OCTA website.

FROM THE ASSOCIATION MANAGER



In my last column, I told you a lot about our YouTube Channel, our social media platforms, E-News, documentaries, and other things we have created to both keep you engaged and to help us find new supporters, members, and advocates. This time, I want to tell you about other things we have coming shortly.

Archaeology along the trails has long been a tool used to help better tell the story of our historic trails, but finding information in one central location is an impossibility at this time. However, long-time OCTA member Mary Conrad is also heavily involved in the Kansas City Archaeological Society and has collected reams of information about archaeological sites along the trails. She met with our webmaster Gina Sifers and me to start the process of fleshing out ideas for a new section about archaeology on our website.

Bob Hovey, another long-term OCTA member from Kansas City, made a donation shortly before his death that is being utilized to create this new website section on archaeology. A grant from the Partnership for the National Trails System enabled us to hire intern Laura Theel (a December 2022 graduate of Emporia State University in Kansas, where she earned a master's degree in library science), and she has busied herself with collecting more data and assembling it into a useful database. She will be working with Gina to get this new section launched later this year.

At the same time, Laura has spent the winter assembling an index for the Merrill Mattes collection. When Mattes donated his massive collection of correspondence, maps, research, photographs, and diaries back in the 1990s, the internet barely existed. Researchers had to make the trip to Independence to utilize his materials. But soon, we will launch another new website section featuring digitized versions of Mattes' collection with Laura's index serving as a guide to the collection. Mike Smith, chair of the Library and Collections Committee, will help Laura finalize everything before we get it added to our online offerings, but we expect to have this section launched later this summer.

An important milestone was also reached since the last issue of News From the Plains. Our YouTube channel became monetized once we reached 1,000 subscribers and 4,000 watch hours. That means OCTA will now get paid every single time an ad plays on our videos, creating an important new stream of income for the association. You can help us earn more passive income by subscribing to our channel, watching our videos, and sharing them with others. Encourage others to subscribe as well. It's free to do so, and will create even more revenue to help us better achieve our preservation mission and goals.

Finally, by the time you read this, OCTA will have debuted its latest documentary, *On the California Trail: Preserving Gravelly Ford*. The movie will make its debut as part of the Nevada Indian Tourism conference in Carson City on March 21, with another screening the following night at the Northeast Nevada Museum in Elko. We will wrap up the week with a final screening in Salt Lake City on either March 23 or 24. After that, we will also screen it at our Gering convention this summer, and we will of course attempt to work with local PBS stations to air it as well. Finally, it will be added to our Vimeo channel for download.

The movie showcases OCTA's efforts to preserve a seven mile section of trail about 30 miles west of Elko. Partnering with Nevada Gold Mines, an easement will ensure the long-term preservation of this beautiful and remote section of the California National Historic Trail. The movie features OCTA's National Preservation Officer John Winner, OCTA Vice President Steve Allison, Nevada Gold Mine's Biodiversity and Rangelands Manager Chris Jasmine, Leah Brady of the Shoshone Nation's Noowuh Knowledge Center, and American Mountain Man reenactors Larry and Pam Walker, who all share the history of this migration corridor and the work being done to preserve it for posterity. The documentary is, in a nutshell, a calling card describing the core mission of OCTA. We are excited to share it with you.

Staff, volunteers, and contractors continue to work diligently to both fulfill OCTA's core mission and to bring more value to your membership. We truly appreciate your support and will continue striving to remain America's greatest trail preservation organization.

Travis Boley, Association Manager

Spring Fundraising Committee Report

The past six months have been devoted to defining opportunities to enhance membership communication capabilities. OCTA desires to improve member relations beyond publications and infrequent gatherings. Many of our OCTA members live beyond defined routes used by our forefathers heading west and Chapters that meet on the trails. To achieve the desired improvements a new digital communication system is being launched. Once the systems complete Beta testing our committee believes you will be favorably impressed.

As everyone prepares for trail activities this year and trail preservation opportunities why not consider how you can help your Chapter and OCTA nationally achieve OCTA strategic plan objectives. Within OCTA membership there is a wealth of knowledge, professional experience and talent that could employed to help achieve important OCTA goals. One example would be to use your ability to share fascinating history with friends, civic groups and senior centers using selections from our new video library. This may well lead to new members and friendships. New members also may lead to greater

financial funding in support of OCTA objectives. Please consider how you might use your talent to advance the OCTA Mission. The following Committee areas could use your help: Archaeology, Collections/Library, Preservation, PR and Marketing and Education. More information about these Committees can be found on the OCTA website.

How do I find more information about OCTA service opportunities? Go to octa-trails.org and select the Membership link at the top of the page. There you will find, under the sub-heading Useful Information and Resources, the President's Letter and a little further down the page the link to **OCTA Leadership Manual, Strategic Plan & Organization Chart**. Both the *Leadership Manual*, containing all the Committee information, and a copy of the *Strategic Plan* are available for you review. Please consider using your expertise to help move OCTA forward. Your experience and expertise are a valuable asset to the organization. Thank you for considering how you can help.

*Lee Black, Fundraising Committee Chair
and OCTA Past President*

On behalf of the “Working Girls.”

Life has never been easy, and when you were born as a woman you were already relegated to the bottom half of society. Abigail Adams, wife of President John Adams, reminded her husband not to forget the women when they were setting up the United States of America. We gave black men the vote in 1870 and it was another 50 years before the 19th Amendment, and its two sentences: “The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex. Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.” So few words to say so much, and it took them so long to do it.

In the west women carried more power as a widow. States like Oregon allowed women full voting rights in the general election of 1912 and joined other Western states and territories in extending the vote to its female citizens providing crucial legitimacy to the woman suffrage movement nationally. I'm thankful

to my own grandmother Alma Shaw, born in 1893 for being among that first group of voting women who helped pave the path for us.



It breaks my heart to know the limits placed on women, and to know that your chances for making an income were so limited that prostitution became one of the few choices for high incomes. Those working girls had to overcome a lot of obstacles and they help lay the foundations we built upon. I prefer to call them “working girls” because they had many skills and talents, they employed to help us climb the ladder of success. We owe them gratitude and thanks that they paved the way so we can continue our journey for financial success and pay it forward by keeping their efforts relevant even today.

It's nice to see so many women involved in OCTA, and our efforts are recognized in the many achievements we bring to the Pioneer History. It's our job to pay it forward. Thank you, ladies! *Melissa Shaw, CFP®*

PRESERVATION



By John Winner

National Preservation Officer

OCTA's mission is to protect the **historic emigrant trails** legacy by promoting public awareness of the trails through research, education and **preservation activities**; by achieving organizational sustainability

and by partnering with others.

OCTA's Preservation Officers are currently working as a Consulting Party to two **score** of active projects that have potential impact to historic emigrant trails. Many continue to work through the mandatory review process where OCTA's concerns and recommendations are presented. Some success, some not; however, there would be little to no success without participation. Here are just a couple updates:

B2H Transmission Line: 300-mile Idaho Power project from Boardman, Oregon to Hemingway, Idaho. A 500kV Transmission Line crossing the Oregon National Historic Trail.

Dave Price and Dave Welch are continuing their review of Boardman to Hemingway (B2H) project documents. Last year, the State of Oregon Energy Facility Siting Council (EFSC) approved the project routing. The BLM is now in the process of determining impacts to the Oregon National Historic Trail using Section 106 guidelines. An independent assessment by Price and Welch identified seven locations where there is an indirect (visual) adverse impact. No sites were identified where the trail itself was disturbed. The culprit is the transmission line's large lattice towers.

Much work was completed in the past to alter the line's route and design to minimize impacts to high quality trail, but by OCTA's own assessment seven impacted locations remain. Further significant route alterations are not possible since EFSC has approved the current route. Section 106 requires a sequential process that starts with avoidance and, if that is not possible, then impacts are to be minimized. If impacts remain, then the next step is mitigation. We are still working to minimize impacts by tweaking tower locations and construction impacts.

Price and Welch are currently reviewing the "Visual Assessment of Historic Properties," a document required of Idaho Power and its contractors. Comments are due March 4. The next step will be detailed

negotiations on appropriate mitigation. The BLM's target is a project start in the Fall (2023), but there are many pieces that have to fall into place for this to happen.

R-Project: 225-mile Nebraska Public Power District (NPPD), 345kV that crosses the Oregon-California and Mormon National Historic Trails.

As previously reported in NFP, a lawsuit was filed when U.S. Fish and Wildlife (FWS) issued an Incidental Take Permit (ITP) authorizing the project to move forward. On June 17, 2020, a U.S. District Judge vacated the ITP and remanded the matter back to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) for further review to address the issues raised in the Judge's decision. In the meantime, the plaintiff's attorney (OCTA is one of the plaintiffs) filed with FWS, a Freedom of Information Act request. Reviewing FWS responses from the FOIA keeps the consulting party's busy trying to digest some of the thought process as FWS attempts to respond to the issues that the judge cited. FWS has filed a notice of intent to prepare a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) for the R-Project transmission line. NPPD recommends a complete revised [NHPA] Section 106 Programmatic Agreement. There still seems to be some confusion as to what endangered species should be added to the ITP. The NPS also agrees that the SEIS explore additional transmission line alternatives to avoid adverse impact to National Historic Trails. The FWS held two virtual public scoping meetings in December 2022 resulting in little change. There is no prediction where all of this is going.

Long Canyon Open Pit Mine / Gravelly Ford Conservation Easement and Virtual Tour: In the last issue of *News from the Plains* I detailed the events of how a conservation easement could come about from a mine project located 120 miles east. Briefly, little resulted regarding preservation at the Newmont Mining Company Long Canyon Open Pit Mine in the Goshute Valley in northeastern Nevada, mostly on BLM land. A few concessions were mitigated, but the real story lies in what transpired when the BLM insisted that there were no direct effect on cultural resources resulting from the mine, only indirect (visual) effects. Following that decision, BLM requested Consulting Parties submit indirect effect mitigation items. Several mitigation items were submitted by OCTA, including, but not limited to, conservation easements or similar protective provisions for trails and sites

on Newmont owned land. Specific to this were the pristine Class 1 trail segments on the California National Historic Trail leading to the Humboldt River and the Unknown Emigrant Graves at Gravelly Ford located on Newmont's Horseshoe Ranch, 120 miles west of the Long Canyon mine project. Also an item of mitigation was a Virtual Tour (video) from Interstate 80 to Gravelly Ford, telling the emigrant story and preserving the trail. Well, we're almost there. Nevada Gold Mine (NGM), the current owner of the Horseshoe Ranch, will enter into a Conservation Easement (CE) granting the development rights to Nevada Land Trust (NLT) a nonprofit conservation land trust, working to protect key land, water, wildlife, recreation, historic, scenic and agricultural resources in Nevada. NGM has prepared a Management Plan outlining how they will continue ranching operations adhering to the CE. NLT has prepared Baseline Reports as to how they will monitor and preserve the emigrant trail and sites. Permitted and prohibited uses are detailed within the Conservation Easement document.

The Virtual Tour (video), *Preserving Gravelly Ford*, sponsored by NGM and OCTA and produced by Knowledge Tree Films is scheduled to be complete in early March and will be premiered in Elko, Nevada at the Northeast Nevada Museum, March 22, 2023.

Epilogue: Preservation... keeping safe from harm

or destruction. A tall order with the ever increasing needs and wants of today. Where do we draw a "line in the sand" to protect and preserve historic emigrant trails and sites. In the past 7 years, OCTA has been a consulting party to nearly 80 projects that could have a potential impact on historic emigrant trails, either through direct effects, indirect effects or both. We've seen it all. Today, one of the more difficult preservation threats to work through is energy development. The need for more energy, more electricity. Times have changed, for years it was fossil fuels, nuclear and hydroelectric; today it's wind and solar. Thousands of acres of land are now devoted to wind and solar farms, but wait, producing power is just the beginning. It needs to be transported to where power is needed requiring thousands of miles of transmission lines. A 2019 analysis by global consulting group, Wood Mackenzie, found that reaching 100% renewable electricity would require adding 200,000 miles of high-voltage transmission lines, at a cost of \$700 billion¹.

In most instances there is no debate that the need for energy is valid. The challenge is: how do we meet this demand and try to salvage some of our part of history, to continue to tell the story and try to save remnants of the mid-nineteenth century overland travel. More to come...

¹ *The Sacramento Bee*, January 29, 2023

Publications

The new year has gotten off to a good start. Our editors have been kept very busy. The Overland Journal, under Bob Clark's watchful eye, has been providing us with some very interesting reading material. The recent Winter edition was the last one for Volume 40. For the committee, that signals it's time to start working on the selection of the Merrill J. Mattes Award and to review our past budget and prepare for next year's. Jay Lawrence and the News from the Plains has kept us informed of HQ/national's activities and those of our different chapters. It allows all of us to see what is happening along the trails. The reason why this edition came out a little later was that we wanted to include the reports and other news from the OCTA Board meeting in St. Joseph which was held later than usual. We should be back to normal by summer.

The Legacy of the Plains is the focus of the

museums "Doing Old a New Way" related to the Gering Convention's theme in this edition, and our next NftP issue will focus on the changes, recent & future, at Chimney Rock.

The Education Publications will be starting its work on the new student calendar for 2024 with the submissions due on April 15. The goal is to have it completed and printed in time for the Gering Convention. Working with Headquarters, we should have Reading, Writing, and Riding Along the Oregon-California Trail reprinted and available soon. There is still the need for additional members to help with all the educational publications and awards projects. Contact headquarters if you are interested in helping.

Please let us know how we are doing. We aim to please, but we need your feedback to do it. Thank You.

Bill Hill

From the Webmaster

The Marketing and PR committee is dedicated to expanding a comprehensive social media platform, Google Ads program, and YouTube videos to promote OCTA's core objectives, goals, and mission.

YouTube Results - January 2022 – February 2023

In the selected period, your channel got 50,351 views



The past 14-month period (1/1/22 - 2/23/23) was a dynamic time for efforts associated with OCTA Marketing to leverage the existing YouTube Channel (<https://www.youtube.com/@octatrails>) with a focus on added content and presentation. The Committee published consistent video offerings beginning in October 2022 with a new feature video every Tuesday and Friday.

Over 50 new weekly videos joined the previously released library resulting in a variety of material that viewers embraced. Beginning in late February 2023, the Channel surpassed the threshold for revenue monetization and OCTA will now begin generating a small amount of revenue from these publications.

The results of these efforts produced an increase of 634 new subscribers (note not all viewers are subscribers), a 269% increase in videos watched (50,400 views) and 310% increase in time watched (4,506 hours). Factors contributing to these impressive results included compelling subject content, dynamic presentations, a consistent publishing schedule, active marketing including press releases, internal communications, advertising, and the most effective method - promotion through **Facebook Groups**.

96 Facebook Groups comprising over **2.9 million** members were joined. 45 OCTA videos were promoted in **658** instances to an audience of 19 million potential viewers. This activity resulted in **41%** of our total views coming from these Facebook postings.

The OCTA YouTube Channel Page was updated with new artwork and reorganized to feature playlists, a weekly featured video, an upcoming events section, and a promotional video about OCTA.

Facebook & Instagram Results Comparison 2022 to 2021

Reach

Compare your reach from this period to the previous one.

Facebook Page reach ①

99,635 ↑ 94.5%

Instagram reach ①

5,372 ↑ 725.2%

Paid reach ①

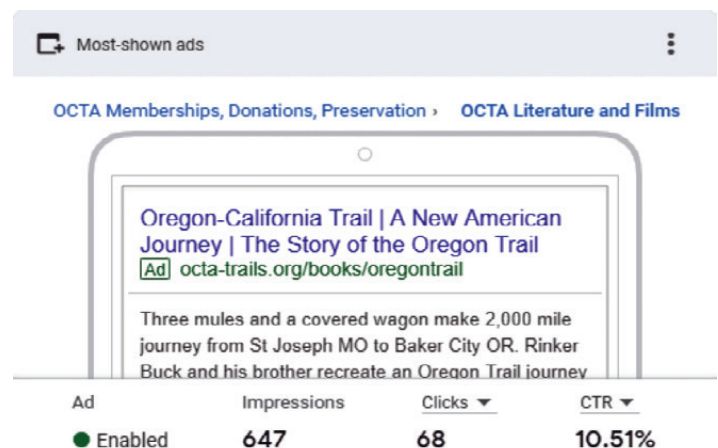
122,561 ↑ 459.9%

Thanks to a campaign of aggressive exploitation of modern social media, OCTA reached a record number of people/contacts this past year, is on a growth curve, is gaining momentum, and is seeing exciting, positive results. Facebook efforts with the help of the dedicated marketing/pr team, volunteers, and interns have helped more people learn about OCTA on the platform than ever before in OCTA modern history. Through social media we have made great strides.

In 2022 on Facebook OCTA reached 90,212 people (the number of people who saw an OCTA post at least once) with a 76.1% increase on the prior year. Instagram posts reached 5,344 people with a 720.9% increase from the prior year. Instagram increase is due to an uptick in posting video content and rich imagery to encourage young people to visit the OCTA YouTube channel videos series.

We are happy to report that we ran two video ads on Facebook/Instagram that reached 114,719 people. The committee is dedicated to using a portion of the marketing budget to excel these advertising efforts to reach more people to generate greater awareness of OCTA's events, mission, and goals.

Google Ads Results



One of the most-shown ads in 2022 on Google search and partner sites

Google Ads gives OCTA inkind advertising to run ads on Google search and partner sites. We promote all of the segments of OCTA, including, preservation causes, westward migration history, store products, genealogy,

media, events, donations and new membership calls to action. All of the ads lead readers to various pages of octa-trails.org website to learn more about each of the segments. In 2022 OCTA is running 35 ads with results reigning in at just shy of 5,000 clicks and over 81,000 impressions (people who viewed the ads and some people who viewed the ads more than once). See below the meanings of the report results:

- Clicks: When someone clicks on an OCTA ad it will lead them to specific pages of the octa-trails.org website designated within the ad.

Clicks ▾	Impressions ▾	Avg. CPC	Cost
4.99K	81.2K	\$2.60	\$12.9K

- Impressions: An impression is counted each time an ad is served and viewed. Impressions help one understand how often an ad is being seen.
- Avg. CPC/Cost: Google donates the cost per click (Avg. CPC) for the ads through the Google Ads Non-Profit Grant.

Octa-trails.org Website Results

Younger age group website visitors increased significantly in 2022 in comparison to 2021. OCTA has doubled its website growth since 2020. In 2022 octa-trails.org received 121,316 website visitors in comparison to 2020 when the site received 60,989 visitors. Other notable mentions:

- 33.9% increase in visitors to the website compared to 2021.
- 34.5% increase in new visitors to the website compared to 2021.

Archaeology Website Segment Launch for octa-trails.org

Gina Sifers, Chairperson, and owner of Bella Media Services is thrilled to announce that the archaeology segment of the website will be ready to launch in March 2023. Kansas will be the first state to be available on the site providing rich archaeology resources for members to research and enjoy. This is only the beginning of many states resources that will be added over the course of the next year and ongoing. OCTA intern Laura Theel has helped immensely by researching and gathering documents and imagery from various sources over the last several months. She also set up a new database to store and share the information called Zotero.org. Association Manager Travis Boley has also helped direct the project.

New OCTA Brand Guide and Logo Proposal

The brand refresh project, which includes a new Brand Guide and logo has been approved by the Marketing Committee and will now be presented to the Board in St. Joseph for their consideration.

OCTA's online presence has expanded profoundly. We are excited about what we have accomplished as a committee in 2022 and are confident that our efforts will continue to produce positive results that lead to substantial growth in 2023 and onward. We thank all our members, partners, subscribers, followers for all your support.

Gina Sifers, OCTA Marketing/PR Chair



Pioneers Crossing the Plains of Nebraska
C. C. A. Christensen, 1912. Brigham Young University Museum of Art

Welcome to Landmark Country

By Bill Hill, Gering Convention Committee

The Gering Convention Committee members look forward to July when they will be able to welcome OCTA travelers and attendees to the greater Gering-Scotts Bluff area, also known as the Landmark Country.

About 175 years ago emigrants also looked forward to arriving in this area. After traveling along the Platte River up its broad, flat valley for hundreds of miles the emigrants noticed a change in the geography. Since near Grand Island and Fort Kearny, all the emigrants from the varied jumping-off sites were now funneled into the route along the Platte River. They were now in the heart of the Great Plains, the relatively flat grassland where the travel was generally easy, along established trails on both sides of the Platte. They had plenty of water, good roads, and good feed. However, as they continued west, they approached and passed the forks of the Platte, changes were noticed. The climate became drier. Larger hills and unique formations came into view and soon lined the trail. The hills made travel more difficult and good clean, fresh water and sufficient fuel and feed were harder to find. They were about to enter the present-day panhandle of Nebraska. Emigrants recorded their observations of these changes, and many sketched the unique formations which lined their route in their diaries, most of which were in view to the emigrants on both sides of the Platte River. Today, this area is also known as Landmark Country.

Attendees to the July Gering convention will get a chance to see this area and many of these landmarks up close. Some of our members may not be able to attend, but the following photos and information will allow them to see the many landmarks they will miss.

O'Fallon's Bluff – One of the first landmarks to be seen and encountered is shown here. West of present-day Hershey, the hills and bluff first appeared as a low

rise barely noticeable in the distance west on the south side of the river. As the emigrants approached the hills, the Platte cut closer, and then, dangerously closer to the cliffs. Most emigrants chose to turn away from the river up the hills for about two miles. This photo shows the parallel swales left by the wagons as they climbed up the hill. They are part of the eastbound interpretive rest stop on I-80 south of Sutherland. One can walk up part of the hill as the emigrants did. Ruts on the north side trail are visible and marked about four miles north of Sutherland on the right after crossing the North Platte River.



California Hill – Continuing westward, one of the main river crossings used by the emigrants later became known as the Lower California Crossing. It is four miles west of Brule. Here the trail forded the South Platte and then climbed up the hills to cut northwest to cross the plateau to the North Platte River. This photo shows the part of the swales and a cut on "California Hill" as they made a long and somewhat gentle 1 ½ mile climb to the plateau. On highway US 30 there is a highway interpretive sign and small pull-off at its intersection with the farm section line road. One half a mile up that road there is another small pull-off on the left near where the trail crossed the road. The trail is accessible from that pull-off.

Ash Hollow – After successfully crossing the flat, treeless and waterless plateau, the emigrants were eager to get to the North Platte River. Here is the view from the crest of windlass Hill where the trail dropped down into Ash Hollow. Three miles farther was a popular camping area with a nice spring, wood and grass where the trail turned northwest to follow the North Platte River. Today some of the swales down the hill have been washed deeper. The line of cedar trees from the left side down to the center have grown up





during the last fifty years in one of those deeply worn swales. The hike to the crest is worth it. At the mouth of the hollow next to the trail and modern highway 26 is the Ash Hollow cemetery. It is the 1849 final resting place of emigrant, Rachel Pattison, the first known recorded and identified burial there.



High Bluffs & (Ancient) Bluffs Ruins – Those emigrants following the trail on the north side of the river saw these two formations shown here which can be seen along Hwy 26. North side emigrants had frequently camped opposite Ash Hollow. During the next two days of travel, they passed “High Bluff” and later (Ancient) Bluffs Ruins. These formations were especially important to the Mormons who primarily travelled on the north side. The “Ruins” site is four miles east of Broadwater.

Courthouse and Jail Rock – This formation lured many an emigrant away from the trail. Most were surprised about how far away it really was from the trail. Depending on where the emigrant left the main trail, the distance was at least 4 ½ miles to get to the



site, and then they had to get back to camp or catch up to their wagon which may have continued on. This view is similar to one drawn by an emigrant/artist who made the side trip. Today there is a narrow road off Hwy 88 out of Bridgeport that leads past Jail Rock to the grassy area in front of Courthouse.



Chimney Rock – Chimney Rock is the most famous and recorded landmark on the trail. The first recorded use of the name “Chimney” was in Joshus Pilcher’s report in 1827. At its closest, it was less than two miles from the main trail. Emigrants were drawn to it like bees to honey. One of the first depictions of it was by Alfred J. Miller, painting it in 1837. While it has lost some of its height, today it is still impressive. The Chimney Rock National Historic Site has an excellent visitor center and has recently expanded its acreage and plans to expand its hiking and viewing area.

The Scotts Bluffs – Before only the separate formation on the right became known as Scotts Bluff, the whole larger area was referred to as Scotts Bluffs by the early emigrants and travelers. To the earlier



trappers and traders, it was “the Bluffs.” Travelers heading west first saw Scotts Bluffs from the east of Chimney Rock. It is about twenty miles west of Chimney Rock. For the earlier trappers, traders, emigrants, and military, the badlands surrounding the large right bluff compelled them to move away south from the river to the left of the center formation, but fortunately, there were springs in the distant hills and bluffs which were welcomed.



Tower Rock /Dome Rock – This singular formation to the left of center was off to the right, north of the pre-1851 trail. This was the view seen by the early Oregon and California bound emigrants and gold seekers as they entered the broad valley going up to “Robidoux Pass.” The valley was noted for its varied, massive, and romantic formations. The photo was just off the trail’s location as it approached and crossed highway 71. After 1851, the majority of the emigrants took the new route cut through the badlands through Mitchell Pass. Dome Rock was then to the south of the main trail as it headed west into Mitchell Pass.



Robidoux Pass – The early trail was headed for the low point or pass in the saddle to the right of center. Nearby were springs and, also, for a few years, the sites of Robidoux’s trading posts. This is first actual view of the pass, still eight miles away, that the emigrants had after traveling up the valley. Robidoux’s first post was about ½ mile north of the trail, about 1 ½ mile before the pass in amongst the trees. This was the post visited by some of the 49’ers.

Today the trail swales are easily seen for more than a mile on both sides of the pass off Robidoux Pass Road.



Robidoux’s second trading post site – This butte marked the location of the site of Robidoux’s second Trading Post of c. 1850-2. It had been constructed in front of the butte and stood at the rear of the large grassy area in the foreground back in front of the trees that have grown up in the ravine. This post was actually about two miles off the trail in a neighboring more sheltered canyon, today called Carter Canyon. A partial reconstruction of the post is located in Gering, north of the Five Rocks Amphitheater parking area.



Eagle Rock & Mitchell Pass – This is the famous Mitchell Pass with the Eagle Rock portion facing the trail in Scotts Bluff National Monument. In front of it where the trail enters the remains of the rugged trail portion is the fine Scotts Bluff Visitor Center

and museum. Also shown is the view looking back east towards Dome Rock. The trail is about to make a hairpin turn up the hill after making its way through the remnants of the worn-down rugged portion. The hike along the trail through that section up to an emigrant camping area is worth the experience.

Laramie Peak – From Robidoux Pass the early emigrants got their first view of Laramie Peak and the faint Black Hills. It is the small dark low triangular



rise in the center on the horizon. It became the dominant guidepost for the next few weeks as the emigrants and the trail moved west,



then north, and until it turned west again near present-day Douglas, WY. It followed the general route of the North Platte River. Shown here south of Douglas

Fort Laramie – While not a geographical landmark, the site of three successive forts, William, John, and finally, Laramie, marked the end of the first third of the journey. It was a major recruiting place for all types of travelers - traders, trappers, missionaries, emigrants, freighters, and the military which purchased Fort John in 1849 and rapidly expanded it. This is the restored Old Bedlam, the commanding officer's residence at Fort Laramie National Historic Site. There is much to see here.



A new Fort John was built near Scotts Bluff and competed with Robidoux's trading posts.

Register Cliff – After leaving Fort Laramie the trail's main routes stayed on the high ground above the river until near present day Guernsey, WY where some of the trails dropped down to the river. However, they were shortly forced to turn away

again. They camped in the river bottom along the river and carved their names on the cliffs along the river. This is part of the Register Cliff State Historic Site.



The sagebrush in the photo has grown up in two parallel trail swales heading along the river into the camping area.

Deep Rut Hill (Guernsey Ruts) – This is where the trail was forced away from the river west of the camping area. Here the wheels of thousands of wagons cut deep scars into the limestone hills and as they moved away from the river and made their way into the Black Hills. Today it is possible to climb those hills and follow the ruts for a short distance in the Oregon Trail Ruts State Historic Site.

To its west is the marked grave of another 49'er, Lucinda Rollins. Nearby, in the restricted property of the National Guard, is Warm Springs, another well-known camping area.

We hope you enjoyed a preview to what could be seen on your way to, from or during the Gering Convention in Landmark Country. Be sure to obtain a copy of the NPS Auto Tour Guides for Nebraska and Wyoming for even more sites and directions. Also, please read the article about Legacy of the Plains Museum, not a landmark, but a great place in Gering to visit and learn more about the area.



Convention registration materials should now be available. Please be sure to register as early as possible, especially for those who want to go on the pre-convention and bus tours. Limited space is available. As you will read, the topics and speakers are varied and interesting. Also, if you are an author and wish to participate in Author's Night – Tuesday, July 25th, please be sure to note that. It would also be appreciated if you would contact Bill Hill and tell him you want to be there. hillhousew@aol.com or 631-742-9265.

Meet Our Members

This edition we are introducing three new members from different part of the country. All have had different experiences with the West and have only recently heard of OCTA. The four are Michele Ament from Pennsylvania. Susan Meyers from South Carolina, and Carol Gilson from Indiana.

Our first new member is **Michele Ament** from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Michele's interest in the West and the trails is really new. Last summer Michele and her husband made a cross-country trip out to Driggs, Idaho. They took a slightly different route back to Pittsburg that included going to Denver, Colorado, and then east through Kansas. She noted that they had been warned not to rely solely of GPS, but to get real paper maps. The maps would show the bigger picture, have other information, and that the GPS was not always available or reliable in some



places. As they were traveling and using the maps, they noticed that some of the other information on the maps were the Pony Express, Oregon and some other trails marked on the maps. They noted that there were also signs along parts of the roads that indicated trail crossings and other historical trail markers. They were surprised to see that the trails were marked both on the maps and in some places on the road. As She put it, "Who knew that the ruts from the trails still existed one hundred years later?" Their trip sparked an interest, and Rinker Buck's book, *The Oregon Trail* became a new purchase. It compounded her interest and also introduced them to the Oregon-California Trails Association. Membership in OCTA followed.

There are no family ancestors that went west over the trails that drew them to OCTA. It was the trip that sparked the interest. She has since realized the importance of the trails in the history of the nation and desired to know more about the trails. Since this is really a new interest, she finds it hard to pick a favorite but hopes to find out more about all the trails.

She and her husband plan to travel more and do more exploring. In the past, like many of us, they tended to stick to the major highways, but now they understand the value of taking some of the smaller two-lane highways and roads. Many of us had to go through that same process. I hope that they will soon come to see the value of the country dirt roads and, perhaps, even some "four-wheeling." They could even become one of the "Rut Nuts!" Michele's final comments reflect the same thoughts that most of us have, "I hope to get a better understanding of the trails and also hope that my membership will help preserve the trail. I am so impressed with the work that OCTA does and think it's important to preserve the history of the trails."

Our next member is **Susan Meyer**. She first learned of it on a trip west in September of 2022 noting, "I had no idea such an organization existed, because I couldn't imagine that there were others out there like me with a keen interest in the Oregon Trail. I don't remember where I picked up an OCTA brochure, but the photo on the front, saying "Save the Trail" caught my eye. Upon my return home, I sent in my membership form and joined!"

She has always been fascinated by history, especially the everyday lives of people and how they survived or thrived. "The Oregon Trail, the history of covered wagons moving west, the families that made this monumental decision, it's all intriguing to me. I have a particular interest in hearing the stories of women and their experiences on trails west. Though



many went west as willing partners with their spouses, I believe that many went because of their husband's desire to set out to a new land. For women, I think, the hardships were

much greater than for men. Women's stories are filled with missing their families in the east. On the trail, they had the responsibility to feed everyone, keep them healthy, watch the children, and most extreme, give birth. Hearing the women's voices from the trail is pure inspiration from true American heroes."

She has seen very little of the trail, noting that "I do not live anywhere near it! My husband and I visited the National Trails West Museum in Casper, what a great museum! One of the docents there was incredibly helpful and gave us directions to see trail ruts. I saw my first trail ruts in September at Guernsey, and it was a dream come true. We followed the Platte River, went to Register Cliff, and climbed Independence Rock. There is so much more to the trail than what I have yet been able to experience. I'm looking forward to learning more from being a member of OCTA."

"When we were at Independence Rock, there were several Airstream trailers with signs in their windows that said, 'Oregon or Bust,' or 'See America Slowly.' Having read and done a book review several years ago of Rinker Buck's Oregon Trail, their signs resonated with me. We chatted with one of their group and (learned) they were an Airstream club, all on a long caravan from Missouri to Oregon, following the trail. I said to my husband, "See, I'm not the only Oregon Trail nut out here!" (Now they have joined a bunch of them.)

"South Carolina is nowhere near any trail west, so when I'm not indulging my interest in the Oregon Trail, I am busy enjoying the beauty and nature of the coast. I am a certified Low Country Master Naturalist, with a special interest in birds. I love being outdoors, playing tennis, and volunteering in our community. I spent many years as a small-town librarian in the Finger Lakes area of New York, and love that I can read, then get outside without having to think about the snow!"

She is currently reading *Brave Hearted, The Women of the American West*, by Katie Hickman and highly recommends it.

She sums it up with, "I hope I can learn from people involved in OCTA, and that in some way, I can give back to help "save the trail." The pioneer migration west is an important part of the American story, and I want to preserve and share it. When I mention to friends that we saw trail ruts from covered wagons, most think I'm kidding. Most can't imagine that they are still visible today. I'll be happy to be a part of keeping the story of so many brave journeys alive."

Our third member is **Caroline Gilson**. Caroline Gilson, her husband Jim, a retired archivist and Boz, their teenage son, live in Terre Haute, Indiana. She is



the science librarian at DePauw University in Greencastle, Indiana. She has worked at DePauw for 22 years.

She learned about OCTA when searching for information on the Overland Trails. She is new to the entire subject of westward migration and the trails. Like any good

researcher she knew the value of following footnotes and bibliographies. From the entries she discovered the website for The Merrill J. Mattes Research Library, and that led her to the Overland Journal. Access to this publication led to her joining OCTA. She's been a member for over six months and has enjoyed reading about activities and members in the regional chapters in the "News from the Plains." She decided to delve in further and joined the Trails Head Chapter.

Her interest in the trails stems from the desire to learn more about her ancestors. Her great-great grandfather, John Ernest Heinen (her mother's maternal grandfather) traveled the Overland Trail in 1864. She inherited his diary of this trip; he wrote about his route from May-September of 1864. John Heinen was born in Germany and settled in northern Illinois for a time. She thinks he traveled to California twice to work at a ranch in the San Francisco area. He became a US citizen in 1860 and married her great-grandmother in Forreston, Illinois in 1868. They moved to Riley County Kansas in 1873. He died in Green, Kansas in 1925.

The 1864 Heinen Diary offers specific travel information: including distance traveled that day; geographical points; like rivers, towns, forts; as well as weather, water and terrain conditions. There are also specific persons mentioned, the Rev. Jonathan Blanchard for example, that have published diaries or letters of travel accounts on the same route at the same time as Heinen. The diary is an exciting new primary source to add to the historical narrative of the Overland Trails, and she is actively working on a research proposal for the summer of 2023 to begin scanning, transcribing and annotating the diary. She said "I am excited to share my ongoing work with the OCTA membership, perhaps in the form of a presentation or publication." (Our future convention planners should keep this in mind.)

While she has not traveled over the trails yet, coupled with her research, this is something she and her family are looking forward to doing in the future. OCTA is just the organization to help her.

When replying to the question about her future plans, she answered, "I am planning to retire from DePauw University in December of 2024. After that, I'm hoping to continue my work on the Heinen Diary project. (I also have a diary from his wife, my great-grandmother, from 1916, the year she turned 70. The family lived in Green, Kansas at that time and I'd also like to transcribe that diary.) My late mother was a proficient genealogist and I've inherited her work

as well as documents and photographs. I'm slowly working through her work and continuing to research. I also enjoy cooking and working in our yard and birdwatching."

My mother's family's ancestors also moved to Riley County, Kansas, but only a few miles outside of Manhattan, later in the 1870s. I look forward to reading about Caroline's family's early experiences in the same general time and place. If any of our other present members read something that hits home, be sure to look for our new members or contact them and also welcome them. More about our other new members will be in our summer edition. *Bill Hill*

Legacy of the Plains Museum, Gering, Nebraska

One of the major sites in the Gering/Scottsbluff area is the Legacy of the Plains Museum. The museum was formed in 2013 when two fine local museums, the Farm and Ranch Museum and the North Platte Valley Museum combined as the Legacy of the Plains Museum. Since then, it has continued to expand and is one of the major tourist attractions in the area. This July, it is looking forward to welcoming members of the Oregon-California Trails Association and participating in its convention.

The High Plains and the North Platte Valley have a special legacy and a unique place in American history. The private, nonprofit Legacy of the Plains Museum celebrates the people who made that history. Located on the Oregon Trail, Legacy of the Plains Museum features an impressive collection of pioneer and early community artifacts, antique tractors and farm implements, an 80-acre working farm, historic farmstead structures, and striking views of Scotts Bluff National Monument.

The Platte River Road – The North Platte River basin has been a superhighway of travel for thousands of years. Visitors can step back in time and follow the

footsteps of our earliest inhabitants of the area, the Paleo-Indians, fur trappers and traders, emigrants, and many others. Located on the Oregon/California Trails, our museum provides a look into the lives of the people that have travelled through our area. The museum has a wide variety of exciting exhibits about: bull boats, trapping, Paleo-Indians, Paul and Helen Henderson, wagons, Native Americans with arrowheads and tools from all over the country, a Teepee with the Lakota origin story playing in it, and an amazing artifact collection. A great stop for any trail enthusiast.



A Legacy Tied to the Land – Our legacy is tied to the land. Hunting, gathering, ranching, and farming have shaped the people that have called this area home. The Legacy of the Plains has one of the largest agricultural equipment collections in the area, which feature hand, horse, and tractor drawn equipment. Our exhibits showcase livestock/ranching history of the area, both irrigated and dryland farming practices, and features the wide variety of crops grown in the region including: wheat, alfalfa, dry beans, potatoes, corn, sugar beets, and others. On the third full weekend in September, the Museum hosts its Annual Harvest



Festival which showcases this heritage. A crop is highlighted and live demonstrations are available using a wide variety of equipment.



Those who stayed – Early American Settlement is a major focus of the museum and can be seen throughout our campus. Our exhibit hall consists of exhibits that focus on industries, home life, and art, and our interactive features help bring the past alive for our visitors. Our Wiedeman Farmstead provides our visitors with a view into the lives of people in the 1930's to 1950's. The barn, workshop, granary, windmill, and the sounds of farm animals add to the experience. The Gentry Cabin, including an outhouse, highlights life in the 1890's. Both of these houses were moved to the museum, and during our festivals, visitors can talk to descendants of the people who built them.

The People – The Legacy of the Plains Museum tells the stories of the diverse peoples that have called the high plains home. We feature Native American, Germans from Russia, Japanese, Hispanic, Greek, and many others that have shaped our community into what it has become today. Our Japanese Hall, a communal center built in 1929, will be opened in early 2024 and will tell the stories of the trials and triumphs of the Japanese Community.

Collections – The museum is the holder of various specific collections, artifacts, rare books, documents, and visual records relating to the history of the Panhandle and Nebraska's long history. They include the different periods of emigration, ranching, homesteading, farming, irrigation, and local businesses and industry. For Oregon Trail enthusiast, it holds the collections of one of the trail's well-known researchers and historians, Paul and Helen Henderson. Included in the collection are hundreds of diaries, maps, notes, and photos made during their more than fifty years of research. (Appointment required.)

The Legacy of the Plains Museum is open daily, closed during winter holidays, and has several events and activities going on throughout the year, which makes the Museum truly a must stop for everyone. Be sure to drop in and spend a few hours.

Legacy of the Plains Museum
2930 Old Oregon Trail
Gering NE 69341
308.436.1989
info@legacyoftheplains.org
woftheplains.org



News from the Chapters

COLORADO-CHEROKEE

Upcoming Zoom events:

• April 15

Jeff Broome will speak about *The Sand Creek Massacre: The Betrayal that Changed Cheyenne and Arapaho People Forever*, the new exhibit at History Colorado. The 1864 massacre, which became known as the deadliest day in Colorado history, was the subject of a prior exhibit at History Colorado in 2012. However, it was closed several months later after the museum received criticism for its not having consulted with members of the tribes. The new exhibit is presented from the perspective of the tribes. Jeff Broome, an Indian war historian and author who is a member of OCTA and the Colorado chapter, led a tour of the exhibit for the chapter in February. In this Zoom event Jeff will discuss his reaction to the exhibit and his view of controversies that remain in the interpretation of the massacre.

• May 13

Joint event with the Northwest Chapter
Jerry Eichhorst, President of the Idaho Chapter, will give a presentation on Cadaver dogs, how they are trained and how the Idaho chapter has used them to verify human burials along the emigrant trails across the state.

Mapping Committee update – Ethan Gannett, Chair

The Cherokee Trail Mapping team in northern Colorado has completed its report to the National Park Service for the southern part of Roberts Ranch in Larimer County. The results were described in the chapter Zoom event on January 14. Besides multiple spurs of the Cherokee/Overland trails in this area, the team identified the original location of Dutch George's Cabin and its potential influence on some of the spurs passing in front of this original location. This information has garnered much interest in the local historical community, with presentations given to Roberts Ranch Preservation Trust Board, Historic Larimer County, and the Northern Colorado Chapter of the Colorado Archaeological Society (NCC-CAS).

A trail signage project is underway for Roberts Ranch and discussion is ongoing for a potential cabin signage project as well. The team is now focused on the northern part of Roberts Ranch, mapping Cherokee/Overland trail passages and the convergence at the Cherokee Station along with many notable trail artifacts like "Double Team Hill." "The Devil's Washboard" and several period foundation remains which will undergo an archeological dig by NCC-CAS this summer. The team has also been granted temporary access by the State Land Board for adjoining property to Roberts Ranch which will be explored this year. *Camille Bradford*

NORTHWEST

We continued with our ZOOM meetings in January and February in this new year of 2023. January 14th featured Frank Tortorich speaking about his "favorite rascal" John Sutter. We drew in about 28 attendees, and they enjoyed the presentation. On February 11th our member Sherrill Beck gave a presentation on members of her family- the Clarks- who came by way of the FREE EMIGRANT ROAD. This road was new at the time and the emigrants had to clear the way for their wagons. They left from the Bend area and went over the Cascades and down into the area around present-day Eugene. There were not very many people living in that part of Oregon at that time. The Train ran into trouble in the mountains and people from the valley

sent supplies up to them and then offered the travelers shelter in their cabins. The Clarks settled on a fork of the Willamette.

Members of the Jedediah Smith Society presented their plans for a trip up the Oregon Coast in April. The auto tour will leave from Crescent City and take several days to travel to the mouth of the Umpqua River. There are a number of markers along that route that describe the happenings when the Fur trappers met the native people along the coast. People are invited to come for one day or more to hear about the history of this trek.

We will be meeting in person on March 18th at the End of the Trail Interpretive Center in Oregon City.

Sallie Riehl

SOUTHERN TRAILS

The Southern Trails Chapter has been busy. The Butterfield Trail became a National Historic Trail and was signed into law by President Joe Biden. We had supported the bill sponsored by Senator John Boozman of Arkansas. OCTA and Southern Trails Chapter had encouraged our members to help get this exciting legislation passed. Our members are working with the National Parks Service to help them get the interpretive markers right along the trail. It's an exciting time for us all to pull together across the many states that made up the Butterfield's Overland Mail Company.

We sponsored a Trail Gathering in Tombstone, Arizona the end of January 2023. We had nearly 100 people register for the three-day event. We met in the historic Schieffelin Hall for a variety of speakers and then enjoyed several outings to various historic sites and trails. The drive out to John Slaughter's San Bernardino Ranch gave us a chance to be right along the border of Mexico. We enjoyed a nice picnic lunch on the Ranch, and were able to tour the many

buildings on the grounds. We continued our Road Rally out to Cottonwood Canyon and the historic marker noting the Mormon Battalion efforts through that area in 1846. We had many good speakers and a chance to meet the authors of many books that were available too.

We held our chapter elections and confirmed our new Board of Directors for 2023 with 11 directors. We hope to inspire more members to take on roles in our chapter. We meet by Zoom once a month for our board meetings. Email Chrstrains4449@gmail.com if you would like to become more active with us.

We have added new friends and members from Oklahoma and Arkansas to our chapter and hope to continue to expand the five regions that make up the Southern Trail Chapter. We are trying to get a Newsletter started for the chapter and keep our website www.Southern-Trails.org more up to date.

We anticipate a March 2024 meeting in El Paso, TX as our next symposium.

Melissa Shaw reporting for Mark Howe

CROSSROADS

It's been a long and snowy and cold winter in Northern Utah. And, as of today (February 22), it doesn't appear to be over yet. As we sit here we are experiencing another record snowfall. Hopefully, better days are ahead.

While at this time of year in the past we have had numerous field trips to report, this year we are just starting our membership meetings. On February 23 a membership meeting is planned at the Fort Douglas Museum, hosted by Matt Ivory and Steve Allison. We hope for a good turnout.

On other matters, we are saddened by the passing of Vern Gorzitze, who died at age 92 in December. Anyone who has been in OCTA/Crossroads for the last 25 years should have been acquainted with Vern. Vern and his wife, Ilene, who passed away a couple of years ago, were both stalwart, hardworking members. We all remember the accomplishments of these two people who were both very active in OCTA on both the national as well as the chapter levels.

He was chapter president. He served as the chair of the 2005 Salt Lake City OCTA convention. Ilene was instrumental in the creation of the children's calendar. They were both always ready to serve in any capacity and to support any activity. Vern was the son of German immigrants but he loved to study the history of our trails and was passionate about preserving that history. They were always willing to go beyond the scope of their duty. We shall certainly miss their presence at our activities. They are survived by two children and several grandchildren and great grandchildren and Vern is survived by one brother. We offer a salute to their accomplishments and their years of service.

Membership Meeting - February 23 - Fort Douglas Museum - This is our first meeting since 2019. We hope this revitalizes the chapter. (NOTE: Because of the record breaking storm and snowfall, this meeting was held on ZOOM.)

Stay tuned until next time. Anton Oscar Olson.

TRAILS HEAD

Our Annual Meeting was held November 5, 2022, at the Trailside Center. Election of new officers resulted in recycling Jean Coupal-Smith as President; Mike Smith, Vice President, Kelly Breen, Treasurer; Dick Nelson, Assistant Treasurer; Sandra Wiechert, Interim Secretary on behalf of Mary Conrad.

Lila Aamodt presided over the meeting as out going President and was presented Trails Head's Meritorious Achievement Award. This was a wonderful award for her to receive as she had been a great leader for our chapter and very involved in trails work. As many of you may already know, Lila passed at the end of November. She has been greatly missed by all of us and left big shoes to fill.

December 3, 2022, was our Historic Trails Holiday Luncheon. This was in conjunction with Missouri River Outfitters ~ Santa Fe Trail Association; Trails Head Chapter ~ OCTA; and Kansas City Area Historic Trails Association. The luncheon was held at the National Frontier Trails Museum in Independence, Missouri.

This is a social event that brings the three organizations together to share what they are doing and to see others that are historic trail minded as well. Each organizations President was given two minutes to talk about their plans for the coming year. There are many of us that belong to all three organizations. These joint gatherings help to keep us informed on what is next with which organization.

February 14, 2023 I presented the upcoming 2024 Calendar Contest to the 1st – 5th grades at JPII Catholic School, Overland Park, KS. Due to the Pandemic for the past couple years Certificates of

Appreciation, had not been presented. Seventeen certificates were handed out to the winners from the years 2020 – 2023 contest. Only one student had transferred out to another school and several of the other students were in higher grades and not present. However, their certificates would be given to them by Mrs. Sharri Janner. Mrs. Janner is a pleasure to work with and she is most enthusiastic about

doing this each year. She and the other four teachers enjoy doing this as it gives them an opportunity to do the research on our local trail history as well.

Contest winners for the 2023 Calendar: Mountain Men, Indians & Emigrants – Trade & Trade Goods were:

Kate Massoth, Henry Churchill, Ramona Slowik, Louise Morgan, George Macan, Mary Holland, Ruth Lusk, and Nian San.

A young talented group of students!

Upcoming events are the Spring OCTA

Symposium in St. Joseph, MO – March 30 – April 2, 2023. The summer OCTA Convention will be held in Gering, NE – July 23-29, 2023. With both events being relatively close to Trails Head chapter, we hope more of our members will be able to be a part of these events. These events are filled with great speakers, bus tours and social time to visit and meet others from across the trail.

In the upcoming months, with warmer temperatures, those involved in marking trail segments in Douglas County, KS will resume. As this gets underway again, I'll try to have more information regarding this new project.

Jean Coupal-Smith



Pictured are four of the eight that were present to receive certificates for their participation in OCTA's 2023 Calendar Contest. They are (left to right) George Macan, Jean Coupal-Smith (presenter), Ramona Slowik, Mary Holland, Ruth Lusk

WYOMING

BLM fast tracks solar plans in five more states

Since 2012, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has fast-tracked large-scale solar energy projects in six western states, including Arizona, California, Colorado, New Mexico, Nevada and Utah. Now, because solar energy technology has advanced so quickly, the agency is looking to expand that fast-tracking to five more states – Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington, and Wyoming.



Figure 1. Desert Sunlight Solar Farm in California's Mojave Desert, near Palm Springs. TIME magazine photo.

Large-scale solar energy projects typically consisting of large arrays of solar panels covering sizable plots of land (see Figure 1). So, these projects could affect important resources like historic trails. For instance, if they are placed near the Oregon Trail in

the BLM-managed high deserts of Wyoming, Idaho, or Oregon, they could harm intact historic settings of this iconic National Historic Trail.

Furthermore, large-scale solar energy projects also require large electrical transmission lines to distribute the power they create. These types of transmission lines, which are easily visible for many miles, could affect the settings of historic trails even more (See Figure 2).



Figure 2. Solar array with transmission lines. SEIA photo.

Therefore, OCTA is now monitoring and getting involved in the fast-tracking EIS process for these new 'solar' states. BLM has said they are planning on writing a Programmatic EIS to cover all 11 western states and is now in the initial comment gathering phase. We will follow the EIS process to make sure that historic trails like the Oregon, California, Mormon Pioneer and Pony Express trails are not harmed by these new projects.

For further information on this new EIS effort, go to this website: <https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/2022371/510> *Craig Bromley*

KANZA

In October, the chapter co-sponsored the Oregon Trail Trek, a trail run along the trails of Alcove Spring Park. The race consists of a 5K and a 10K running, biking, and walking event. There is also a one mile walking event that connects the historic portions of the park. One of our historians led the event and discussed the park's history along the way.

Members of the chapter have been involved in clearing the damage to the timber at Alcove Spring Park following the tornado assaulted it last July. The damage to trees was severe, blocking trails or making them dangerous to use. Trees also were blocking waterways.

A new wayside exhibit has been ordered to upgrade the current panel at the Lower Blue Crossing of the Big

Blue River that KANZA placed many years ago. An event is being planned to visit Alcove Spring to install new panels in the five wayside exhibits that are being fabricated now. Carsonite markers will be replaced as necessary.

In May, Richard Hunt will visit sites to produce videos for the OCTA sponsored Trail Stories that are shown on YouTube. At present videos will be made of Alcove Spring Park historic sites, the area of Marshall's Ferry in Marysville where a replica ferry is located. Videos will also be made at the Trail Junction marker and possibly Hollenberg station west of Marysville.

Other projects are being considered for the rest of the summer.

Duane Iles

CALIFORNIA-NEVADA

California and Nevada are experiencing the first regionwide wet winter in several years. It a relief for the States in multiple ways, mitigating the droughts in numerous areas. The effects of the weather on trails in fire areas will remain to be seen. There will be lots of opportunity for Chapter work outings in the coming season!

The CA-NV Spring Symposium will be held in Wheatland, Ca on April 29- 30, 2023. Wheatland is the location of the Johnson Ranch, the end of the California Trail. The Forlorn Hope reached the spot in January of 1847, after a 31-day journey over the Sierras. From the Johnson Ranch the Donner Party rescue efforts were assembled and survivors were brought to recover. The site of the ranch is on private land. There will be a tour of the property, the first public access since the mid 90's. Registration details will be available soon.

California Nevada Chapter has begun presenting Zoom meetings on various topics. The first presentation was held on February 18, 2023. Dee Owens talked about the work the Chapter has been doing on the Carson/Mormon Emigrant route. Over twenty people participated. Dee outlined the mapping team's work, showed pictures of the team, the terrain, items documented and discussed future work outings that will happen this season.

The Chapter's next presentation will be on March 18 at 6 PM. David Fullerton will be making a presentation on how in June of 1850, near Red House (between Battle Mountain and Winnemucca) on the North side of the Humboldt River and 150 miles from the Humboldt Sink, a false story began to be passed from emigrant to emigrant that the Humboldt Sink was just ahead. Emigrants were strongly advised to take an extra day or two to cut grass for the long 40-mile desert crossing to the Truckee or Carson River. For several weeks virtually all emigrants traipsed as much as 6 miles or more away from the Humboldt River to cut grass. Many were very angry when they discovered, a day or two later, that the effort had been unnecessary. In this talk David will discuss why this

rumor started, why it persisted for so long, and how the rumor was finally debunked.

Recently several members of the Chapter traveled to the residence the late Don Buck to continue inventorying and digitizing his extensive collection. Don had asked John Winner to be the executor of his collection. In conjunction with Don's wife, Velma, and daughter Margo, multiple maps were digitized and an inventory of Don's extensive book collection was begun.

The CA-NV Chapter is planning various work outings in the coming season. Workdays are being arranged on the Lassen Trail, the Beckwourth Trail, the Carson Trail and the Hastings Cut Off. We also hope to have an outing on the Greenhorn Cut Off to help confirm the trail as it winds its way across the Adobe Range, between Elko and Carlin, Nevada.



The Chapter has been made aware that the Nevada Department of Transportation has reinitiated contact with stakeholders in Elko to reinvigorate the proposed multi-use trail between Elko and California Trail Interpretive Center 7 miles west of town.

The installation of fencing and two interpretive panels at the Elko Hot Hole has been completed. The panels are about trail history and the geology of the site. The fencing is for safety because of the high temperature of the hot springs.

As been mentioned in previous notices from OCTA, the virtual tour of the Gravelly Ford area is about to be released. On March 22, 2023 a showing will be held at the Northeastern Nevada Museum in Elko. The CA-NV Chapter was involved in mitigation for a mining lease in Long Canyon on the Hastings Cut Off. John has toiled over 10 years with mineral companies and governmental agencies to evolve the mitigation first purposed to now protect the Gravelly Ford segment of the California Trail. Through his work and ability Nevada Gold Mining company has provided funding to make the video and is working with the Nevada Land Trust to preserve this pristine segment.

Jon Nowlin, Chapter Board member, is leading the work with BLM to continue preservation efforts at the

Fernley Swales easement. He coordinated meetings with Chapter members, OCTA National President John Briggs, BLM State Director John Raby, and his staff to come up with solutions to preserve the easement. As a result, BLM is now seeking design plans for barriers to protect the Fernley Swales as well as exploring funding options. Jon and his wife Janet have spent many hours monitoring, cleaning the area, and replacing signage over many years. The Chapter is hoping to see some results of John and Janet's hard work this spring. We will continue working to preserve this one-of-a-kind historical site.

The Nowlins have also led the CA-NV Chapter's

coordination of maintenance of the 21 California Trail Wayside exhibits across Nevada which will result in replacement of damaged interpretive panels in Waysides displays at three Nevada State Parks, one Interstate 80 rest area, and the Marzen House Historical Museum in Lovelock, Nevada. The Chapter is working with the Nevada Department of Transportation on finding a site for replacing the I-80 Button Point Wayside display.

The hard work and dedication of the CA-NV Chapter members will continue to enhance and protect the Emigrant Trail heritage of California and Nevada.,

Dick Waugh

GATEWAY

Gateway Chapter continues to build partnerships with those who share our preservation of history of the Trail. In St. Joseph we have a working partnership with the Pony Express National Museum. Each year the Museum does a six week series of well-attended community education programs called Tuesday Night Talks. This year Gateway Board members Dr. Kim Schutte and Sarah Elder were featured speakers as well as member Dr. Robert Corder. Then on Presidents Day the Museum sponsored Family Day. Over 2,000 toured the museum that day. There were a variety of activities for all ages. Gateway members acted as docents and storytellers. The history of the Oregon California Trail was highlighted by Gateway members.

The St. Joseph Symposium planning is underway under

the chairmanship of Jerry Mogg. Gateway members are looking forward to seeing many of you here.

Dave Berger, submitted by Jackie Lewin



Diane Waddell visits with a young girl and her mother about the wagon exhibit at Family Day.



Jerry Mogg and Jackie Lewin by wagon exhibit. The video program behind Jackie is about loading a wagon and was sponsored by Gateway Chapter.



Sarah Elder shows visitors the original well found during an archaeological dig before expansion of the Museum.

IDAHO

We are in the planning process for chapter activities for the year. In addition to the following items, activities on the Lander Road, at INL, the Fort Hall Reservation, and using cadaver dogs at Rattlesnake Creek and in western Wyoming are being considered.

The Boise Schools Community Education classes were held March 1, 8, and 15. All classes filled within a week and there are over 20 people on a waiting list. Each year I try to share my passion for the trails with the class participants and get them hooked by taking them on the Oregon Trail with the annual byway tour. Ultimately, I hope they will join OCTA and the Idaho chapter and become active members going forward.

The annual Main Oregon Trail Back Country Byway tour will be Saturday, April 15. I plan to have a potluck lunch on the tour at the Sweetbriar Winery north of Mountain Home. We did this last year and it was a lot of fun.

We are planning some special activities for the annual City of Rocks outings for May 18-19. An archaeologist from Idaho State University will be joining us to excavate one of the graves we verified with cadaver dogs two years ago. Tours and guided hikes will also be planned to fill in time. The chapter meeting will be in Burley on Saturday, May 20. I have obtained a discounted group

rate with the Fairfield Inn in Burley which is about \$10 less than the senior rate.

Plans are being developed for me to do a series of videos across Idaho starting this summer, beginning with shooting videos at City of Rocks in May. We have a new member from Montana, Josh Kornoff, who has a background in technical video production. He is now a member of the OCTA video team and will be working with me on the Idaho videos.

I am currently working with the BLM and Idaho Transportation Department (ITD) to reprint the Main Oregon Trail Back Country Byway booklet. Minor changes are being made to the route because ITD moved signs at one location to a new location.

The chapter preservation officers, Don Wind and Dave Price, are busy monitoring several large power projects in the state. The Lava Ridge Wind project is one of the largest wind turbine projects in the country. Fortunately, it does not directly impact emigrant trails but has many other negative impacts in its footprint. We recently contested the placement of a cellular tower on the Oregon Trail along the Snake River and are pleased to report that it is no longer being considered.

Jerry Eichhorst

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Jo Johnston, Secretary

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Jerry Mogg, Treasurer

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John Winner, Preservation Officer

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Welcome New Ezra Meeker Life Member

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Emigrant Trails Hall of Fame

The Emigrant Trails Hall of Fame Committee welcomes nominations for new members to be inducted in 2023. The criteria for selection and the nomination form are on OCTA's website:

<https://www.octa-trails.org/emigrant-trails-hall-of-fame/>

The Committee particularly welcomes nominations of individuals whose achievements are less well-known to OCTA members. Please submit nominations by October 31 to: ETHoF1846@gmail.com

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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Bill and Kathryn Winn
John and Susie Winner
Joan Young
Herman Zittel

REMEMBRANCES



Henry Boppart

Henry DeLay Boppart of Overland Park, Kansas passed away January 19, 2023, at the age of 94. He was born October 19, 1928, in Kansas City, Missouri to Bertha Mae and Thomas H. Boppart.

During his younger years he was active in Boy Scouts of America. While in Scouting he achieved the rank of Eagle Scout and was a member of Mic-O-Say at H. Roe Bartle Scout Reservation.

Henry graduated from Rockhurst High School where he lettered in football. He attended the University of Missouri graduating with a bachelor's degree from the College of Business. He was a member of Phi Kappa Theta fraternity. He then served in the United States Army and was stationed in Fort Smith, Arkansas.

He and Gretta were married March 4, 1957. They made their home in Overland Park, Kansas, where they raised their three children. They celebrated sixty-five years of marriage.

His interests included collecting maps, planning and taking long road trips, and playing tennis. He especially enjoyed studying historic westward trails. He was an active member of the Oregon-California Trails Association. He also took pride in his family's long standing Kansas City heritage, with his grandfather coming up with the phrase "Heart of America."

Henry's greatest joy in life was spending time with his five grandchildren who called him Papa. He was honored to have his great grandson as his namesake.

Henry is survived by his wife Gretta Boppart, daughter Mary Appleby (Jon), sons Patrick Boppart and Paul Boppart, grandchildren Christopher, Marcus, and Benjamin Appleby, Andrew and Megan Boppart, great grandson Henry Appleby, sisters Jane Schleicher and Kathleen Cashman, many nieces and nephews, and longtime friend Lou Bosso.

He is preceded in death by his parents and sisters Mary Ellen Crowe and Anne Mueller.

Allen Goodwin

Allen Douglas Goodwin passed away February 14, 2023, in Olympia, Washington, where he had lived since 1979. He was born on September 29, 1938, in Ellensburg, Washington, and was the second son of Frank Alvia and Margaret Isabel (Smith) Goodwin. He was a fifth-

generation Washingtonian, his ancestors having come to Washington Territory in the early days by means of covered wagons and ox teams over the Oregon Trail.

Allen graduated from Puyallup High School in 1956, and later received a BA degree in Political Science from Washington State University. He enlisted in the U.S. Army (1960-1963) and served in the Army Security Agency. Six months of training in radio communications at Fort Devens, Massachusetts, was followed by rotation to West Berlin, Germany. His enlistment turned out to be more than three years in a time and place of international intrigue and turmoil, and where he witnessed the building of the Berlin Wall in 1961; he was extremely gratified when that shameful relic of oppression was finally torn down in 1989.

Allen was employed by the Washington State Employment Security Department as a Program Manager and retired in early 2001 after 33 years of service. He worked in Tacoma and Lakewood until 1979, and then relocated to Olympia. He believed that public service was a rewarding career and was pleased to spend his last ten years working with the Washington State Governor's Committee on Disability Issues and Employment.

Allen was a lifelong student of history and an avid genealogist. He had many interests, including gardening, classical music, and travel, but he spent much time studying history and engaged in extensive genealogical research. He was a longtime member of the Olympia Genealogical Society. Other memberships included the Yakima Genealogical Society, Washington State Genealogical Society, National Genealogical Society, Towne Family Association, Clan Gunn Society of North America, and the Oregon-California Trails Association.

Allen is survived by his niece, Tanya Reece (Randy Kohlhasse) of East Wenatchee, Washington; four grandnephews; two grandnieces; and many other relatives, friends and associates. He was preceded in death by his parents, Frank and Margaret Goodwin; his stepmother, Ada (Carlton) Goodwin; his brother, Richard Goodwin; and his nephew, Scott Goodwin.



Vern Gorzitze

Notice is hereby given that I, Vernon Emil Gorzitze, have left this mortal existence, the result of too many birthdays on December 29, 2022.

I was born July 20, 1930 to

emigrant parents Herbert and Margaret Uhl Gorzitze in Salt Lake City, Utah. My parents were poor in dollars but RICH in love and faith, always working hard to provide.

I attended schools in Salt Lake City – Onequa Elementary, Jackson Jr. High, West High and University of Utah, earning a BA Degree in Fine Arts. I served my Church in the West German LDS Mission, 1950-1953. I served my country in the Army attached to the 12th Engineers, 5th Regimental Combat Team and the 21st Division.

Married Ilene Steenblik, my eternal companion, the choice of my heart and lifelong friend.

As a teenager, and later in high school and college, I swam competitively. I was an Eagle Scout. Hopped and later drove milk delivery truck and processed milk for my friend, scoutmaster, and father-in-law Gerrit Steenblik. Swept floors and unpacked chinaware at Restaurant and Stores Equipment Co., managed the Swimming Department at the original Deseret Gym, managed the Packaging and Shipping Department for Perma-Pack Food Storage Company, and a multitude of summer and odd jobs. Spent most of my adult life working in construction-related fields – Elias Morris and Son's Co., Lauren Burt Inc., Advanced Acoustics and Floor Coverings (part owner and full-time janitor), Building Systems Inc. and prior to retirement, Capitol Building Materials. Served and held leadership positions in several organizations – Salt Lake Skin-Divers, Wasatch Toastmasters, Mountain Men of the Wasatch, Rocky Mountain Fur Co., Utah Westerners, Oregon California Trails Association. Was a founding member of the Wasatch Cannoneers (1st Chair Concussion) supplying live cannon fire for the Utah Symphony and several other groups performing the 1812 Overture from 1975 to present.

Loved family, swimming, black powder shooting, books, history – music, good food and collecting STUFFFFFF.

Preceded in death by: Wife of almost 66 years, Ilene, and my parents.

Survived by brother Michael Gorzitze (Jeanette), daughter Michelle Winger (Bill), son Greg (Karen), son Todd (Janene). Grandchildren – Lesley DaLuz, Erica Dutson (Zach), Heidi Lawyer (Tom), Katie Gorzitze, Ryan Gorzitze (Chelsea), Tyler Gorzitze (Kelly), Haley Jessen (Zach). Great-Grandchildren – Lily, Mason, and Hannah Dutson, Mia and Jade Lawyer, Monroe Gorzitze, Oakley Jessen, Kiley & Aaron Nelson and Cayson Gorzitze.

**** Remember to:HUG THOSE YOU LOVE AND CARE FOR – EVERY DAY!!!



Gail Holmes

Gail George Holmes accomplished much in his 99 years. He was born on July 19, 1923, in Menoken, North Dakota, to Paul and Zada Holmes. He was focused on education and work in journalism. WWII interrupted his education. He joined the Army Air Corps and served as a P38 reconnaissance pilot mapping parts of the Philippines and South Korea. He married Marjorie Elaine Wood during pilot training. After WWII his work as a journalist took them to Geneva, Switzerland where their beautiful daughter, Rondee Allene, was born.

Gail's journalism career took them to Minot, North Dakota; Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada; Council Bluffs, Iowa; and Omaha, Nebraska where he worked as a Copy Editor. Gail and Marjorie joined The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Minot in 1955. As a member of the church, he served as a Bishop, Branch President, High Councilor, and Stake Patriarch, among other callings. When they moved to Omaha in 1971, he became passionately engaged in the area's history. He spent five decades doing research and study on the history of the pioneers, Native Americans, trails, French and Spanish fur traders, and settlements of the Area. He became one of the eminent historians on the history of the Middle Missouri Valley and his work was instrumental in developing the OCTA convention that was held in Council Bluffs several years ago. Marjorie died in 1999. Gail married Teresa Lynn Brown in 2000.

Gail is preceded in death by his sister Allene Holmes, father and mother, Paul and Zada Holmes, Brother Paul Holmes, granddaughter Kirste Vesterfelt, grandson Ian Vesterfelt, and wife Marjorie Holmes.

Surviving family include wife Teresa, daughter Rondee Hasson, grandchildren Carly Hellickson, Devra Vierkant, Christian Vesterfelt, Candice Short, Jamie Vesterfelt, Kari Munk, Stephanie Cruz, Joselyn Radford, and eight step-grandchildren.



Bob Hovey

Robert Dean Hovey September 9, 1931 – December 11, 2022
Mission Hills, Kansas -Bob Hovey had a passion for life, which carried over to his family and his community.

Bob attended Southwest High School in Kansas City, followed

by Ripon College, and law school at the University of Kansas. He joined his father's law firm in 1954, where he proudly worked for 50 years to the day. Bob was an Eagle Scout and was member and President of Phi Kappa Psi Fraternity, The American Royal, The Saddle and Sirloin Club, Vanguard Club and The Kansas City Club.

He married his high-school sweetheart, Carol Collins, in 1953. They had four amazing daughters, Cathy, Connie, Karen, and Kelly, who were the joy of his life. Carol and Bob were a great team that especially enjoyed giving back to the community through social and civic endeavors.

Bob treasured his weekends at the Yellowbarn Farm. He loved the country and it brought him great peace and pleasure to drive his tractor through the meadows and appreciate the beauty of nature, particularly watching the birds.

After Carol's passing in 2001, Bob found love again with Eugenia Cartmell and married her in 2004. They shared enjoyment of KU basketball, summer trips to Colorado, and spending time together. Bob was a member of OCTA since the 1980s and recently made a significant donation toward OCTA's issues as they relate to copyright, registration, and trademarks.

Bob is survived by his wife, Eugenia, his four daughters: Cathy (Joe), Connie (Dave), Karen (Skip) and Kelly (Brad); two step-children: Cathy (Matt) and Tom (Shelley); and 12 wonderful grandchildren.



Ron Volk

Fortified with the Sacraments of Holy Mother Church on Sunday, December 25, 2022, at the age 81. He was born on October 30, 1941, to the late Edward and Helen Volk. Ron is survived by his longtime companion Patricia White.

Ron attended Christian Brothers College High School in St. Louis. He earned his BA in Journalism from the University of Missouri. Ron was a proud United States Navy Veteran. He retired from the State of Missouri, Department of Social Services.

Ron was an avid backpacker, camper, and Harley-Davidson motorcycle rider. He loved to travel, especially in the western states. Ron was a founding member of the Oregon-California Trails Association. Ron was a reenactor at Mountain Man Rendezvous. Ron was also an Elvis Presley fan.

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	Dorothy Duffin	Lute Family Foundation	Randolph W. Seed
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Randy Brown	Norma Haner	Mary Ellen Martin	Frank & Mary Ann Tortorich
Don (Deceased) & Vilma Buck	Patrick A. Hearty	Kendall McNabney (Deceased)	Ann M. Van Hoff
James (Deceased) & Judy Budde	William & Jan Hill	Steve Moore	Ron Volk
Jude A. Carino	Jim & Alma Holcomb	Mary Mueller	Pennie Lynn Von Achen
Robert Clark	Thomas Hunt	Mary Olch	Theodore F. Votow
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Dr. & Mrs. Ronald O. Downs	Larry & Pat Jones	Betty J. Pfaff	Sandra & Allen (Deceased) Wiechert
	Milton A. Jones	Mrs. E. W. Puckett	Herman Zittel
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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 (<i>Deceased</i>)	Phillip L. Foremaster	Janet Kanter	M. Lethene Parks
Ivan Baker	Mrs. Kay Forsythe	Raymond Kanter	Mortimer Paulus
Dr Thomas R. Bales	Kathy Colyer Franzwa (<i>Deceased</i>)	M. F. Kiber	Betty J. Pfaff
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Thomas Cardoza	Cheryl & Gilbert Hoffman	Carolyn & Gordon McGregor	Leslie Joan Steuben
Lisa Carle	Chuck Hornbuckle (<i>Deceased</i>)	Kendall McNabney (<i>Deceased</i>)	Michael Strodman
Robert Clark	Mark Howe	John & Jacque McVey	William (Billy) Symms (<i>Deceased</i>)
Kay, Milt & Rylene Coffman	Thomas Hunt	Dan Miller	Kathryn Tanner
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2022-2023 OCTA Board of Directors

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Pat Traffas, Overland Park, KS
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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

NEWS FROM THE PLAINS

Published quarterly by the
Oregon-California Trails Association
(A 501(c)(3) Non-Profit)

P.O. Box 1019, Independence MO 64051
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Jay Lawrence, Editor

530 Ohio Avenue, Long Beach CA 90814
Phone: (562) 760-1999

Summer 2023 Issue Deadline: May 25, 2023
Send materials to: jaylawrenceocta@gmail.com

Visit OCTA on the Internet

OCTA-trails.org

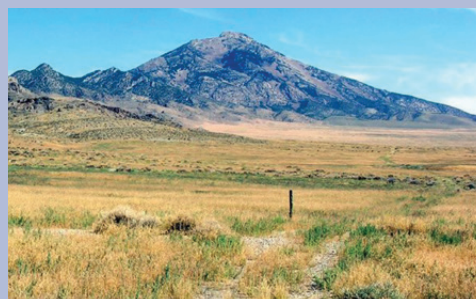
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Report OCTA
Volunteer Hours at
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octa-volunteer](http://octa-journals.org/octa-volunteer)

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

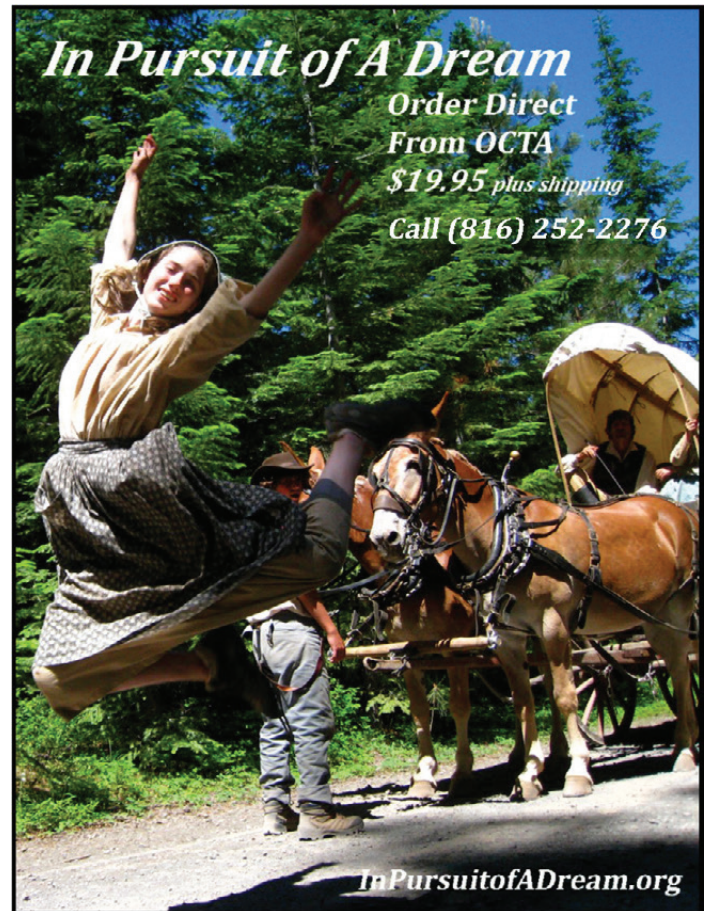
In this issue:

Welcome to Landmark Country

Legacy of the Plains Museum

Meet Our Members

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