

NEWS FROM THE PLAINS

Newsletter of the Oregon-California Trails Association



Scott's Bluff

Fall 2023

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FROM THE PRESIDENT



Hello OCTA Folks!

As OCTA's newest President, I'm learning a lot! I'm working on everything from designing a new business card using our new brand guide, to understanding how the organization works, and

getting up to speed on all our projects. We have some awesome opportunities to put our knowledge and skills and tools to work on preservation projects, educational offerings, finding a place to store our collections, and so much more. We're busy nurturing partnerships and pushing legislation to expand the National Trails Act. We have wonderful members who give their time to help move these worthy projects along. Our Marketing team is doing an outstanding job getting us out there on social media. And there is so much more good we could do if we had more volunteers to help out. If you have only a few hours a week to assist in your local chapter projects, do it. Contact your local OCTA leaders and ask how you can help. OCTA National needs volunteers to help with fundraising, social media and marketing, curriculum development, preservation, and many more projects. Some of this work can be done from your home computer. Some of our work can be done out on the trail! You can help using Survey123 to send the National Park Service site reviews of historical monuments as you travel around. This important work can be done using your phone! It's way cool. We're hosting a training meeting in September. Email me for more

information. It will add a wonderful dimension to your vacation and travels. You can help OCTA by subscribing to our YouTube Channel: www.youtube.com/@octatrails. We have over 150 videos there with two more added each week. Get your friends to subscribe too. Just by watching and subscribing to our YouTube Channel, you can help out financially. It's free and easy to do! You can also follow us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/OCTA1982>.

The preservation of trail resources needs your help. We're losing valuable trail assets very quickly to solar and windmill farms and other development. We do need the energy but we can also work to keep trail damage to a minimum. Often the developers don't know about those cultural resources. A few years ago, while on a tour in Tooele County, Utah, we discovered a new subdivision going in right over some pristine trail swales. The Donner Party used that trail, as did the 49ers and others. We worked with the land developers and the city to create a city park to protect that valuable resource. Soon this new park, Emigrant Trails Park in Lake Point, Utah will be dedicated. It will protect the swales and inform patrons about the history of that place for years to come. You can do that too if you look around, pay attention, and say something.

Our new Archaeology website is awesome. Check it out at www.OCTA-Trails.org. Join us on Twitter at [@octa_1836](https://twitter.com/octa_1836).

Have I convinced you to check us out on social media or see the new offerings on our webpage? I hope so!

Best regards.

Steve Allison, President

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.

Preservation... *keeping safe from harm or destruction.* A tall order with the ever increasing needs and wants of today. An American legacy is at risk. The historic trails and sites from the mid-nineteenth century westward expansion where thousands of emigrants traveled overland, in pursuit of a new life, religious freedom, the lure of gold or maybe just for the adventure, are constantly under threat. Many miles of wagon ruts and swales still exist in silent testimony to those hardy souls who built the nation as we know it today.

Where do we draw a *"line in the sand"* to protect and preserve historic emigrant trails and sites. 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. Today's viewshed and landscape is changing.

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.

So, what do we do about it... We advocate for preservation, we become consulting parties to threats, we identify pristine trails and sites, we use our knowledge of history to educate and *"we draw a line in the sand"*. We seek to preserve first and mitigate second.

Saving the trail is not limited to energy development, preservation takes on all forms, any threat that may cause *"harm or destruction"*, but not just threats, preservation also involves being proactive, actively saving sites and segments and preserving the heritage of trail legacy.

The National Trail Systems Act of 1968 (NTSA) echoed the importance of trail sites and segments by definition:

High Potential Sites - *"Those historic sites related to the route, or sites in close proximity*

thereto, which provide opportunity to interpret the historic significance of the trail during the period of its major use. Criteria for consideration as high potential sites includes historic significance, presence of visible historic remnants, scenic quality, and relative freedom from intrusion"

High Potential Route Segments - *"Those segments of trail which afford high quality recreation experience in a portion of the route having greater than average scenic values or affording an opportunity to vicariously share the experience of the original user of the historic route."*

In 1978 Congress authorized the Oregon National Historic Trail to commemorate the significant route of travel and to promote the preservation, interpretation, public use, and appreciation. In 1992 Congress authorized the California National Historic trail with similar expectations. The NTSA also required that, under the direction of the National Park Service, comprehensive management and use plans be prepared for the national trails.

<https://www.nps.gov/cali/learn/management/upload/CALI-CMP-SM-updated.pdf>

So why is this so important to preservation? In preparing the Comprehensive Management and Use Plan, The National Park Service and consultants listed 244 High Potential Sites on the California National Historic Trail and 131 High Potential Sites on the Oregon National Historic Trail. Now bear in mind we're only referring to sites on designated National Historic trails. There are numerous other historic emigrant trails under consideration for National Historic Trail designation as well as several others that perhaps should be reviewed and designated as National Historic Trails. That's a another subject.

My point here is that while dealing with preservation issues we dwell mostly on projects that threaten emigrant trails. And yet, over 20 years ago as the Comprehensive Management and Use Plan was being prepared for the California National Historic Trail and an update for the Oregon National Historic Trail, 375 sites were classified as High Potential Sites under the definition as stated in the National Trail Systems Act, worthy of preservation i.e., *keeping safe from harm or destruction.*

Perhaps....we as folks that want to preserve our trail legacy, should look at the High Potential Sites along the historic trails in each of the states and adopt a project.

One case in point. The Second Blaze, as it is now titled, was described in the *Comprehensive Management and Use Plan* as follows: California National Historic Trail, Site 201 – Tragedy Springs – Carson Route.

"Tragedy Spring was named by Henry Bigler. Mormons,

who had been at Sutter's Mill when gold was discovered, open the Carson Trail while blazing a new route over the Sierra. They sent three scouts ahead to find a pass, but the men never returned. Upon reaching this hillside, a grave was discovered that contained their three bodies. The names of the three men (Daniel Browett, Ezra H. Allen, and Henderson Cox) were cut into a red fur tree. This section is on display at the Marshall Gold Discovery Museum in Coloma, California. Along the trail west of the spring (which is covered by a wooden enclosure) is the stump of a dead tree with a blaze and the inscription "P. R. Wright, Aug. XIX, Second Company". Sergeant Phineas

R. Wright was a member of another Mormon party that followed the first group during the summer of 1848 and the date matches current research.

An effort to preserve the Second Blaze stump and its inscription has been in the works for over 25 years. Patience and perseverance has endured. The stump was removed from the forest prior to a devastating forest fire, placed in storage, transferred to OCTA by the Eldorado National Forest, and now encased in a display cabinet, to be put on display at the county museum.

What site is on the trail in your area?

More to come...

FROM THE ASSOCIATION MANAGER



For those of you who attended our annual convention in Gering, Nebraska: thank you! Wasn't that a great week? Incredible tours, entertaining speakers, fantastic food, weather maybe a few degrees too warm. Anyone who has ever helped put on a convention knows the hard, long hours that go on behind

the scenes, and this year's convention crew was no different. Our main planners -- Barb Netherland, Karla Nieten-Streeks, Bill & Jan Hill, Loren Pospisil, Dan Morford, Harlan Seyfer, David Wolf, Brenda Leisy -- these are the people who met every couple of weeks to make things happen. Selecting the speakers, planning the tours and meals, finding money and volunteers, working to fix things quickly when they went wrong; these are the people who got us across the finish line, and all deserve a hearty "thank you!"

But so many other people come together to help during the week. Those who brought items for the silent and live auction helped raise thousands of extra dollars. John Winner once again officiated as auctioneer. Roger Blair emceed awards. Mary Wieckert sold raffle tickets. Pat Traffas and Jean Coupal-Smith oversaw the book room. Matt Ivory and Mark Howe helped serve as chase cars on tours. And that list is surely not comprehensive, because the fact of the matter is, most everyone at a convention pitches in and helps where they can. We could never pull this off without those who participate. So, thank you all.

This year's convention is also looking like it will exceed revenue expectations. Though we do not yet have a final number tallied, we do know that some large gifts from Humanities Nebraska, Scotts Bluff County

Tourism, and Farmland Reserve ensured profitability. Black Hill Parks & Forests Association stepped up as a key sponsor (they created the commemorative William Henry Jackson lithograph; if you're interested in acquiring one, contact me at tboley@indepmo.org). Many other groups supported through in-kind donations and volunteerism. It truly was a community-wide effort.

So, what about next year? Roger Blair and the Northwest Chapter are well underway planning next year's convention, set to be held from July 21-25, 2024, in Pendleton, Oregon. A visit to the Blue Mountains is always special, and OCTA has not held a convention in Pendleton since the 1990s. We do hope that you'll join us for what will certainly be a spectacular week in eastern Oregon.

Before we get to Pendleton, however, we also have a symposium set for El Paso, Texas, from March 13-16, 2024. OCTA will hold its spring board meeting ahead of the speakers and tours, but this will be an incredible opportunity to not only learn about a branch of the Southern Route that passes east to west through El Paso, but also El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro, the north-south road that went from Mexico City to Santa Fe and the pueblos of northern New Mexico.

Finally, if you were in attendance in Gering, you most certainly saw Volunteer of the Year Richard Hunt filming the speakers. If you weren't able to make it to the convention, do not worry, the speakers will begin populating OCTA's YouTube channel in short order. This is yet another valuable benefit of membership, so thank you to Richard and our marketing/PR committee for ensuring that this has become a regular offering of our association. Be sure to subscribe to our YouTube channel; it's free to you, and helps create revenue for OCTA every time you watch one of the ads that starts our videos.

Travis Boley, Association Manager

Publications

The recipient of the 2023 Merrill Mattes Award for the article in the *Overland Journal* best reflecting excellence in writing was Amy McGill for her article, "Oliver Hazard Perry White, West with the Gold Rush." Unfortunately, Amy was unable to attend the Gering Convention to receive the award, which was presented by Bob Clark, editor of the *Overland Journal*. Amy sent her regrets for being unable to attend and also expressed her sincere gratitude for such an honor from a such a publication that she holds in high esteem. If you did not read her article, get your copy of Volume 40, Number 3 (Fall) Part 1, and Number 4 (Winter) Part 2. You'll enjoy a good read! We hope to focus more on her in the future.

Our MOM section continues in this issue with the introduction of three more of our recently joined or re-joined members. Please feel free to contact them and introduce yourself if you live nearby or find a common interest with theirs. Together we are stronger and also have more fun.

I wish to thank the many OCTA members who have contacted me and our editors in writing or verbally for their comments and continued support. Good, bad, or in-between, we want to know!

The education publications' student calendar, "Emigrant and Indian- Tools, Utensils, & Equipment," went on sale at the convention and was almost sold out. Each of the student artists has now received a check for \$50.00, a copy of the calendar, and another copy was

sent to their school. The price is only \$10.00 and those left may be obtained from headquarters. Please support our young budding artists.

The theme for next year's calendar is "Emigrant & Indian, Games, Toys and Other Activities." It is open to all elementary aged students, including both home-schooled students and all types of elementary schools. If you have family members of elementary school age, please encourage their participation or contact their school to let them know of our project. The deadline for submissions is Monday, April 15, 2024.

If you know a teacher or school that would like a class set of one of OCTA's educational activity books about the Oregon-California, Mormon, Lewis & Clark, or Pony Express trails, have them send a post card to OCTA with their name, school and address, and the name of the trail. The deadline for the drawing is Thursday, February 1, 2024.

The Outstanding Educator Award is available in five different categories: elementary, primary, intermediate; middle school or junior high; high school; post-secondary, college or university, adult ed; and institutional, park or museum. The recipient receives a check for \$250.00. The deadline for receipt of applications is Monday, April 1, 2024

Information and related forms about all these programs can be found on OCTA's website or by contacting headquarters. It is important to adhere to the deadlines.

Bill Hill

Monterey, California

Our office building in Lake Forest, CA is just off Portolá Parkway. It turns out that the Portolá expedition of 1769 camped just around the corner from our office. I'm amused to see how often the trails show up in my life, and how history finds me. Even when I'm not looking for it, history is always looking for me. The California Missions and the story of Father Junipero Serra were accompanied by Gaspar de Portolá as their expedition worked their way north from San Diego towards Monterey and San Francisco. It was a long walk of more than a thousand miles each way. Portolá went back in 1770 to prove that he really had found Monterey. These land expeditions were ventures



into the unknown at a time when most of the maps had come from the sea, and the ships that traveled upon them.

Whether this land was controlled by Spain, Mexico or California – it was still the same land, and the land never moved. Gaspar de Portolá was born in Spain, and has the recognition of being the first governor of California from 1768-1770, and the statue in Monterey commemorates the occasion. Monterey continues to hold their old town and old buildings as sacred, as their history evolves. We're thankful to the generations that came before us and the stories they left behind. We hope we can keep their stories

alive as we march forward into the future. Hopefully in 2070 we will have left enough knowledge behind that our grandchildren will have perspective on how far we have come. I'm just thankful that our trip takes less than eight hours to drive, in the comfort of my Nissan Rogue, and not having to walk or ride in a covered wagon! We appreciate the air conditioning and our bottled water! It's good to be a part of OCTA as we keep on traveling and learning. Stay safe out there. *Melissa Shaw, CFP®*

The plaque at the foot of the statue of Gaspar. "Captain Don Gaspar de Portolá of the army of King Carlos III of Spain, first Governor of California 1768-1770. With Father Junipero Serra founded Monterey on June 3, 1770. Donated by H.M. King Juan Carlos I of Spain to the city of Monterey on the bicentennial of the United States of America." Fausto Blazquez - Sculptor
Rededicated by H.M. King Juan Carlos I of Spain October 3, 1987



Dr. McDermott is Re-interred

About twenty-five interested parties gathered on the trail at Warm Springs, Wyoming, on June 17 to witness and participate in the reburial of Forty-niner Dr. McDermott. The event was a joint project of OCTA and the Wyoming National Guard. Randy Brown of OCTA and Jason Bogstie, the Guard's Cultural Resource Manager, organized the event. For more information on Dr. McDermott, readers are referred to the Summer 2022 issue of the Overland Journal and the story titled "Dr. McDermott's Place of Rest."


Bill Hill, OCTA's Publications Committee

Chairman, and Jason Vlcan of the Casper Trails Center gave talks at the graveside. Lt. Eleanor Pugel, Environmental Program Manager, represented the Guard, and Chaplain


Lt. Col. Robert Peterson completed the program with a benediction.

After Dr. McDermott's coffin was lowered into the grave, flowers were added, and several attendees pitched in with shovels to complete the reburial. The coffin was made by the late Bill Sinnard of Douglas, Wyoming.

A new OCTA marker was dedicated to replace the old McDermott marker which was left at the original gravesite. *Randy Brown*



Dr. McDermott
1821 - 1849



Dr. McDermott, given name unknown, was a member of an 1849 Gold Rush company composed of men primarily from Fairfield, Iowa, and vicinity. They were described as "a fine body of men, fitted out with all the necessities of life," numbered about 50 or 60 persons and had between fifteen and twenty teams. Dr. McDermott, age 28, of Fairfield was the company doctor.


A member of the wagon train, S.S. Ross, was interviewed about the trip by the Fairfield newspaper in the 1890s. Ross is the only known source of information about the company's trip and the death of Dr. McDermott.

They followed the Council Bluffs Road along the north bank of the Platte and North Platte Rivers until they reached Fort Laramie. There, they crossed to the south side on June 19th or 20th. It was a difficult passage with McDermott getting wet and badly chilled helping to drive the cattle and in "trying to expedite the search to a point beyond, where it was hoped plenty of grass was to be found." In the meantime, McDermott showed symptoms of cholera. By the time the company reached Warm Springs the doctor was very ill. As Ross put it, "He had taken a large dose of calomel and he soon was unable to move." Unfortunately, calomel (mercury chloride) would only have made the effects of cholera more severe.

Here at Warm Springs, it was apparent that McDermott would soon die. Most of the company went on leaving him in the care of his messmates, John McWhirter, Robert Hill, and brothers William and James Walmsley. When he died, they buried him on a knoll on the south side of the valley opposite the spring. His friends marked the grave with a tin office sign they found in the doctor's pack on which they added his age, hometown, and date of death.


In 1852, diarist Richard Keen visited the grave and wrote: "On an eminence about 200 yards from the spring, I accidentally came upon a grave that made quite an impression at the time. Here was a grave neatly finished and well paved with small boulders and on his headboard was nailed his epitaph that he had procured before starting, a physician's sign or shingle. It read Doctor McDermott and under was scratched the date of his death which is June 21st 1849. He sleeps here alone in these rugged mountains far from the road and in a place seldom seen by a White man."

Due to encroaching erosion the remains of Dr. McDermott were disinterred in 2018 by the University of Wyoming and reburied here in 2023. Detailed studies confirmed that the remains were likely that of Dr. McDermott, age 28, of Fairfield, Iowa. An older OCTA marker placed in 2005 still stands at the original site of the McDermott grave about a thousand feet across the draw from here.



Oregon-California Trails Association
P. O. Box 1019, Independence, MO 64051-0519
2023

This is a part of your American heritage. Honor it. Protect it. Preserve it for your children.





Gering Convention – July 23-28, 2023

By Bill Hill • Photos by Roger Blair and Jay Lawrence

Gering – “NEW is now OLD”

Gering’s “We Do Old in a New Way” is now history. For those of you who missed the convention we are sure you had good reasons and we hope to see you in Pendleton, Oregon next summer, July 21 – 25.

Sunday saw Randy Brown’s pre-convention tour starting with their first stops at nearby graves and deep swales going up Gering and Cedar Valley to Robidoux’s Pass that was used by the westward emigrants and early argonauts. There they enjoyed the view of the first sighting of Laramie Peak immortalized in Bruff’s drawing. From there until they reached the iron bridge at Fort Laramie, participants saw more sites, including the 1851 Horse Creek Treaty area, visited more graves, including those of Henry Hill and Charles Bishop and saw more dramatic swales and heard diary entries about other stops that kept the group engaged until the very end.

For the Board, officers, and committees, the convention started off Monday morning with the Board Meeting run by John Briggs, then OCTA President. The meeting ended on time, one of the first! Highlights were the various financial reports and passage of a new budget, Travis’s extensive report, John Winner’s report on preservation challenges

and accomplishments, the good news relating to OCTA’s growing social media footprint, continued support for publications, the update on the archaeology and collections committees, the Journey of a Lifetime, National Parks, and various chapter reports to name a few. For other adventurous members there was another pre-convention trip led by Linda Tacey at sites east. Some included were O’Fallon’s Bluff, the Sutherland northside or Mormon swales, Alkali Station site and then over to Ash Hollow.

By Monday evening the temperatures were so high that the opening reception and talk on William Henry Jackson was moved from outdoors at the Monument to indoors at the Civic Center. Bob Blair’s presentation about William H. Jackson’s life and accomplishments was a tremendous success. And, a special convention Jackson reprint depicting Fort Mitchell and Scotts Bluff was made available.

Tuesday began with the general membership meeting with President Brigg’s last report of Monday’s board meeting and then the election of new officers: President – Steve Allison; Past President – John Briggs; Treasurer – Jerry Mogg; Vice President – Helen Hankins; Secretary – Jo Johnson; and Preservation – John Winner. Our two new board members, Jenny Miller and Greg Hatten, were



introduced. Next came the Keynote Speaker, one of OCTA's founders, Roger Blair. His history of the early years of OCTA's forty-plus years enlightened the newer members and brought back many fond reminiscences of the early challenges and fun times for many of our older members. There just wasn't enough time to cover 40+ years. Perhaps there will be more at Pendleton. After a quick lunch our speakers programs kept our members in their seats and engaged. Eric Wadsworth recounted about the later Mormon Trail and use of Wyoming, Nebraska as a jumping off place, followed by Angela Bates who spoke about the Black experiences and settlements that were established in Kansas and Nebraska after the Civil War. Her ancestors helped to settle Nicodemus, Kansas, and one served as a Buffalo Soldiers. Francois-Marie Patorni, spoke about the "French Connection" and the development of Nebraska and some of the prominent individuals and families, including the Robidoux. The afternoon ended with chapter meetings, followed that evening by *hors d'oeuvres* and Authors' Night.

Wednesday and Thursday days were for the bus tours. One went west to Ft. Laramie from Mitchell Pass, one east to Ash Hollow, and a third took in the more local sites in Scottsbluff and Morrill counties. Wednesday and Thursday had different evening events. Wednesday evening was "movie" night. OCTA showed off one of its new videos on Gravelly Ford on the California Trail in Nevada. Candy Moulton, an OCTA member, but representing the Western Writers of America showed four of their new videos for kids including Standing Bear – Indian Trial and Louise Clapps and the Gold Rush. After the Thursday bus tours members got together for auction night. The committee

thanked the many, many, members who donated items for the daily raffle drawings, and both the silent and live auctions. Mary Wieckert, the "Raffle Ticket Queen" deserves our special thanks. Credit for the success also goes to the skills of John Winner who really can get "money from a turnip." The total raised was \$4,509.00. Special thanks to all those "turnips" and also to those that got outbid. You didn't get the items, but you helped raise the stakes higher. And to the purchaser of the #1 printed student calendar and all the others who supported the budding student artists – Thank You!

On Friday, our next day of presentations opened with some brief remarks about the recent passing of Cowboy Mike Searles who had been slated to speak on the Black Cowboy experience and Buffalo Soldiers. Brian Croft spoke about trails and the Scotts Bluff's area. Next, Broc Anderson, from Trails and Rails Museum, spoke about relationships among the Indians and settlers that developed along the trail. Just before lunch Kylie McCormick, in her effervescent manner, got into the history of the Trail Marker at the border between Nebraska and Wyoming, leaving no stone unturned. After lunch, with a chance for everyone to digest the information they had heard as well as the food, the talks started up again. Cindy Ossman and Gina Rhodes presented their information about Lucinda Eubanks, who had been held in captivity by the Indians. After that came Scott Alumbaugh's unique presentation about a slightly different approach to the history of the Pony Express while also sharing some of his experiences bicycling large parts of the trail. Our final speaker, Jeff Broome, focused on a



different Indian captive experience, that of the Fletcher sisters near Rock Creek Station in 1865.

Friday evening was dedicated to the Awards Banquet. It was OCTA's chance to recognize both members and non-members who have contributed to meeting the goals of OCTA. Recipients and their awards were: Friend of the Trail – Cleo Jones; Wyoming rancher and Mike and Monica Thompson; Merrill Mattes Award – Amy McGill; Meritorious Achievement – John Krizek; Distinguished Volunteer – Richard Hunt; Distinguished Service – Travis Boley; Outstanding Educator Award – Garrett Seuser; President's Award – John Briggs; Certificates of Appreciation – Barb Netherland and Loren Pospisil for their work on the convention and

Chuck Milliken and Pat Fletcher as retiring Board members. Also announced were the four new members of the Hall of Fame, James Beckwourth, Margaret Long, Jedediah Smith, and Joseph Walker.

Saturday morning started with the drive to Wyoming outside of Hartsville near Guernsey for our final event, the tour of the abandoned Sunrise Mine and lunch. Then, the last "Good-Byes," and it was time to head for home until we meet again in Pendleton next July.

We heard many compliments about the programs and the food. Special thanks to all who came and to all those unmentioned individuals who helped to make the convention the success it was!

Bill Hill

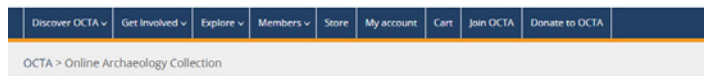




Marketing/PR Committee

The Marketing and PR committee is excited to announce some fine milestones and report about the OCTA Gering, Nebraska Convention happenings. The convention was a great success! The new Archaeology Collection launch was presented to the board. In addition, we are thrilled to report that many of our committee members were deservedly awarded on Awards night at the convention. The committee, with the help of Intern, Colby Crabtree, has begun work to assist chapters that want help in getting their new OCTA branded logos and Facebook pages developed. Other projects in the works include the OCTA website rebranding and redesign, and an exciting new grant the Marketing/PR committee won for OCTA. We are also happy to report on a new Marketing/PR member. Without further ado we will delve into all the details.

Archaeology Collection Database Successfully Launches! Gina Sifers, Chairperson and owner of Bella Media Services and in conjunctive effort with the Archaeology Committee have successfully launched the Archaeology Collection Database! The Archaeology Collection can now be found and utilized at www.octa-trails.org/archaeology-works. The image below is from the home page of the website that shows several slides of archaeology work and geographic regions. OCTA's Online Archaeology Collection database is a continuously growing collection of archaeological trail articles available in one digital place, and organized so that those interested in trail archaeology can easily access relevant information.



Online Archaeology Collection



Second Cold Springs Pony Express Station, Churchill County, NV

Laura Theel gave an excellent presentation to the OCTA board at the convention showing the many details of the expansive database and how to easily access and navigate it. The new collection has received many accolades.

Bella Media Services team has great appreciation for all the hard work put forth by members of the Archaeology Committee. We are happy to see wonderful feedback coming in through email to the National office about the collection. We are pleased that the OCTA membership and the archaeology community and enthusiasts will enjoy the growing collection for many years to come.

Dynamic OCTA Chapter Branding Implementation Underway! The new branding is truly beginning to take shape across our chapters to provide the overall organization with a consistent brand identity. All materials created for OCTA will follow a general visual style that is overall simple, classic, and contemporary. Colby Crabtree is currently meeting with many chapter leaders who are very enthusiastic in getting their new branded chapter logos created and those without Facebook pages are receiving valuable help in creating their new pages. Those chapters that already have Facebook pages can have Colby assist them in developing Facebook Group connections.

What is a Facebook Group and is it worth the time to explore the advantages and look for relevant groups to join? Here's a great answer to that question. A Facebook Group is a place for group communication, letting people share their common interests and express their opinions. Groups let people come together around a common cause, issue, or activity to organize, express objectives, discuss issues, post photos, and share related content. Anybody can create and manage a Facebook Group, and you can even join up to 6,000 other Groups. The groups' reach has been tried and tested by our team for nearly a year now and we have seen substantial growth on the OCTA Facebook page due to joining relevant groups, sharing event information and OCTA video links to those groups.



Regarding an update on the branded chapter logos, each chapter logo implementation is underway. We are happy to announce a new beautiful chapter logo brand color named "Deep Blue," that will accompany versions, black and white, dark and light monochrome for various uses. Thanks to volunteer Scott Alumbaugh for modifying the logos with the deep blue brand color for the chapters to utilize. Above is an example of the logo color. The chapter name appears in Optima Regular, sized to accommodate the space. The "Oregon-California Trails Association" is unchanging throughout the various chapter versions and appears in Optima font.



OCTA President Steve Allison presenting awards to John Briggs, John Krizek, Richard Hunt and Travis Boley

Marketing/PR Award Winners! Our committee may have broken a record for the most award winners from one committee. The OCTA Gering, Nebraska Convention was a wonderful time all around, but the night of awards was truly one of the best evenings of the week!

We are very happy to report that Travis Boley received the 2023 Distinguished Service Award acknowledging the remarkable achievements and dedicated 20-year service within our organization. He has not only been a vital figure in engaging with the public and various governmental bodies, but also a key figure in keeping the organization on track with events, communication, and engagement. Throughout his tenure, he introduced innovative initiatives to raise the profile of OCTA and its programs.

John Briggs received the outstanding 2023 President's Award for his two years of exceptional service as President of OCTA. His dedication and leadership helped advance OCTA's mission, goals and objectives on every level of the organization. His deep involvement with the organization and his sincere enthusiasm during his tenure has been inspiring to all of those who know him.

OCTA owes a debt which we can only partially repay through presentation of our 2023 Meritorious Achievement Award to John Krizek. John devoted years of service to the organization as National President and as longtime Chair of the Marketing Committee and was at the forefront of our Public Relations efforts that include "Saving South Pass," "Stop B2H," and "Forgotten Journey," among many others.

Richard Hunt received the 2023 Distinguished Volunteer Award. His tireless work to promote the organization, especially with the resurgent OCTA YouTube Channel, is one reason why he richly deserves this recognition. From producing a year's worth of videos, to spearheading new methods to raise OCTA's recognition and profile, as well as engaging with local Chapters, we are very happy to have Richard as lead of our OCTA video YouTube productions.

The OCTA Marketing/PR team congratulates the award winners and thanks them for all their hard work for OCTA as a whole and for their work in our committee. We greatly appreciate every one of our members for their leadership,

time, resources and dedication to the organization and committee. We are proud and look forward to accomplishing many more feats over the coming years.

Marketing Efforts Help Get 180 Attendees At The Gering, Nebraska Convention! Overview regarding all combined ads results for the Gering Convention promotions:

- Reached 76,401 Facebook accounts that viewed the ads at least once.
- Received 140,205 impressions/views of the ads meaning that some of the same accounts viewed the ads more than once.
- Received 1,214 clicks (the number of clicks, taps or swipes within the ad that led to advertiser-specified destinations, on or off Facebook.) All links either led to octa-trails.org home page or to Regfox registration.
- We spent \$467.62 and reached a close to equal share of men to women with 45-65+ being the dominant ages that were the most interested.

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.

CANVA Grant Offers Marketing & Branding Design Tools for Chapters & Committees!

You might ask the question: What is CANVA? Powerful marketing tools for nonprofits! With the free CANVA for Nonprofits program, we get access to premium design tools to help us create impactful marketing and campaign materials. CANVA is easy to use, and our entire organization can benefit. CANVA for Nonprofits has everything we need to create powerful marketing campaigns. We can create social media posts, presentations, infographics, websites, reports, posters, flyers, business cards, and signage. Here is a summary of what CANVA offers:

- 420,000+ templates
- 75 million+ images
- 3.5+ million graphic elements
- 3000+ fonts
- Look professional with set and forget brand colors, fonts and logos (our brand is currently uploaded)

- Turn one graphic into many with Magic Resize.
- Unlimited folders and 100GB storage for all your designs.
- Bring your creativity to life with animations and GIFs.

Intern Colby Crabtree will soon be working with chapters to help them utilize the new marketing tools that make creating easy for everyone that wishes to utilize the program.

Closing and New Marketing/PR Member

Announcement The Marketing/PR committee continues to work hard on many projects and will be reporting next time on the new octa-trails.org home page and site branding work, among, other notable achievements and new projects.

We also want to convey our sincere thanks to our newest Marketing/PR Video Productions sub-committee member,

Ethan Gannett. He accepted our offer to volunteer to help the team with video editing input and video quality control. Ethan is a member of the Colorado-Cherokee Trail Chapter, and Chairman of the OCTA Mapping & Marking committee, who was featured in a recent YouTube video on mapping and marking the Cherokee Trail.

WANT TO HELP? We are looking for volunteers to help us expand our efforts. If you are interested or know someone that finds delight in marketing/pr work, please send them our way! We are eternally thankful to all our members, partners, subscribers, volunteers, donors and followers for all your support!

Gina Sifers, OCTA Marketing/PR Chair

Hall of Fame

The induction of four new members into OCTA's Hall of Fame was announced at the convention in Gering - James Beckwourth, Margaret Long, Jedediah Smith and Joseph Walker. Their biographies appear in the Fall issue of Overland Journal and on OCTA's website. Highlights of their achievements were featured in a special video shown during the Awards Banquet at the convention. The committee

thanks Richard Hunt and Linda Graves for their production of this video.

The committee will be meeting later in the year to consider nominees for induction in 2024. OCTA members are welcome to submit nominations. The criteria for selection and instructions on submission are on the website.

Camille Bradford

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Meet Our Members

When OCTA was formed, the original focus was on the Oregon Trail, but it quickly expanded to include the California Trail. Since then, OCTA has expanded its purpose to include other related emigrant and historic trails, and, most recently another historic trail, the Butterfield Trail. Our three new members being introduced are from Iowa, Alaska, and Arkansas. Their interests represent the traditional emigrant and historic trails, but also the Butterfield. The most recent Overland Journal had articles relating to the traditional trails and also one on the Butterfield Trail, the most recently added National Historic Trail. We introduce Mike Sellberg from Iowa, Kat Lee from Alaska, and Garry Penman from Arkansas.



Mike Sellberg lives in the town of Ankeny, Iowa which is just north of Des Moines. Mike has been interested in history since he was a young boy growing up in Kansas City, Missouri. His interest centers on the exploration and westward migrations of the 19th century. The area is full of history of the explorers, traders, and pioneers who lived and passed through there. As many of us know, sometimes “life” has a way of getting in the way of our pursuit of our interests, but Mike notes, “Having spent my entire career in engineering and software, I want to spend my retirement pursuing my passion for history, photography, and travel. I also want to write a book, a historical-based travelogue relaying my experiences while I travel the national historic trail exploring the different “cultural folkways.”

Mike first heard of OCTA 20 years ago when learning about the Lincoln Highway and Gregory Franzwa. However, he joined this spring now that he has retired and “could immerse myself in the trails history and to meet members with a similar passion.” He had earlier seen parts of the Mormon Trail from Nauvoo, IL to Council Bluffs, IA.

His first trip dedicated to the trails was this past June when he followed the Mormon Trail from Council Bluffs, Iowa to Fort Kearny, then along the Platte River to Fort

Laramie and the Oregon-California trail to the Big Sandy Crossing at Farson where he turned off to Pinedale and the Museum of the Mountain Man. He then returned home by dropping down to follow the Smoky Hill Trail back to the Kansas City area before getting back home. The highlights he noted included Ash Hollow and Windlass Hill, Scotts Bluff, Fort Laramie, Independence Rock & Devil’s Gate. But the section he liked the most was when he could follow the route on the county and local dirt roads from Emigrant Gap over to Horse Creek, almost to Independence Rock. That is where he saw Avenue of Rocks, Willow Springs, Prospect Hill, and Horse Creek where he also met a local rancher. Later he took the dirt roads to the South Pass and the historical monuments commemorating Narcissa Whitman and Eliza Spalding.

Having lived on a gravel road for more than fifteen years, they are commonplace to him. His mode of travel is a class B RV with 4WD capabilities he has named “Estevan.” He loves the time when he travels off the interstates and can take state and county roads, or the local roads, or even, off-road and visit the small towns. As many of us have learned from our own travels, you get a better feel for the trails and small towns have some great little museums.

Mike notes that as this point as a new member he is enjoying the publications and learning from the wealth of material in them. As he travels more and his research increases, he looks forward to the opportunities that OCTA will present him in meeting and learning from the present members with their related interests and knowledge to support him in his quests.

Mike is a seasoned veteran of 32 years with the B2B software industry. He is now semi-retired, serving as a consultant a few days a week helping start-up businesses, but looks forward to full retirement in a few years. He lives with his partner Jessica, and their dogs Mose and Misha, He has three grown children, Erin, Brendan, and Aidan, scattered in the US and in post-graduate studies.





His hobbies include historical research, antiquarian book collecting, and photography, and he hopes to become an author. He looks forward to sharing his photographic work of the trails, perhaps having some of them appear in our publications. Here is where “MOM” can help.



Kat Lee, our second new member, is from Wasilla, Alaska, a different gold rush state, but her connection and interests in the westward migration are like many of our members. Now you will read as she describes her own introduction.

My name is Katherine (Spaulding) Lee. My family has lived in Alaska since 1962. My father

moved our family from Salem, Oregon to Alaska for the adventure and a future job. He went to work for the State of Alaska, Department of transportation and became a highway engineer. After the great earthquake of 1964 we moved between Homer, Soldotna, and Anchorage as he participated in road reconstruction. We were raised

primarily in Anchorage. I grew up loving the outdoors. I am married with two grown children, four grandchildren and two great grandchildren. I am currently retired after thirty years with an Alaskan based telecommunications company. I spend time in the summers camping around the state and gardening. During the wintertime I continue my genealogy research and working on sewing projects.

Twelve years ago my sister and I researched our family tree. I found out I loved the subject of genealogy and joined several societies with the hope of assistance in our searches. I discovered that several of our ancestors traveled to Oregon and California via wagon trains. I researched as best I could with the limited online resources that were available 7-8 years ago. I didn't discover very much. My sister and I made several trips out of state to Oregon, California and Oklahoma to discover what new information we could. Just this spring, on a hunch, I googled Wagon Train documents and noticed the OCTA website. I went to the site and searched for the names of my ancestors. Nimrod Ford and Thomas A. Stoddard. I saw that a William Cochran Stoddard had a document available if I was a member. So I joined with the hope of finding something new. I was so excited to see the 24-page document that summarized the wagon train details from the original diary of William Stoddard. William is my Great Granduncle and traveled via the Oregon Trail in 1852. He was the, then, unknown first child of Thomas Stoddard, my 2nd Great Grandfather. Thomas and the rest of the family traveled by wagon train to California about 1856.

Using the survey of location pages of the OCTA document dated 6.12.2003 I was able to Trace William C. Stoddard's path along the Oregon Trail, My husband and I were leaving mid-April this year for our first RV trip to the lower 48 so we decided to incorporate some of the locations from the diary into our itinerary. We dropped into Montana from Canada and worked our way to Fort Laramie, Wyoming, It was wonderful to visit and imagine my ancestors being there. From there we worked our way to Independence, Missouri to visit the National Frontier Trails Museum. We passed by Chimney Rock and several other sites of interest. We did miss the Guernsey Ruts and hope to return some year and see them. I love to visit where I know my ancestors lived or traveled through. (Don't we all!)

I am thankful to OCTA for making documents available that help round out a specific life experience of my ancestors. I also utilized the National Historic Trails Auto Tour Route Interpretive Guides that were available for the states we traveled. It was all so helpful.

Since our trip I have contacted the California Pioneer Society in San Francisco and obtained a copy of the 50-page transcript of the complete diary of William C. Stoddard. It has been a treat to read his daily activities and

know his thoughts and reactions to this time in his life. He was well-educated and became a lawyer at the age of 25. He actually traveled the trails twice. The first to Oregon, then back to Illinois to get married. He then organized another train and served as the Captain. He returned to his home in Sutter County, CA. He died in 1860 at 30 years old while assisting a sheriff transporting a prisoner. He was shot in the back.

Kat, her family, and their history is what OCTA is about.



Garry at Pott's Inn

Garry Penman is our third spotlighted new member. He lives in Pottsville, Arkansas, on the Butterfield Overland Stage Line trail, our newest National Historic Trail. Garry first heard of OCTA from Gerald Ahnert, an OCTA member who had invited Karen Bowers and Margaret Motley, two board members of the Pope County Historical Foundation, to the recent Tombstone, AZ meeting, shortly after the Butterfield Trail was designated a National Historic Trail. Most recently Garry met Travis Boley and Cecilia Bell who had come to a Pope County Historical Foundation board meeting to discuss OCTA and its mission. Since 1990 Garry has lived by the Potts Inn, a stop on the Butterfield line. After his retirement in 2017, he became active in the foundation

which oversees the operations and care of the Inn. OCTA seemed like a natural partner, and he decided to join. He is proud that the Potts Inn is one of the few or only original Butterfield structures still in place on its original site and foundation, and it is open to the public.

He has done some exploring of other Butterfield sites in Arkansas including Fitzgerald Station in NW Arkansas, and other station sites near Pottsville, such as Plummer's Station and the Cadron Ferry Crossing. He spent part of his childhood in Arizona, and he would like to go back to explore some of the sites there.

Garry notes that while interstate highways are good for speed, it is the country and local roads that are the most enjoyable, stating that "the pace is little slower, and the scenery is usually better," and that they allow for a better view and understanding of the trail in those settings. Gary loves sharing his knowledge of the Potts Inn, early Pottsville history, and the Butterfield Trail through central Arkansas. Don't be surprised that when you speak with him that he invites you to Pottsville and a personal tour of the Inn. I got an invitation after speaking with him in the first few minutes. That is really "trail enthusiasm." He looks forward to learning



Garry with Karen Bowers,
board member & tour guide

more about the other historic trails and the people's experiences as they traveled on those trails and to spreading that same enthusiasm.

Garry stated, "During my working years, I did metal fabrication. I am married to my lovely wife, Hope, and have an adult son, daughter-in-law, two young grandsons and a granddaughter. When I am not spending time with them, I like to explore old cemeteries and organize my large collection of baseball cards."

Here we have representatives of new members and a member also with added trail interests. It is truly a good cross-section of trail enthusiasts. You may look forward to more new members in our winter edition.

Bill Hill

News from the Chapters

TRAILS HEAD

Trails Head Chapter is honored and pleased to have the Outstanding Educator nominated and winner. Garrett Seuser of Junction City, KS.

Garrett teaches Social Studies to student's 3rd to 6th grades at Wakefield KS. Onsite archaeology and metal detecting field trips using correct scientific methods are included in his teaching.

His hands-on teaching and archaeological methods should be an inspiration to all teachers of history. What a way to make this become "living history".

We had a most enjoyable time visiting with him, his wife Cassidy, and 2 archaeology friends, Tony Frangella and Ken King of Denver, CO – that came to see him receive this award.

The Trails Head chapter also honored him with a check for \$250.00, a one-year Educator membership to OCTA and the Trails Head chapter.

Thank you, Garrett, for your excellent teaching methods and Congratulations!

Trails Head held our chapter meeting in the OCTA Bookroom at the Gering Convention Center. Attending were: President Jean Coupal-Smith, Travis Boley, Kelly Breen, Matt Mallinson, Ross Marshall, Shirley Marshall, Dick Nelson, Todd Nelson, Gina Sifers, Pat Traffas, Sandra Wiechert.

We were introduced to Todd Nelson, Dick Nelson's son,

who brought Dick to the convention and Todd was learning all over again about trail travel with his dad. Todd is also an Administrator at Barstow School, 11511 State Line Rd, KCMO. He told us how his school also teaches the history of the trails as the school sits on the trail site of the Santa

Fe Trail, Oregon & California Trails. The future of our organizations lies in the hands of these young kids learning how to love, preserve and enjoy the history of the trails. There are some very great teachers and methods out there to be acknowledged!!

Gina Sifers gave instructions on how to download the new OCTA logo and commented on ways we could use it: on letterheads, cards, newsletters, flyers, wearing apparel, etc. All are excited with the new logo. Colby Crabtree, OCTA's new intern will be working with the chapters to help them set up their individual FaceBook

pages. This will be an easy way for chapters to share information to those they have as "contacts/friends" on FaceBook.

Our annual meeting of the Trails Head chapter will be held at the Trailside Center, 9901 Holmes Road, KCMO. The date is Saturday, Nov. 4, - 9:30-12 noon, the speaker will be Bob Courtney.

Jean Coupal-Smith

NORTHWEST

Several of our Chapter Members attended the Convention in Gering, Nebraska at the end of July. Present were Roger Blair and Susan Doyle, Dave and Wendy Welch, Pat and Jack Fletcher, Jenny Miller, Sallie Riehl and daughter, Becky Peterson, Muriel and Gail Carbiener and Bob Clark. We all enjoyed visiting the Scott's Bluff area with its fantastic rock and mountain formations. My daughter has recently joined OCTA and the Chapter and had never been in the area before. We visited all the major stops along the Trail from Gering to the City of Rocks in Idaho. We drove there and back and really enjoyed our trip.

We are still working on dispersing the books from the storage unit mentioned in my last report. We expect to be finished by the October 7th Chapter meeting in Oregon City.

Some of our members will be at the Philip Foster Farm to hand out information on the Chapter and OCTA on Saturday, September 16, 2023. The Farm is located near the foot of the Barlow Trail near Sandy, OR. Emigrants crossing the

Barlow were able to find food and animals on their way to Oregon City. The Trail crossed over the base of Mount Hood and was difficult for the people arriving late in the season.

There will be a Cowlitz Trail Auto Tour September 9-10 led by Dennis Larson, Karen Johnson, and Dave Welch. The Cowlitz Trail is in Washington, and our past member Chuck Hornbuckle worked on tracing the Trail and developed a guide that the group will be following.

Robin Baker and 8 other Chapter members were back in the Blue Mountains from May 18th to the 21st. This is the third year in a row that our members have been searching for remnants of the Oregon Trail in that area. They found several traces of the original Trail, and Robin is working on the mapping for these remnants.

The Chapter will be hosting the July 2024 Convention in Pendleton, and the planning for the event is beginning in earnest.

Sallie Riehl



COLORADO-CHEROKEE

Many thanks from the chapter to Richard Hunt for his second trip to Colorado to film additional videos for OCTA's YouTube channel. Links to the videos also appear on the chapter's new Facebook page.

The Cherokee Trail Mapping team completed the ground survey of Roberts Ranch northern portion in Larimer County. Multiple east-west and south-north trail spurs were found in this section of the ranch including two major trails that were undiscovered by previous historical trail researchers. Inclusive in this ground effort was the placement of a dozen Cherokee/Overland Trail signs at the best trail evidence locations in both the northern and southern sections of the ranch.

On June 10, the chapter held a gathering at Roberts Ranch to showcase the trail finding work and discuss the Dutch George Cabin research that was done to ascertain its influence on trail locations in the southern part of the ranch. It was determined the original location of the cabin may have influenced some of the trail spurs traversing in front of the cabin location perhaps for trading purposes. Proposed sign verbiage to be posted at the current cabin location has been presented for consideration to Historic Larimer County.

We were fortunate to have DL Roberts speak to the group and give us a tour of the old homestead replete with turn-of-the-century furnishings. Fifteen members of both the Colorado and Wyoming OCTA Chapters attended this

event. As we wrap up OCTA trail-finding work on Roberts Ranch, the archaeological dig with the Northern Colorado Chapter of the Colorado Archaeological Society at the base of Devil's Washboard saloon and blacksmith shop potential sites continues. The first dig yielded promising evidence of emigrant camping in the area as well as a cache of broken bottles that could indicate a small saloon. Work continues in the fall with exploring the potential blacksmith site and further test holes on the saloon.

Just as we wrap up Roberts Ranch, the field team now has access to Stonewall Creek ranch in Larimer County and will begin trail-finding there this fall. This area is unique because it covers a significant hurdle in emigrant travel, traversing around Grayback Ridge.

Our new southern Colorado Cherokee Trail emigrant trail mapping group has completed one field outing at Bluestem Prairie Open Space in Colorado Springs. The team is meeting again to plan a second field event at that location and to form an ongoing reporting ground team for the Cherokee Trail.

Ethan Gannett presented a program on the history of the Cherokee and Overland Trails at the Fort Vasquez Museum Welcome Center on August 26, which was well-received. Ethan's presentation included a special treat for the audience to view drone footage of the trail ruts at Roberts Ranch, filmed during Richard Hunt's recent trip to Colorado.

Camille Bradford and Ethan Gannett



Chapter outing 6-10-23



DL Roberts and Ethan Gannett



Dutch George cabin

NEBRASKA

"It was a hoot!" a great comment from an attendee. "Wow, the Holy-Grail of ruts!" observed an OCTA member beholding the Guernsey ruts for the first time. The 2023 OCTA Convention in Gering, Nebraska, was hosted by the small, but energetic, Nebraska Chapter of OCTA. We were delight to showcase Western Nebraska and Eastern Wyoming historic trails.

"You are on the OLD OREGON TRAIL," proclaimed the lamppost banner outside the Gering

Civic Center. Indeed we were, with visits to Windless Hill, Chimney Rock, Scotts Bluff (the big rock, not Scottsbluff the town), Register Cliff, Fort Laramie, and so many other points that make California, Oregon, Mormon, and Pony Express Trails history so intriguing.

The list of those to thank for organizing this experience is too long to cite here. A sincere "Much Obligated" will just have to do.

Harlan Seyfer



CALIFORNIA-NEVADA

The CA/NV Chapter is a highly motivated group of trail enthusiasts who are driven to locate and preserve our historic trails. As you'll see, we're busy!

We recently completed installation of interpretive panels on the Beckwourth Trail at the Four Trees rest area/snow park on the Bucks Lake/Oroville Quincy Highway. Past Chapter President Dick Waugh has been the lead person on the Beckwourth Trail and organized this work with OCTA volunteers



In addition, the chapter assisted the Plumas NF with trail flagging on several hazardous tree removal projects along the Bucks Lake/Oro-Quincy Highway and in the Lake Davis Area along the Grizzly Valley. We also met with curator Richard Arnold and NPS Lee Kreutzer at the Beckwourth Cabin Museum east of Portolá regarding the California Auto Tour Guide.

On our June 6-8 Chapter work days, we mapped the Greenhorn in the Maggie Creek Ranch, Elko, NV area. There were ten participants. We documented a new route/segment, differing from the 1990s Buck quads.

We are planning Greenhorn #2 on September 7-9, 2023. The project will cover from I-80 up and east of the first summit.

Lassen's store and compound at Vina CA. The chapter will be planning a tour of the project in the near future.

The Tragedy Springs "Second Blaze" tree has finally been secured from the Eldorado National Forest. This has been Tom Mahach's life's work for many, many years. The blaze was finally moved to a private carpentry shop for restoration and preservation. The inscriptions are hard to read now, but Tom has a system to make it readable without touching the wood. This blaze was made by a member (Mr. Wright) of the Second Mormon Battalion in 1848 while piloting the Carson Emigrant Trail east at Tragedy Springs. Expect to see and hear more about this in the future. In the upper photo Tom is seated on the left and John on the right. The carpenter Joel is standing.



The annual Fernley Swales cleanup is on the calendar for September 23 from 9 AM to 12 PM. This project takes a lot of effort. Everyone who is physically able is invited to attend. Jon Nowlin has been the lead on this project for many years and will continue to be.

We have had a big success with the Tahoe National Forest

(TNF) recently. We are in the process of getting permission to use metal detectors as one of the tools to verify the trail(s) on federal lands. The TNF archeologists have asked that OCTA help them with a new recreation trail being proposed in Placer County. The TNF wants to be sure the new trail does not affect the emigrant trail. Look for announcements of trail work soon.

We've also had some success on the Lassen National Forest (LNF) in getting permission to use metal detectors as one more tool to verify a trail route. Dave Freeman is the lead on the Lassen Trail and his enormous project at Peter



a lot of research these past few months and we firmly believe there are more than four soldiers buried in the cemetery. We are planning to use Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) to confirm the eighteen spots where human remains dogs have hit in the past. Look for information in upcoming Trail Talks.

As part of my duties as Chapter President I have started an inventory of the trails in the CA/NV Chapter area. Have we verified the various trails? Is there

someone assigned to each trail who can assure OCTA has done its due diligence in researching, mapping, and ground truthing each of the historic trails? John Winner had started a program he called Adopt a Trail, back when he was the chapter President. We are going to renew that program and see where we are.

I am sure there is more going on in the chapter and will report out on it in the next issue.

Bill Holmes

IDAHO

Several members have recently stepped up to assist with the chapter. Shannon Gorringer is leading a new Social Media team with member Kristi Hamon. Kent Schaufelberger is taking over as the Membership Chairman. Steve Dayton is going to start assisting with the preservation effort. I am grateful for their help as well as for all the other members who help the chapter run successfully.

A few members joined me for two days in June to search suspected grave sites with cadaver dogs. The dogs searched a previously unexplored area on Ditto Creek and found a possible site for the mass grave where the victims of a massacre on the Jeffreys Route were buried. We are going back to the site with ground penetrating radar on August 26.

I recently was the first person to create a video in the new OCTA series, Traveling the Trail Videocast, in which the trails in each state will be highlighted. Richard Hunt interviewed me about the various trails in Idaho. Richard is coming back in late August to film the GPR outing and make a video with me of the Main Oregon Trail Back Country Byway. The video developed in May on our City of Rocks outings will be released to the OCTA YouTube channel in late August. I encourage you to explore all the excellent videos on the channel.

The Main Oregon Trail Back Country Byway booklet has been modified and proofed. It is now being sent to the printer. I will drive the entire byway in September with several BLM people to inventory the signs which are missing or need to be repaired.

The Idaho chapter has combined forces with the Utah Crossroads and CANV chapters to pay for professionally

mounting three contemporary paintings of the City of Rocks made by Nicholas Lowe. He followed the California Trail a few years ago duplicating the paintings of James F. Wilkins, a California Trail emigrant of 1849. The known paintings of Wilkins stop at Steamboat Spring in eastern Idaho, so we do not know what he painted at City of Rocks. Lowe used his knowledge of Wilkins' technique to create paintings which should be like Wilkins may have done. A grand unveiling is being planned for May 16, 2024, as part of our annual outing days with the City of Rocks. Nicholas will talk at the spring chapter meeting on May 18.

Gary Makey will be leading a Lander Road outing on Saturday, September 30. We will follow the Lander Road from the Wyoming border to the Fort Hall Reservation.

The fall chapter meeting will be Saturday, October 14, at the Idaho Pizza Company restaurant in Boise at Overland and Orchard where we have met several times before. The meeting will start at 11:15 with an excellent pizza buffet lunch to follow. John Hiler, a Mountain Home historian, will talk about some of the early history of that area.

I have offered the Northwest chapter convention planners the opportunity to have the Idaho chapter lead a pre-convention tour for the Pendleton convention next July. Tentative plans are to follow the Oregon Trail from Boise west to Vale, Oregon, then on to Huntington, Oregon. The route will be on paved roads except for a small portion at the original Fort Hall site. The tour will end by 3:00 pm for participants to drive west to Pendleton for the convention beginning the next day.

Jerry Eichhorst

CROSSROADS

Well, we are well into the summer of 2023. We are still not quite up to speed after COVID but we have a couple of activities to report on. I hope OCTA was well represented at the Casper convention. Congratulations to Steve Allison on being installed as OCTA national president. (We hope he doesn't forget Crossroads.)

We did have a one-day field trip this summer headed up by Steve Allison and Matt Ivory. We visited western

Salt Lake County and eastern Tooele County, following the California Road (or the Hastings Road). We visited many historic sites including the new park at Lake Point, Utah, that was built around one of our trail marker posts. There was cooperation between the developer, the city of Lake Point, Utah, OCTA National, and perhaps some help from the BLM to create this park. While it is still a work in progress, it looks like this will become a very nice addition

to the community. When we placed the post in 2000 it was vacant fields. Today the area is almost totally developed. The park will help preserve a section of the California Road. Thanks to all who have been involved.

We visited an archaeological site of petroglyphs at Bates Fort culminating at some trail ruts and rust marks from iron tires on the rocks made during the trail days. Twelve people were present.

Victor Heath and I paid a visit to Jesse Petersen in Tooele who doesn't get out much these days due to the care of his wife. We went to the Lake Point Park site and felt good that the developers have lived up to their promise of creating a nice park.

On other matters--a small contingency of us visited a historic site in Wyoming that I think few people know about. About 20 years ago the late Al Mulder made mention to me about a "three-corners" site in Wyoming. This planted a seed in me and I wanted to "sleuth" it out. It came to my realization that there had to be a common site where the Oregon Territory, the Mexican Territory, and the Louisiana Territory met at a common corner and, low and behold, we found it. Somewhere in central Wyoming the BLM has marked a site where these three political territories came together at a common location. It's called the Tri-Territories Historic Site. It answered a lot of questions for me concerning this historic site. Though by 1850, or thereabouts, it became irrelevant as

the United States claimed all of this territory. Its location is in a high prominence where the 42nd parallel crosses the continental divide. The BLM has created a wonderful historic site there with a split rail fence, three tall posts, and informational kiosks. It is 38 miles on a dirt road, but, to me, it is a very significant historical site. Thanks to the BLM.

On other matters, the Crossroads chapter is planning a fall field trip to visit a non California trail site in Utah. This is known as the "Hole in the Rock" trail which was traveled in 1879 and 1880 to settle southeast (or San Juan County) Utah. The boundaries of Colorado, Utah, New Mexico, and Arizona were well defined by then and the southeast corner of Utah still lacked any settlement due to the Colorado River canyons. The LDS Church felt the necessity to establish a settlement in southeast Utah to prevent an invasion of Colorado and Texas miners and cattlemen from establishing themselves into southeast Utah. So it called 120 people, as a mission, to settle San Juan County. The church (state) needed to establish itself in southeast Utah. The trail was cut by the people sent to settle San Juan County. The trail still exists and is historically very followable. The west side of the Colorado River is a back county byway, but the east side of the river is still very primitive. A trip on the west side is being planned by the Crossroads chapters for early October. More on this later.

Stay tuned, Anton Oscar Olson

SOUTHERN TRAILS

A sincere greeting from the Southern Trails Chapter (STC) of OCTA. Things are looking up for the STC as we are exploring the Southern Trails in many aspects. If you are a member of STC you should see lots of information we put out in our monthly newsletter. The STC has regular Board of Director (BOD) meetings and if your interested in the dates and to listen in, just go to our websites. For National OCTA, <https://octa-trails.org/regional-chapters/southern-trails-chapter/>, and for STC site with up-to-date information, <http://southern-trails.org/>. So, for those reading this, join STC as we are moving along and full of energy!!

We had a productive meeting at the National OCTA Conference in Gering, NE with about fifteen people attending the STC meeting. Some of the highlights we discussed are the Newsletter, which many people like and enjoy getting monthly. Please contribute – information on this may be found on the STC website. *Desert Tracks* is always looking for articles and, again, may be found on the website and Facebook pages. The upcoming Spring meeting of the STC and National BOD meeting before the STC conference will be in El Paso, Texas. This is the "El Paso Southern Trails Gathering" from March 13 – 16, 2024 (Wednesday – Saturday), checkout on Sunday the

17th. A reception will be held on the evening of the 12th (Tuesday). We plan to have many speakers, half hour and hour, and panels. Tours will be the Mission Trails; Old Fort Bliss/ Hart's Mill and Monument 1; Concordia Cemetery; Museums and other. Tentative and hopefully will be a Mesilla and Las Cruces tour; optional Hueco Tanks; Railroad Museum and Old El Paso Downtown tour and a few more. We will have two days of tours as well as some half-day tours that will allow you to visit other museums, or other points of interest.

Our Banquet will be set for Friday night instead of Saturday due to St. Patrick's Day as the area has several bars located nearby. It is anticipated to have the USIBWC Commissioner Dr. Maria-Elena Giner, Ph.D. as our banquet speaker talking about the history of Commission and the trails in the history of the borderlands. More information can be found here, <https://www.ibwc.gov/about-us/commissioner/>. This STC Gathering will be at the Sunland Park Holiday Inn (we had our last conference here over five years ago) located at Sunland Park Drive and I-10. This is a great location with ample parking, local food locations and two malls nearby. It also provides for quick and safe access to our tour locations as traffic in El Paso can be crazy at

times due to I-10 construction to the north, changing from two to four lanes.

Hope to see you all in El Paso and more information will be forthcoming in the future in NFTP and on the STC website and our Facebook page. Feel free to contact me

or others for more information. Contact info is on the website and Facebook pages and please put in header STC Gathering if questions on this.

Mark Howe

GATEWAY

Gateway chapter has had a long-standing relationship with the Doniphan County Historical Society and most recently the Robinson, Kansas, Historical Society. That has also recently grown to include the Brown County Historical Society. These Kansas areas are important to the preservation and interpretation of the St. Joe Road and its feeder trails.

In June, Jackie Lewin spoke to the Robinson group with an overview of the St. Joe Road. Then, in July, Wendell Ganstrom, president of the Robinson Historical Society, invited Gateway members to join them at the site of the Prairie Springs Campground just east of today's Hiawatha, Kansas. Ganstrom has been busy verifying the location

of the springs. Everyone enjoyed a picnic supper and homemade ice cream at the campground – a delicacy the emigrants would never have imagined.

In August, Wendell Ganstrom shared his research on the feeder trail from Atchison to the St. Joe Road with the Brown County Historical Society. A segment of that trail runs through his farm near Robinson, Kansas. Gateway was invited and several members attended. Gateway supports and encourages individuals and historical societies to do research into the historical basis of preserving the trails story.

Dave Berger



Dave and Linda Berger visit with Charlie Wiechert.



Lunch boxes decorated by the ABC Homeschool co-op students.



Some members of the group resting in the same location as the mid 1800 emigrants.



Carole McClellan and Sandy Smith enjoy homemade ice cream.

Wendell Ganstrom and Robinson musicians lead a sing-a-long of pioneer songs.



REMEMBRANCES



Dorothy Duffin

1925-2023

Dorothy B. Duffin, née Maggs, age 98 of La Grange Park. Beloved wife of 61 years to the late Reginald P. Duffin; fond mother of Lynne E. (William) Lilly and Philip K. (Nancy) Duffin; special friend to Robin Zimmerman and Randy Brown. Nancy and Reg were long-time

raising three children, she never lost her interest in dietetics, taking every opportunity to remind family and friends about the need to maintain a healthy diet. She became an active dietician again in the early 1980s after putting in long hours reviewing old notes and pouring over Gray's Anatomy to prepare for her recertification.

Working first as a traveling dietician in western Ohio and eastern Indiana, she finally accepted a position as a Clinical Dietician at Reid Memorial Hospital in Richmond in 1981. This began a 16-year career in which she interacted with hundreds of patients, doctors, and nurses, several of whom came by to see her during her final days. Talkative with any and all, she made a lasting, positive impression on everyone whom she met during her time working at Reid Memorial Hospital.

Upon her retirement, Mary Ellen and Chuck traveled extensively in the US and around the world. In addition to travel, her joys were visiting her children and grandchildren, traversing remote mountain passes in Colorado and Utah, and spending time at their homes in Colorado and Florida. She was a passionate fan of the Boston Red Sox, watching every game from Spring Training until the last out in the fall. Her home had Red Sox memorabilia throughout. On one visit to Fenway Park for a game, her name as a lifelong Red Sox fan was shown on the center field scoreboard.

Mary Ellen and Chuck were also very active in the Oregon-California Trails Association (OCTA), an organization devoted to the preservation of trails related to the 19th century westward expansion. Chuck served on OCTA's board of directors, while both served on numerous committees in OCTA's early years. They attended nearly every annual convention, beginning with the inaugural one in 1983. Mary's children donated their parent's extensive collection of original trail diaries and rare books to OCTA's headquarters in Independence, Missouri.

Survivors include her son Charles Wellington (Sabine) Martin of Manhattan, Kansas, daughter Amy Martin (Paul) Ferguson of North Andover, Massachusetts, daughter Catherine Martin (Dave) McCool of Newburyport, Massachusetts; grandchildren, Nicholas and Christine Martin, Benjamin, Rebecca, William, and Owen Ferguson, and Margaret and Clara McCool. Mary was preceded in death by her husband Chuck and her parents.

In lieu of flowers, the family suggests donations "In Memory of Mary Ellen Martin" to:

Girls Inc.

1407 South 8th Street
Richmond, IN 47374

Or online at www.girlsincwayne.org.

Condolences may be sent to the family via the guest book at www.doanandmillsfuneralhome.com.

OCTA members, and Reg co-authored *Graves and Sites* on the Oregon and California Trails with Randy Brown.

Mary Martin 1931-2023 Mary E. Martin, age 91, of Richmond, died Thursday, May 11, 2023, at Reid Health Center surrounded by her daughters, Amy and Catherine. She had lived at Friends Fellowship in an independent house since 2015. The family would like to sincerely thank Reid Health Hospital Staff and Hospice Services for the wonderful care they provided her during the last weeks of her life.

Mary was born on 30 August, 1931, in Foxborough, Mass., to Arthur H. and Ethel M. Ellis. Mary graduated from Foxborough High School in June 1949 and attended the University of New Hampshire in Durham, N.H., graduating in 1953 with a bachelor's degree in home economics. She went on to complete a one-year post-graduate course in Dietetics at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston in 1954. She then worked as a Clinical and Administrative Dietitian at the University Hospitals of Madison, Wisc., from 1954 to 1960. It was in Madison that she met her future husband, Charles (Chuck) W. Martin. They were married June 20, 1959 in Foxborough, Mass.

In August 1960, Mary and Chuck moved to Richmond, Ind., where Chuck took a position as an assistant professor in the Department of Geology at Earlham College. Mary remained in the home, raising their three children Amy, Catie, and Chuck. During those years, she developed a passionate interest in botany, and for a time was affectionately known to her family as the "belly botanist" because of her penchant for crawling around on hands and knees outdoors on family trips looking at and often collecting plant specimens, which she pressed into her growing botany collection in the basement. While

Welcome New Ezra Meeker Life Members

Robert Clark • Mary Lynn Corbett • Dr. and Mrs. Robert Corder, Jr.
Jean Coupal-Smith and Shirley Coupal • Bryan Hopkins
Matthew Ivory • Tom Mahach • Dick Waugh

Welcome New Members

Leesa Augustine
Rose Hill, IA
Mark Barry
Boise, ID
Anne Constantin Birge
Lincoln, CA
Kim Bishop
Waikoloa, HI
Marc Bond
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Sylvia Bowers
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Melissa Brown
Independence, MO
Alisha Cole
Kansas City, MO
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Andy Toelle
St Johns, FL
Angelo Tsakopoulos
Sacramento, CA
Shirley Viscalla
Mount Vernon, WA
Joe Waggershauer
Yuba City, CA
Terry D Watson
Milwaukee, OR



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:

Carol Bachhuber	Patrick Hussey	Sue Sesnon Salt
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Dues and Life Membership fees are increasing

Due to increased costs and inflation, effective October 1, 2023, the Emigrant membership level will increase from \$50 to \$60, while the Pioneer level will increase from \$65 to \$75 and the Pathfinder level will increase from \$90 to \$100. The Meeker Lifetime membership will increase from \$1,000 to \$1,500.

We've managed to keep our membership fees stable for over 15 years, but the time has finally come where we are forced to raise rates a bit to keep up with the times.

If you've been thinking about becoming a life member, now might be the time! Call us at (816) 252-2276 and let us process that Ezra Meeker Lifetime Membership for you now before the price goes up!

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 \$1,500 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>)	Brian L Dukleth	Rollie & Paula Johnson	Bob Noll
Ivan Baker	Keith Fessenden	Ken Jutzi	Stanley W. Paher
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Thanks to Our Business Sponsors

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

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Pat Traffas, Overland Park, KS
traffasp@gmail.com

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

Education Activity Book Raffle - February 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

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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.



P.O. Box 1019
Independence MO 64051

In this issue:

Gering Convention – It was terrific!

Preservation Updates & Progress

El Paso Spring Symposium • Pendleton Convention

Archaeology Collection Database Launched

