

NEWS FROM THE PLAINS

Newsletter of the Oregon-California Trails Association



Guadalupe Mountains at sunset, West Texas. Courtesy Wiki Commons

Winter 2024

Volume XXXIX, No. 1

FROM THE PRESIDENT



Last October, I served OCTA and Knowledge Tree Films as a site director and a pioneer extra while filming Preserving Gravelly Ford in Utah and Nevada. We were filming near the end of the shoot at Maggie Creek Ranch, near South Fork

Canyon, Nevada. South Fork Canyon is where the Hastings Cutoff exits the Ruby Mountains and joins the Humboldt River and the California Trail. It rained, snowed, cleared up, and repeated. We got some tremendous winter-like shots. That afternoon, I began to feel unwell. The pain in my back on the right side was intense. I was passing a kidney stone. I went to a nearby ranch house where the kind folks welcomed me. They had provided us with some horses and had family members in the film.

"Sit right there," the woman said, pointing to a chair in the corner of the room. "That's where Grandpa sits when he passes kidney stones." She brought me some pain meds and a lot of water. "The bathroom is right through that door."

I looked out the window at the threatening clouds in deepening darkness. It was easy to imagine walking

by outside in the Harlan Young company in 1846. What would I do then? Tough it out, I guess. Where could I go for help? Nowhere. Did the pioneers have medicine for this kind of ailment? Probably whiskey. Did they know to drink tons of water? Probably. Have you seen the Humboldt River? No thanks. A fellow could die from this back then.

As we celebrate the Holidays this winter, think about those folks today who are out in the cold or have nowhere to go. Be a Sub for Santa. Help someone in need. We all have our troubles to deal with, too. Margaret Reed observed that those in the Donner Party who kept faith in their hearts and looked at their trials with a hopeful and cheerful disposition fared much better than those who let bitterness and anger fill their hearts. Come what may, be of good cheer.

During the winter Holidays, we focus on Christmas, Hanukkah, or other traditions that all have one thing in common: light! On the darkest days of the year, we light up our cities, yards, and Christmas trees or Menorahs and celebrate the light. I am grateful to that ranch house porch light that guided me to safety. This winter, be a light. Happy Holidays!

Steve Allison, President



PRESERVATION

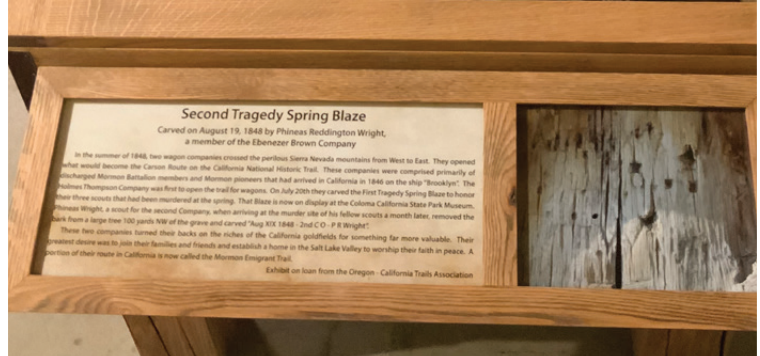
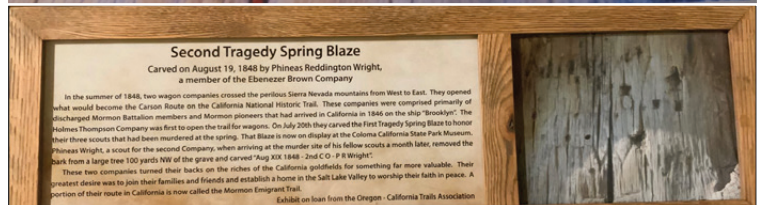


By John Winner
National Preservation Officer
OCTA's mission is to protect the **historic emigrant trails** legacy by promoting public awareness of the trails through research, education and **preservation activities**; by achieving organizational sustainability and by partnering with others.

In March 2019, the United States Court of Appeals, District of Columbia Circuit 1 issued an opinion that clarified the meaning of the term “directly” in Section 110(f) of the National Historic Preservation Act as referring to the causality, and not the physicality, of the effect to historic properties. This means that if the effect comes from the undertaking at the same time and place with no intervening cause it is considered “direct” regardless of its specific type (e.g. whether it is visual, physical, auditory, etc.) “Indirect” effects to historic properties are those caused by the undertaking that are later in time or farther removed in distance but are still reasonably foreseeable. Got that!!

Importantly for both Section 106 and 110(f), the court recognized that visual effects to historic properties can be direct effects under the NHPA.

Since the passing of the National Historic Preservation Act in 1966, The terms “direct effects” and “indirect effects” have been a standard by which we debate the impact to historic properties. A direct effect to a historic property would include the physical destruction of, or damage to, all or part of a historic property. An indirect effect would be effects that may change the character of the property's use or of physical features within the property's setting that contribute to its historic significance, or introduce visual, atmospheric, or audible elements that diminished the integrity of the property's significant historic features. The range of impact for direct effects would be much less than indirect effects, perhaps within a half mile, whereas the visual impact of indirect effects may be as much as 10 miles. Generally, a direct effect to a historic property carries much more weight when reviewing, debating, having spirited dialog or adjudicating a threat to an emigrant trail or site. This court ruling should change the approach to defining effects based on physicality and recognize instances when direct effects may be visual, auditory, or atmospheric. We'll have to wait and see how the agencies deal with this new ruling.



One thing that I have come to accept over the years as OCTA's National Preservation Office is that you must have *patience and perseverance*. Along with the chapter Preservation Officers and countless OCTA members, we have endured what seems like endless time on preservation projects. Not just threats to trails and sites,

but on projects that will save and preserve sites and trails before they become just a memory.

In Oregon and Idaho there has been a decade long effort to keep a 300 mile transmission line away from the Oregon Trail. A contested case, this has included drone simulation, specific site location impact studies and protracted mitigations have occurred.

In Nebraska, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service issued an Incidental Take Permit allowing a proposed 225 mile transmission line construction to proceed. The proposed line was directly over the Oregon and California National Historic Trail. A lawsuit followed (Oregon-California Trails Association, et al, v U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service). An initial victory followed where a federal judge vacated the ITP Permit and remanded the matter for further consideration and a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement by US F&W. There was a minor concession made by the power company to move the line a half mile east, but it still has a direct impact on the trail.

In Nevada, there is a 2001 Historic Preservation & Access Easement, (BLM Grantee) to preserve the

Fernley Swales, pristine Class 1 trail segments, and the original roadbed of the Central Pacific Railroad of the transcontinental railroad near the end of the infamous 40 Mile Desert. For 22 years there has been a less than successful effort by the grantee to enforce the preservation of the site and minimize degradation.

Again in Nevada, a ten year effort came to a successful conclusion with the recording of conservation easements on Class 1 trail segments and sites stemming from off site mitigation.

In California, what began in 1987 by OCTA member Tom Mahach after reading a 1948 report "*100 years at Silver Lake*", there was an effort to preserve an 1848 inscription on a tree stump near Tragedy Spring on the Carson Emigrant Trail in the Eldorado National Forest. After a protracted effort with the Forest Service, 36 years later the preserved "2nd blaze" is now on display at the El Dorado County Museum.

Epilogue: *Patience and Perseverance*, preserving the legacy of the mid-nineteenth century western expansion is not a quick and easy task.

FROM THE ASSOCIATION MANAGER



We hope you have your calendars marked for March 12-16 for the El Paso Trail Gathering, brought to you by the Oregon-California Trails Association and our Southern Trails Chapter. Chapter President Mark Howe, along with Cecilia Bell and other chapter leaders, have put together an amazing program to kick off Spring 2024.

OCTA's Board of Directors will hold its Spring board meeting during the day on Tuesday, March 12 at the Holiday Inn located at 900 Sunland Park Drive in El Paso. The Holiday Inn will also serve as the host hotel for the Trail Gathering, and reservations can be made by contacting them at <https://tinyurl.com/mhhpkp33> or by calling them direct at (915) 833-2900 and asking for the OCTA rate, which is \$109/night and includes a free cooked breakfast. The rate is good from Monday, March 11 to Sunday, March 17.

At the conclusion of the board meeting on Tuesday, the Trail Gathering will kick off with an evening reception right at the famed Oñate Crossing of the Rio Grande, which later became the site of Old Fort Bliss. This mountain pass was used by the Spanish along El Camino Real de Tierro Adentro, and is very near the site where that north-south trail intersects the east-west Southern Route to California and Butterfield Overland Stage Route.

The Trail Gathering officially gets underway on Wednesday, March 13, with a slate of entertaining and informative speakers. More great speakers will appear at the hotel on Friday, while Thursday and Saturday will be tour days, followed by a closing event on Saturday night. Feel free to join with others who will take self-guided tours by continuing on to Fort Davis and Big Bend National Park at the conclusion of the Trail Gathering.

Trail tours will include a tour of El Paso that will include the Mission Trail (including stops at all three beautiful Spanish missions), an historic cemetery, and the famed Magoffin House. A second tour will take attendees into New Mexico to see important sites in Las Cruces and Mesilla.

Indulge in the history of the Spanish in the Southwest while learning about early El Paso, and arm yourself for the military history of the region, from Old Fort Bliss, Col. Alexander Doniphan's exploits during the Mexican-American War, Whipple's survey of the 35th parallel, and the lives of officer's wives. Learn about available trail archives at New Mexico State University and the University of Texas - El Paso, and learn how to search records for women on the trails. And let's not forget about railroad history, from its arrival in El Paso to the unwelcome diseases that often came with this faster mode of travel. These presentations and more await in El Paso! Be sure to register now!

Travis Boley, Association Manager

Publications

While winter may cause most of us to slow down a little and chapters to reduce or put their outings on hold, our editors do not have that choice. Their timetables and required work continue, and they must keep on top of it. Some of our members have mentioned that they don't always have the time to read all the articles, well, winter is the perfect time to find those back issues and to get caught up and read those articles skipped. By late winter our committee members will be starting again on their usual work.

For the education publications, however, winter and spring are the times when those programs are in full swing.

Reading, Writing, and Riding along the Oregon-California Trails, one of our four education publications has been republished just in time for the spring sales and our Activity Book Raffle. Schools and teachers are encouraged to send in a postcard with their name and address and the number of students in their class and the title of one of OCTA's activity books for which they would like to receive a free class set. More than one entry made be made, but each titled book must be on a separate card. Entries must be addressed to OCTA Book Raffle, P.O. Box 1019, Independence, MO 64051. Entries must be postmarked no later than February 1, 2024. OCTA's activity books are *Reading, Writing, and Riding Along the Oregon-California Trails*, *Following Lewis and Clark's track*, *Finding the Right Place*, and *Here Comes the Pony*. Please encourage your school district and/or their teachers to enter.

Our student western calendar program and contest is underway. There are still a limited number of the 2024 calendars available through HQ. If you don't have the **Emigrant and Indian – Tools, Utensils, & Equipment** calendar, you can purchase one for only \$10.00.

Covid had reduced the number of student and

school submissions the last two years. Since schools have returned to "normal" with students and teachers back in the classroom, we are hoping for an increase in participation. The contest is open to all elementary students whether in public, private, religious schools or home taught. The **theme** for the **2025** calendar is **Emigrant and Indian – Toys, Games, & Other Activities**. Both children and adults were engaged in a variety of social activities. It should be fun learning about the many different ones. Fourteen drawings depicting these activities will be selected for the calendar. Each child whose drawing is selected will receive a check for \$50.00 and a copy of the calendar. Their school will also receive a copy of the calendar. Specific requirements for the contest and labelling information are required and may be found on OCTA's website. The deadline for submissions to OCTA is April 15, 2024.

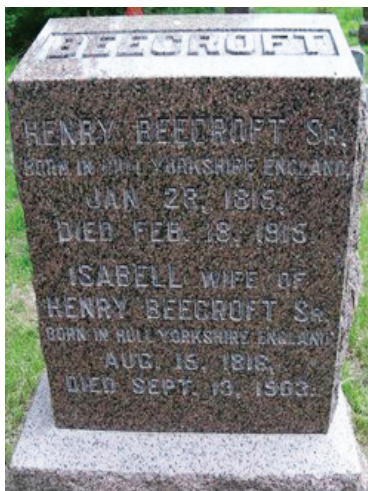
A third program, but not a publication, is the Outstanding Educator Award. There is a maximum of 5 categories available. They are: Elementary School; Middle School; High School; College, University & Adult Ed; and Institution-Museums & Parks. The recipients will receive a plaque, and a check for \$250. Application forms and specific instruction may be found on OCTA's website or by contacting headquarters. The deadline for receipt of all forms and materials is March 31, 2024. They should be sent to OCTA's headquarters. If you know of a teacher or institution whom you believe has an outstanding program on the westward migration for students or adults and is deserving, please encourage them to apply.

Questions about any of these programs should presently be addressed to headquarters or to Bill Hill.

Bill Hill

Planned Giving - Finding And Appreciating an Ancestor

OCTA makes it fun to find your trail emigrants and will even help issue an Emigrant Trail Certificate as you find your ancestors that made the trip by foot and wagon. I've found many of my relatives that made the trip in the 1850's. Some left from Kansas City as part of the wagon train to Utah as I research the Beecroft family. Henry Beecroft lives to be 100 years old and is buried in Council Bluffs, IA just across the cemetery from Grenville Dodge. It's fun to think he walked the streets there with Abraham Lincoln and Grenville Dodge as those two tried to decide where the eastern terminus for the Transcontinental Railroad should be.



I'm reminded of how much good was done when the South seceded from the nation after the election of Lincoln. Congress finally got things done like the Transcontinental Railroad and the Homestead Act. It was an opportunity for many to "own land" and enjoy the freedoms that America afforded the emigrants.

William Wells McGuire and Charlotte Babb McGuire made the trip in 1852 with a few of their family members. It makes it fun to see their names and ages as part of the Uriah Curtis Company of



1852, known as the Scotch Independent Company: Departure 28 June 1852 and Arrival Salt Lake Valley 29 September 1852. There were about 365 individuals and 51 wagons in the

company leaving from present day Council Bluffs that was then known as Kanesville, Iowa.

History is interesting, but the more you make it personal, the better it gets. When you find your own ancestors and research their lives and paths it does bring their energy back to life. We say their names, read their stories and reflect on how we got here. It's important to remember that tough times were here before, and tough people made their way through them. We are reminded that mankind should be kind, and each of the 50 states brings something unique to the United States of America. *Melissa Shaw, CFP®*

BLUFFS CENTENARIAN DIES OF OLD AGE

Henry Beecroft Passed His One Hundredth Milestone Only Last Month.

Went Overland to Salt Lake City Before the Start of the War.

(Council Bluffs.)

Henry Beecroft, aged 100 years and 21 days, thought to be the oldest person in Council Bluffs, died of the infirmities of old age, at 6:30 o'clock last evening, at the home of his daughter, Mrs. Theodore Guttar, 116 North Eighth street. Mr. Beecroft observed his one hundredth anniversary on January 28 of the present year, but owing to feeble health, it was a quiet affair. Numerous friends, however, called during the day to offer congratulations.

Mr. Beecroft was born in Hull, England, January 28, 1861. He came to America in 1881, it taking nine weeks to make the trip in a sailing vessel. He was accompanied by his son, Henry. They landed at New Orleans and took passage by river boat to St. Louis. His family joined him there.

In 1884 the family moved west, going

overland to Kansas City, and at that point joining a wagon train. They settled in Salt Lake City. In 1887 they decided to return east on account of dissatisfaction with the teachings of Mormonism, which was embraced by most of the population.

The trip across the plains was again made overland, in time the family arriving at Plattsmouth, Neb., thence going to Pacific Junction, Ia., and from there to Council Bluffs, where they arrived in 1890. Mr. Beecroft always worked at his trade of cooper until forced to retire of old age.

Until less than fifteen years ago he and his wife continued to keep house, but because of their advanced ages they gave up their home and went to live with Mrs. Guttar. The death of Mrs. Beecroft occurred two years later.

Mr. Beecroft was a member of the Latter Day Saints' church. He is survived by two daughters, Mrs. Guttar and Mrs. E. D. Brackebury of Almo, Ida., and one son, Henry Beecroft of this city.

The funeral will be held at 2 o'clock Saturday afternoon from the residence of the daughter, Mrs. Guttar, 116 North Eighth street, the Rev. Mr. Wright of the Latter Day Saints' church and the Rev. J. J. Hobbins of the First Baptist church officiating. Burial will take place at Walnut Hill cemetery.

Fundraising

An American legacy is at risk. The historic trails trod by half a million pioneers, gold rushers, adventurers, families—people in pursuit of a better life in the West—are under constant threat from development, including energy-related projects. 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.

YOU CAN HELP by supporting the preservation work of the Oregon-California Trails Association, on behalf of the Oregon and California National Historic Trails.

The OCTA Board of Directors created the Trails Legacy Society to encourage "legacy gifts" to the OCTA Heritage Fund (for operations) and endowments through bequests and other estate gifts. It is a great way to guarantee that the trails are there for our grandchildren and beyond.

One of the keys to the long-term financial stability of the Oregon-California Trails Association – and to our ability to protect the trails – is to grow the size of our Heritage Fund, Legal and Preservation endowments. OCTA uses these endowments to augment funds received from memberships, donors, grants, and other resources. In fact, an estate gift, when it is invested in our named funds can increase in value over a period of time while providing a stream of revenue for the OCTA mission.

At this time, many people are taking a fresh look at their wills and estate plans. Won't you join us in including a charitable gift for OCTA in your planning? The Trails Legacy Society brochure has additional information and it

is important that you consult with your family, your estate advisor, or your attorney before making any decision. Please take a moment to contact us so we will know that you have included OCTA in your estate plan. While bequests represent more than 80 percent of all estate gifts, there are other options. **Please consider including OCTA in your Will, as a charitable recipient in your Donor Advised Fund, as a beneficiary in your IRA, or Life Insurance policy.**

Remember, the size of your gift isn't important. The important thing is that you can make a difference in trails preservation that will last beyond your lifetime. Isn't that a great legacy?

What are the greatest immediate funding challenges before OCTA today that your gift can meet?

OCTA seeks to add support staff in the accounting area, membership relations, and development. The Archaeology website is now operational and much more information awaits site uploading once funding is available. Every bit as important as saving the visible trails, left by our forefathers, are the diaries, documents, and maps they used. Digitization and security of all OCTA historical resources is imperative. Your gift today will go a long way to funding these current opportunities.

Please make your gift today using the new Network for Good "Donate Now" link on the OCTA website (octa-trails.org).

Lee Black

Marketing/PR Committee

Marketing and Public Relations for Trail Preservation

Over the last year our dedicated team members have worked together to come up with strategies that improve our efficiency and proficiency by empowering our unique talents in the areas we are most experienced and serve best. We have restructured our committee and now refer to the committee and sub-committees as teams. Our new teams encompass video productions, website publications and public relations teams. We are tracking our work and its effectiveness through organizational and public feedback, statistics that flow through OCTA Google Ads Grant program, OCTA's new Google Ads/YouTube video campaigns that allow us to run video ads with OCTA marketing funds to help us reach more people. Other significant programs include social media marketing, websites, E-News, YouTube, and Network for Good. In this edition of News from the Plains we will explore and share some of those year-end statistics.

Websites, YouTube & Social Media Expose OCTA to New People!

OCTA's family of websites serves as a central hub for information, engagement, and calls to action. Key website statistics highlight the success and impact of marketing efforts. The team's focus currently is the octa-trails.org website that holds some of OCTA's most valuable revenue regarding store products and memberships.

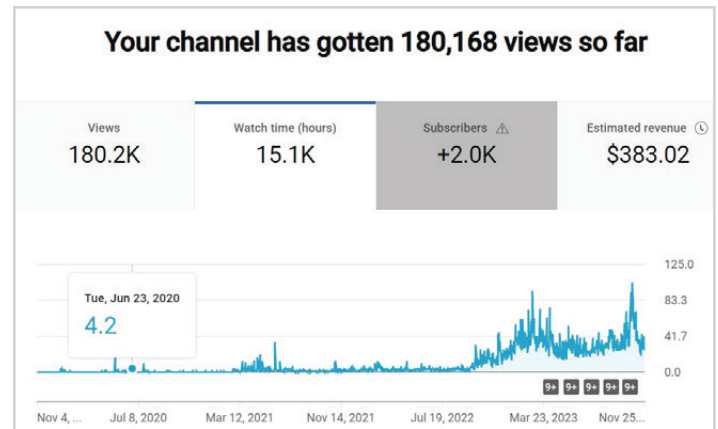
Traffic Analysis:

- 50,000 new visitors/users to the site in 2023.
- 54% increase in paid search visitors and they were more engaged (time spent and actions made on the site) in 2023 vs. 2022.
- 128% increase in organic social visitors. (due to new, consistent postings on OCTA social media)
- 240% increase in visitors who found the site searching for videos.
- 293% increase in views at the store (4,600 views in comparison to 1,100 in 2022)
- Top viewed site pages in order:
 - > Home Page
 - > Articles/life-and-death-on-the-oregon-trail
 - > Trail-facts
 - > OCTA-store
 - > Virtual-trail
- The new Archaeology collection section of the site has gained momentum with over 450 views since it was launched in August.
- The octa-trails.org online store's net sales are up 36% in comparison to 1/1/22 – 11/28/22. Product orders

are up 28% in comparison to the same period. These stats give us many insights and one is that more people are embracing the online process and using it more than ever before in OCTA's history.

OCTA YouTube Continues to Climb in Subscribership, Views and Revenue

The Video Productions team is ramping up many new video projects publishing two dynamic videos per week to the YouTube channel. The channel continues to increase in views, subscribers, and revenue. The team has also advertised several videos that have produced significant new viewers.



Content	Average view duration	Views
1 The Forlorn Hope - Retracing the steps of the Donner Pa... Feb 11, 2022	13:21 (29.1%)	11,292
2 Jim Bridger's Original Rifle Dec 30, 2022	3:51 (53.5%)	8,674
3 Trappers Point: Mountain Man Rendezvous Historic Site Oct 20, 2023	2:32 (32.6%)	6,269
4 A Trail of Tragedy - Hastings Cutoff - Ft. Bridger to Calif... May 25, 2022	10:37 (26.9%)	4,349
5 4 Can't Miss Oregon Trail Sites in Wyoming Nov 3, 2022	3:13 (61.5%)	3,459

All-time reports from when the channel was initially launched in July 2022 show the platform has received over 180,200 views, 15,100 watch time hours, and claimed 2,000 subscribers. As the channel grows in subscribers and views the revenue will continue to increase each month.

Powerhouse Google Shopping Driving Views to OCTA's Store

At the end of November, Gina Sifers, Marketing/PR Chairperson, connected the octa-trails.org store to Google Shopping. In a nutshell, it's another way for people to find the OCTA store more easily in Google search results. Customers can see the products in the Shopping tab, directly on Google Search, or on YouTube, when searching

for products and click to visit the website to buy. According to Google People are shopping across Google more than a billion times per day. (2022 Shopping Trends - Google Trends)

Within less than a week of adding the 365 items to the Google Shopping platform the products have received over 2,000 views on Google and YouTube. Google Shopping is free and at the same time offers future advertising opportunities that will allow us to more aggressively promote memberships and products. The Marketing/PR team is going to be working on ad programs and PR projects with a focus on helping OCTA increase memberships, donations, and store products in 2024.

Your products	
Understand how the products you sell are performing on Google	
Popular now	Trending up
Trending down	
Title	Impressions
The California Gold Rush, by Cobble	226
Covered Wagon Women: Diaries & L	207
Across the Kansas Prairie: Riding on	183
Jim Hardee - Bartolome Baca and I	136
Osborne Russell: Encounters with H	136
The Oregon Trail Revisited, by Grego	135

Happy Holidays & Shopping to All!

Last but certainly not least, when it comes to the public relations side of things, Travis Boley and John Krizek are masters at making the most of every PR opportunity. From local and national news media relations, liaison with partner organizations, speakers’ bureaus, education campaigns, conventions PR—Travis

and John continue to be the sub-committee handling those important responsibilities. They’ve literally been the OCTA news bureau for decades. If there’s anybody new out there with media backgrounds who’d like to join them on their team, we’d be glad.

Lastly, are you curious about some of the PR media results? Add this search string into Google search engine: Oregon-California Trails Association. The many pages of OCTA articles, products and other stories picked up by various news channels and other sources over the years are very impressive.

As we look to the New Year, we are excited at the possibilities to expand our endeavors and continue to reach more people with OCTA’s message of trails preservation. We want to thank our team of leadership, volunteers, support staff, interns, partners, donors, and every member for your support of our efforts to advance OCTA. We wish everyone a very happy holiday season!

WHO FINDS JOY IN MARKETING/PR & VIDEO

PRODUCTIONS? We are looking for volunteers to help us expand our efforts. We are hoping to find those who enjoy video productions or marketing/pr opportunities. If you are interested or know someone that finds delight in these areas of importance to OCTA, please send them our way! Thank you.

Gina Sifers, OCTA Marketing/PR Chair

Treasurer Report

Turner was able to get OCTA to about as good a place to allow us to be able to transition the completion of OCTA’s year-end financial statement at 9/30/23 as Staff and I could have hoped for in these circumstances. Our financial team will dearly miss having Turner as part of our financial accounting, tax and budgeting team for OCTA.

For the FY 2023, OCTA’s Net Operating Loss is about \$22,800. Turner and I were projecting a net operating loss for the year of around \$15,000 to \$20,000 at our Gering Annual meeting last summer. This is about half the amount of our net operating loss from our previous year ending 9/30/22 of about \$42,000. We are making progress in following our budget and our members have been excellent in providing OCTA with the financial support our Association needs. An example of this support from our OCTA members last year was that OCTA received \$34,500 in restricted contribution for our Journey of a Lifetime Campaign.

We have not received any cash distribution from our investment accounts yet for the last two years.

In September, 2023 we transferred \$16,500 into our Heritage investment account from our bank account funds collected by OCTA from 16 life membership payments and other memorial gifts received during the year. In the months ahead funds will be moved out of our endowments to cover budgetary expenses and funds to cover the cost of expenses associated with life memberships. Both of these actions are Board approved.

OCTA is in about as good of a financial position at 9/30/23 as it has ever been. Unrestricted Cash has been a little tight for October and November but Staff managed to pay all of our bills timely without using any of our Journey of a Lifetime reserve funds we collected in the past few years for future programs later on. OCTA’s good operation results do not include OCTA receiving and recording yet anything relating to the Scotts’ most generous transfer of publicly held stock to OCTA, which happened in October, 2023 and is a wonderful addition to our assets for the present fiscal ending 9/30/2024.

Jerry Mogg, Treasurer

Can You Dig It? OCTA's Online Archaeology Collection

By Laura Theel, OCTA 2022-2023 Intern

Early this year, OCTA's archaeology committee gave the thumbs up to put in motion the research needed to gather available published material about archaeological investigations and/or surveys that occurred on or near a historic pioneer trail site. The collection focuses on the Oregon, California, Santa Fe and Mormon trails, however not exclusively. Other emigrant trails and jumping-off points used during the Westward Expansion are included.

One of OCTA's interns, Laura Theel, began gathering the articles, and other published material on archaeology performed at these trail sites, to create a cloud research library to store the data. Meanwhile, the team of computer programmers at Bella Media Services worked to create the web site. When both sides completed their parts, the content from the research library was uploaded to the web site thus creating OCTA's Online Archaeology Collection.

Online Archaeology Collection



The archaeology web page can be found by its URL link, <https://octa-trails.org/archaeology-works/>, or on the OCTA home page, <https://octa-trails.org/>, and then it is found under the “Explore” tab. There is also a one-click access tab that has been added to the OCTA home page as “OCTA YouTube & Archaeology Collection” There is an introductory archaeology home page that explains how the content is set up for the user. One section has content divided by the state and/or the county where the archaeology site is located. The other section has content divided by the type of archaeology methodology, and this includes a section on Archaeology and Preservation Laws and Professional Archaeological Societies. Each entry contains a title, the author(s) name(s), and a brief description of the content. By clicking on the title, the user is provided a PDF file of the content and often with a link to its webpage, too. A list of the options to choose a different state or methodology type runs down the right side of each page for easy navigation. When you see a button at the bottom of a page that reads, “Older Posts”, this means that there are more entries and

should be treated as a “Next Page” button.

Mary Conrad, a member of OCTA's archaeology committee, worked closely with our intern as a consultant to ensure accuracy for the archaeological terminology. The online archaeology collection was Mary's vision from the beginning. She provided guidance during the processes along with many articles for content. She also felt it was necessary to include the sections, Archaeology and Historic Preservation Laws and Professional Associations. The Professional Associations page provides a listing of other archaeology and historical societies along with the link to their websites to assist users seeking more information.

Archaeology and Historic Preservation Laws

Archaeological resources, both sites and collections, are protected by law on federal lands. These laws and their regulations ensure that archaeological resources and their stories are preserved for this and future generations.

Preserve America: Executive Order 13287



The Preserve America Executive Order directs federal agencies to advance the protection, enhancement, and contemporary use of federal historic properties and to promote partnerships for the preservation and use of historic properties, particularly through heritage tourism.

ACHP 2021: Report On Federal Historic Property Management

Trail Archaeology Topics

Archaeology and Historic Preservation Laws

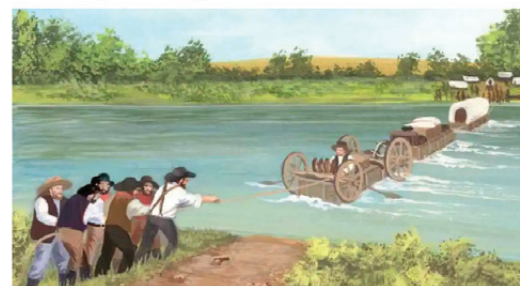
- Preserve America: Executive Order 13287
- ACHP 2021: Report On Federal Historic Property Management
- Missouri Historic Preservation: Section 106
- Incorporating Archaeology into Local Government Historic Preservation and Planning: A Review of Current Practice
- Unmarked Graves And The Law
- 25 USC Ch. 32: Native American Graves Protection And Repatriation
- 54 USC Ch. 3021: National Register Of Historic Places
- 54 USC Ch. 3125: Preservation Of Historical And Archaeological Data
- Archaeology in the National Park Service
- Enactment Of Title 54—National Park Service And Related Programs

It is OCTA's hope that the new archaeology webpage will be viewed and enjoyed by the general public, as well as used for scholarly research by the academic community and archaeologists. It will also help to promote OCTA's mission to advance education and research on early emigrant trails. If you have any content suggestions or comments, you can email them to Gina Sifers with Bella Media Services at gina@bellamediaservices.com. Any requests or submissions will be reviewed before being added to the archaeology collection. More information will be uploaded to the collection periodically over time and as new information becomes available.

OCTA > Wyoming > Sublette County

Sublette County

2012 Archaeological Investigations at the Lander Trail New Fork River Crossing Historical Park, Sublette County, WY



In September 2012, USUAS conducted a second year of investigations that again focused on the Island Area, but also expanded their investigations east of the river onto the Olson property. This year's work was an expansion of the 2011 investigations [Read More ...](#)

State List of Archaeology Sites

- Arizona
 - Apache County
 - Cochise County
 - Coconino County
 - La Paz County
 - Maricopa County
 - Navajo County
 - Pima County
 - Santa Cruz County
 - Yuma County
- California
 - Humboldt County
 - Imperial County
 - Lake County
 - Lassen County
 - Nevada County
 - Plumas County
 - San Bernardino County
 - Siskiyou County
 - Tehama County
 - Yuba County
- Colorado
 - El Paso County
 - Jackson County
 - Kiowa County
 - Lake County
 - Larimer County

The Trail Gathering at El Paso – March 12th to 16th, 2024

Visit www.octa-trails.org for more details

AGENDA

Tuesday, March 12, 2024

- 9 AM - 3 PM:** OCTA board meeting at the Holiday Inn El Paso West at 900 Sunland Park Drive, El Paso, TX 79922, including lunch from noon to 1 PM (free for board members, officers, chapter presidents, and committee chairs; \$20 for all others). Call the hotel at (915) 833-2900 and ask for the OCTA rate of \$109/night that includes a hot, cooked breakfast.
- 6 PM - 8 PM:** Opening reception at the Abara House at the famed Oñate Crossing of El Camino Real Tierra Adentro

Wednesday, March 13, 2024

- Speakers:**
- Dr. Troy Ainsworth** - El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro
 - Dr. Miguel Juarez** - Early El Paso
 - Dr. Doug Dinwiddie** - Destiny's Spearhead: Alexander Doniphan's Mexican War March
 - Larry Francell** - Emil Whipple's Survey of the 35th Parallel
 - Cecilia Bell** - Anna Maria Morris: Territorial Military Wife in El Paso and S. New Mexico
 - Lt. Col. John Hamilton** - Old Fort Bliss
 - Mike Bilbo** - Biological Crusts on Historic Trails: Nature's Way of Locking in Authenticity
- Dinner on your own

Thursday, March 14, 2024

- 8 AM to 4 PM** **Tour one - "Mesilla and Las Cruces"**
Dinner on your own
- 6 PM to 7 PM** Southern Trails Chapter business meeting

Friday, March 15, 2024

- Speakers:**
- Dan Judkins** - Henry Skillman, Mail Carrier and Stage Driver, 1849-1861
 - Doug Hocking** - Escape from Mesilla, 1861
 - Prince McKenzie** - The Railroad Arrives in El Paso
 - Dr. John Bell** - The Good, the Bad, the Ugly: Tuberculosis on the Trails
 - Dennis Daily** (New Mexico State University) **and Claudia Rivers** (University of Texas - El Paso)
Trail Archive Research Materials at NMSU and UTEP
 - Patricia Kidney** - Women Bring the Gospel to SW New Mexico and El Paso
 - Danielle Brissette** - The Magoffin Family in El Paso
- 7 PM - 9 PM** **Dinner Banquet** with Keynote Speaker
Dr. Maria-Elena Giner, International Boundary and Water Commissioner

Saturday, March 16, 2024

- 8 AM to 4 PM** **Tour two - "Three Missions in El Paso, Concordia Cemetery, Chamizal National Memorial, and the Magoffin House"**

Sunday, March 17, 2024 and Monday, March 18, 2024

Post-Gathering Tour of Fort Davis & Big Bend National Park

Registration

The Trail Gathering at El Paso March 12th to 16th, 2024

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Credit Card #: _____ Expiration: _____ 3 Digit Code: _____

Registration (Individual – individual rate only for this event) \$95 x _____ = _____

Opening Reception at the Abara House \$10 x _____ = _____

Tuesday deli buffet lunch \$28 x _____ = _____

Wednesday lunch

Grilled chicken salad \$20; California Club \$22; Chicken salad croissant \$22 (circle one) \$ ____ x _____ = _____

Thursday tour \$65 x _____ = _____

Friday lunch

Cobb salad - \$22; Italian sandwich - \$23; Tuna salad; Croissant - \$22 (circle one) \$ ____ x _____ = _____

Saturday Tour \$65 x _____ = _____

Total \$ _____

The undersigned agrees that neither the Oregon-California Trails Association (OCTA), its directors, officers, employees, and agents, nor, to the extent legally permissible, any private or public (state or federal or instrumentality of either), landowner or tenant licensee in possession of any land on or over which any tour, field trip, or outing takes place, or through which it travels, in connection with or as part of any meeting or convention of OCTA, shall have any responsibility or liability, in whole or in part for any loss, damage, injury to person or property, delays and delayed departure or arrival, missed carrier connection, cancellations.

Changes in schedules, program, or itinerary, or mechanical defect or failures, or for any negligent act or omission of any nature whatsoever which results from, or arises out of, or occurs at or during any activities, programs, tours, field trips, or outing there at, or part thereof, or any accommodations, transportation, food, or other services or facilities furnished or supplies there at, or any additional expenses occasioned thereby, or any liability sustained or incurred as a result of any of the foregoing.

All persons registering at or attending any such meeting, convention, or symposium shall be bound by the foregoing and deemed to have consented to the same by such registration or attendance.

The refund schedule is as follows:

On or before February 12:	100% refund
On or before February 26:	50% refund
On or before March 5:	25% refund
After March 5:	No refund

There will be an extra \$25 fee for any registration received after February 26.

For more details or to register online, visit www.octa-trails.org

Mail check to: OCTA, 524 S. Osage St., Independence, MO 64050 or call (816) 252-2276.

Meet Our Members

In this edition we are welcoming three new members from all across the country. **Andy Toelle** from the southeast from St. Johns, Florida, **Leesa Augustine** from the mid-west in Rose Hill, Iowa, and **Shirley Viscalla** from the west in Mount Vernon, Washington.

Andy Toelle is not a stranger to the western American historic trails and considers himself a history buff, but not only the history of the West. Many of our members are also members of the Santa Fe Trail Association and are familiar with Leo Oliva, the well-known historian and expert on the Santa Fe Trail. Leo is Andy's father-in law. However, that is not Andy's major tie to the trails. Some of his ancestors emigrated to Oregon in 1844 and that played a major role. Most of us have probably watched the TV series "Yellowstone" and its prequel "1883." For Andy that caused him to think about the hardships his ancestors faced and to wonder even more about how they even made it across the continent to Oregon. These ties and his renewed interest in his family's history were not lost on his wife. She knew about OCTA and thought membership would be a perfect gift. Andy said, "She was right."

Over the years Andy had not done a lot of traveling over the trails, but in the 1990s Andy, his father, and his grandfather did join a wagon train reenactment on the Oregon Trail in a covered wagon in Oregon. He remembers how happy his grandfather was remarking that there were three generations of the Toelles now back on the trail.

When traveling, if he is just trying to get from one place to another, he notes that the Interstates are best, but if he has the time, the long way over the secondary roads is preferred. He remarked that he gets to see more that way. He likes to visit museums, forts, and castles. Traveling on the secondary road often results in his finding some small cool museum, which is an experience all of us have probably had. One of the forts he enjoyed was Fort Hays which is on the Smokey Hill Trail, and a favorite castle is the Heidelberg Castle in Germany. He also noted that when traveling for fun, he'll go to a place and use it as the base for other day trips in the area.

Andy's ancestors, Alexander and Rebecca McQuinn joined the wagon company led by Cornelius Gilliam. He has a self-published family genealogy book with information about the company which was known as the Independent Oregon Colony. There is also a McQuinn pioneer cemetery in Oregon.

Andy is married and employed as an Extension 4-H Specialist for the University of Florida. He sings in the church choir and also plays the guitar. He enjoys deep sea fishing, hiking, and traveling. He hopes to see more of the Oregon Trail that took his ancestors west.



Leesa Augustine first heard of OCTA in 1992 while on a family vacation. They had stopped in at Scotts Bluff National Monument, Gering, NE, and toured the site and visited the gift shop. There she came across one of the books in the Covered Wagon Women Diaries & Letters series, edited, and compiled by Kenneth Holmes. That was it, her interest was sparked. She joined OCTA and started her collection of the Covered Wagon Women series.

However, soon raising her family began to take more time and she let her membership expire. Their kids are now older, and she noted, "This year I rejoined, and I am glad I rejoined!" Some of her and her husband, Mike's ancestors came west, and OCTA is another avenue for her to use to explore and do family research.

Leesa's paternal grandfather had started her family's research, her father continued it, and now she has jumped in. Her husband's family immigrated to the US from Germany and settled in Washington County, Iowa. Their son, Albert Augustine led wagon trains to California several times, but always returned to Iowa. He settled in Mahaska County, Iowa. Leesa's family has a copy of one of Albert's logs from April 19th, 1855, to September 19, 1855.



Another book she had purchased was Randy Brown's Graves and Sites on the Oregon and California Trails. Her family has followed the trails in Wyoming and Nebraska and have stopped at many of its places described. She has often thought about the hardships and illnesses encountered and how most of the women and children endured them, but some did not and died as they journeyed west and dreamed of a better life. She has been inspired by many of those emigrant women and children. Her family's travels have been by car and have usually entailed taking the state and local roads as they journeyed to the different sites.

Leesa was born in Indiana, but her family moved to Iowa while she was in 3rd grade. In 1979 while attending Missouri State University she met her husband, Mike, whom she married in 1983. Mike's great grandfather,

William Brown, established their family farm in 1852, where they now live. They have two girls, Catlin is married to Chris Rhea, and Hannah who has special needs. They farm with Mike's brother and son raising corn, beans, cover crops and cattle. As a farm wife, and caregiver for Hannah, Leesa is kept pretty busy. However, she still has some time to devote to her interests in pioneer history, crafts, genealogy, gardening, cooking and "enjoying my life here on the Augustine Homestead."

Shirley Viscalla is interested in genealogy and learned early on that her family has many ties to the western historic trails. It was this interest which led her to the Oregon-California Trails Association. All of her mother's family ancestors came across the trails to settle in the west. The first ones came in 1852. A second segment can be traced back to emigrants from Switzerland who came with the Mormons in 1854. Others came later in 1865. Whether they first arrived in California, Utah, or Oregon, they all ended up settling in eastern Oregon.

Trail preservation is an important part of OCTA's goals,

and Shirley believes this to be very important. Although her home in Washington is not close to the actual trail which may limit her "hands on" activities, she hopes to interest her family members in OCTA and to share some of the volunteer opportunities for trail preservation with them.

Shirley's favorite historic site and museum is Flagstaff Hill, the National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretative Center in Baker City, OR. It had recently been closed for renovation and should be even better now. The Fines members of her family placed a memorial brick there. Her Harris and Hug branches have been meeting together for 85 years near LaGrande, OR.

Shirley noted that she has learned much already from the OCTA's publication and YouTube videos and looks forward to meeting other members and supporting OCTA's preservation work.

I am already looking forward to the next edition and introducing more of our fellow OCTA "rut nuts." Hope you enjoyed all your holidays and wish you a Happy New Year and many Happy Trails! Until next time. *Bill Hill*

Welcome New Ezra Meeker Life Members

David and Linda Gibbs • Katherine "Kelly" Breen
Thomas Mahach • Shannon Gibson

Welcome New Members

Diana Beatty
Colorado Springs, CO

Nicholas Backman
Park City, UT

Michael and Denise Berger
Toledo, WA

Timothy Augustine
Austin, TX

Sherrill Stephens
Bountiful, UT

Terry Clark
Omaha, NE

Joseph Green
Minden, NV

Stephanie Alves
Healdsburg, CA

Lynelle Perry
Boise, ID

Terri Geissinger
Sheperd, MT

Stephen Renn
Monroeville, PA

Kelly Fleming
Patagonia, AZ

Robert Diehl
Woodland Hills, CA

Lorraine Blanton
West Hills, CA

Alan Fitch
Prescott Valley, AZ

Thomas Burk
Pasadena, CA

Peter Hanson
Mill Creek, WA

Jerry Kathan
Bend, OR

Pamela Potter
Boeme, TX

News from the Chapters

TRAILS HEAD

During the early fall, several Trails Head Chapter members gave of their time and expertise in supporting the Santa Fe Trails Association's gathering in Independence. A successful event by all accounts.

At the Chapter's annual meeting held at the Trails Center in Kansas City, Missouri, on Saturday, November 5, reports were shared and 2024 officers elected: Michael Smith as President, Dick Nelson at Vice President, Jean Couple-Smith as Treasurer and Sandra Weichert as Secretary. The highlight of the meeting was a delightful presentation by Olathe, Kansas, historian Bob Courtney on the evolution of the Olathe schools. As Bob would say, as the frontier days faded, the development and support of community schools was one of, if not the most, visible sign that the regularity of settlement had replaced the days of the ox-team wagons

heading off for the buffalo wallows of the plains.

A holiday gathering is planned in partnership with the Missouri River Outfitters and the Friends of the National Frontier Trails Museum on Saturday, December 2 at 1:00 PM at the J Huston Tavern located at Arrow Rock, Missouri, thereby offering Trails enthusiasts a silent auction, a relaxing lunch and Holiday-themed sharing time at one of the iconic locations on the early Santa Fe Trail. All are welcome.

The Trails Head Chapter looks forward to a full year of activities in 2024 including an opportunity to check out the relocated National Frontier Trails Museum, now located in the Truman Memorial Building, 416 W. Maple Street, in Independence where it features exhibits relocated from its former Pacific Street building.

Michael Smith

KANZA

Greetings fellow KANZAns,

Thank you to all those who made it to the annual meeting November 18. A report will be elsewhere in this newsletter. I am really honored and proud to continue as president as KANZA celebrates 27 years this year. In its early years, it was a vibrant group that accomplished much. It mapped the trails from one end of our territory to the other. It hosted many programs, taught and performed pioneer skills, did reenacting at many sites. Most significantly there were usually 20 or more people at all meetings!

At our annual meeting we had fewer than ten attend. That is more than we have when we do a program. I know you all are devoted to KANZA; or else you would not pay the dues. We are a shadow of the 1996 KANZA. We cannot do the things we once did for lack of people. To address this, we work more closely with the Alcove Spring Preservation Association who mostly all are KANZA members also. Even so we need more people.

Being a glass half full type of person, I am excited about

the coming year. We have a possible tour to see wagon swales in the spring. We will be working with Alcove again to hold the Oregon Trail Trek in October. Maybe the Wamego students will be back to visit Alcove. A scout troop will be holding a camporee at Alcove we can help with. There is a possibility of an American Indian dance troupe will come as well as another great concert. We can participate in all of it.

Won't you consider becoming active? We need people who can help give tours of the Marshal Ferry, Trail Junction, Alcove, etc. It is easy and fun. How about learning and teaching some basic pioneer skills? Maybe you would like to be a reenactor and reenact stories of Marshall's Ferry or the visit of the Donner Reed Party. Arleta is always looking for articles for our newsletter; just give her ideas or perhaps write a few lines. These are just a few ideas; there are many more.

I value our friendships. I hope we can return to the great 1996 group of achievers.

Have a great holiday season. *Duane Iles*



CROSSROADS

Crossroads Fall 2023 Field Trip

For our fall field trip, on October 6, 7, and 8, we visited an unusual pioneer trail in southern Utah, which, after all these years, is still very easy to follow.

A little history: From the time Utah was settled in 1847 it was the goal of Brigham Young (leader of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints) to create a State of Deseret in the western United States that would encompass all of Utah, Nevada and a good chunk of California to San Diego for a seaport. This never came to pass--California was a state by 1850, and that changed the whole picture. Nevada became a state in 1864 chiseling away at the proposed state of Utah, and Colorado was made a state in 1876. The New Mexico territory, including Arizona, formulated the southern boundaries. Utah had one section of its territory that was not settled due to the difficulties of crossing the Green and Colorado Rivers to get there. It was felt by territorial officials that this remote corner of southeast Utah must be settled, and a plan was formulated to create settlements there once and for all.

In 1877 the plan was formulated by territorial officials to proceed with this settlement, and about 140 people volunteered to start a company to settle southeast Utah. However, unknown difficulties created many hardships as the company started out in the fall of 1879 to go across country to reach their destination in unknown territory. The Spanish Trail, as it existed, would have been an easier option, but the mileage was thought to be too far. They gathered in November, 1879, and began the task of building a new road across southeast Utah. Unknown difficulties were encountered when they reached the Colorado River. Wagons had to be lowered down to the river through a crevice where a partial road was built. Once at the river, a ferry boat was built to cross the river. After they crossed

the river, they traveled up and through the canyons of San Juan County where difficulties continued until they reached the future site of Bluff, Utah, which was the end of the trail.

The entire road had to be built as they went along – 180 miles of uncharted wilderness where their actual progress was measured at 1-1/2 miles per day. After reaching Bluff



they had planned to go 18 miles further to Montezuma Creek, but the draft animals simply gave out. There were 80 wagons and about 120 people. Nobody died and two babies were born. It's an incredible tale of courage to begin settlements in remote southeastern Utah. The entire journey of 180 miles took six months from November, 1879, to

April, 1880. The trail is still very visible today although it has never been used as a road. The plan worked, and they settled southeast Utah—Bluff, Blanding, Monticello, and Moab. This “Hole-In-the-Rock” trail was, however, not a California or Oregon trail. It was simply a trail totally in the state of Utah and was probably one of the last pioneering endeavors in the western United States due to the fact that railroads were now becoming prevalent. To follow the trail today is quite an adventure--following the same road and seeing the same scenery and trying to imagine the hardships of crossing this country in 1879.

This Crossroads fall field trip was planned to include the first half of this trail from Escalante, Utah, to the rim of the Colorado River (now Lake Powell). Three carloads of trail enthusiasts completed this journey to the rim and back (55 miles each way) on a three day trip in October, 2023. This is not a California/Oregon trail but it indeed was a pioneering endeavor. A few things were different from the pioneering emigrant days as this trail went from west to east and also the company traveled in the middle of winter. It is an enduring piece of Utah history that should not be forgotten.

Signing off - A. O. Olson

NORTHWEST

Twenty-four of our members gathered on Oct 7, 2023, at the Abernethy Grange in Oregon City. We were pleased to award several awards to our members for the work they have done for the Chapter. Award winners

were Dave Welch, Robin Baker, and Michele Lanigan. Michele has helped us find the trail across the Umatilla Military Storage property. Two side trails leading down to the Columbia are on the property. Don Scott with the

Curtis Heritage Education Center in Oregon City gave a talk about the more than 130 horse drawn vehicles and other artifacts that the Center holds. After the Chapter meeting was over, Mr. Scott took our members to see the collection.

All of the books that the Chapter had been keeping in storage at Oregon City have now been dispersed to Chapter members and to the Genealogical Forum of Oregon. The Chapter can no longer afford to rent the storage unit, nor can it accept any further book collections from members. We are sad that we can't maintain these

collections, but we need our funds to help defend the traces of the trail that still exist in Oregon.

Dave Welch and Dave Price have been working to preserve the trail that is now within the Boardman to Hemingway Transmission project. Dave Price is from the Idaho Chapter and has been very helpful in bargaining with the Project leaders in preserving what we can. The Transmission towers will be very visible along the Trail, and since they are very tall the towers will impact the views along the trail.

Sallie Riehl

SOUTHERN TRAILS

Southern Trails Chapter (STC) has been busy this last quarter of 2023. We are planning for our Southern Trails Gathering in El Paso, Texas from March 12 through 17th, 2024. This will be held at the Holiday Inn at Sunland Park and I-10, the same location we held it at several years ago. We plan our opening reception at the La Hacienda / Hart's Mill location that is now managed by Abara, a local non-profit that owns the building and grounds. This is right on the U.S. – Mexico border and is one of the oldest buildings in El Paso. The next day, Wednesday will be presentations and a reception that will be repeated on Friday, but our Banquet and STC business meeting will be held Friday after presentations. Thursday and Saturday will be tours. We plan to have three tours to choose from. One will be by bus as the Mission Trails Tour with stops along the historic Missions south of El Paso, lunch and then stops at Concordia Cemetery and the Magoffin House historic site. The second tour will also be by bus but going up north to old Mesilla, NM and into Las Cruces, NM with a lunch stop. The final

tour is a car led tour to areas around El Paso and on the refurbished historic Trolleys for an excellent overview of the rich wild west history of El Paso, Texas and the borderlands. After the tours come back on Saturday, we will have a small closing reception and time to talk to old and new friends and discussions before wrapping up the Gathering.

As of now, we have many speakers ranging from the Camino Real to how to do research at local historical sites and university special collections. As we are finalizing the speakers and tours, please keep looking at the National OCTA webpage and especially the STC webpage and on STC Facebook page for updates. Also, as a member of STC, you get Desert Tracks and our monthly newsletter. So please send in your articles to both Desert Tracks and our newsletter editors. As a note, we will be looking for a new editor of Desert Tracks as one of them is stepping down to work on a book, please consider if you have time. Otherwise, see you in March 2024 in El Paso, TX!

Mark Howe

CALIFORNIA-NEVADA

Since we are in the Thanksgiving time of year we are giving many thanks to someone that helped preserve the emigrant trail this past summer, Kristin Hostetter. Kristin is a Maintenance and Rec Volunteer for the Amador District of the Eldorado National Forest. Kristin took it upon herself to clear downed trees and replace and update various signs on the Carson Emigrant Trail between Covered Wagon Pass and Caples Lake. She also surveyed the damage done by a wind storm and the Caldor Fire between Tragedy Spring and the Maidens Grave off Hwy 88 for work next summer. The following note to Kristin is from Frank Tortorich and says it all. *Bill Holmes*

Dear Kristin,

Thank you so much for your great work on the Carson Trail. It warms my heart to see the Forest Service taking an active role in its preservation.

The Peddler Vista interpretive signs were developed

by the Forest Architect with my input many years ago.

The records should be at the SO. I was the one who maintained that sign and put it up and took it down each season for some 20 years.

I am delighted that you are replacing the pregnant Triangles.

The Section from Tragedy Spring to Maiden's grave can be a bit difficult to follow. Especially after the big wind downfall followed by the fire.

Please know that I am willing to help relocate that segment next season.

Don't hesitate to contact me anytime. I have been working on this trail for the past 45 years, only age is slowing me down.

The signs at Caples lake are beautiful. Thanks.

Warmly,
Frank

IDAHO

It is hard to believe that it is already November and the year is almost over. 2023 seems to have gone by extremely fast.

We continued the search for the mass grave site on the Jeffreys Route near the main Oregon Trail in August. We brought a cadaver dog back and re-confirmed several sites on top of a small knoll, then used ground penetrating radar to scan the top of the knoll. Although there were several anomalies noted in the scan, none turned out to be indicative of the

mass grave I am searching for. OCTA video master Richard Hunt produced an OCTA YouTube video of the day which is available at GRAVE DOGS! In Search of a Massacre on the Oregon Trail. The OCTA YouTube channel is filled with interesting historical and trail-related videos. I encourage you to visit the channel and click the "Follow" button.

The next day, I took Richard on a tour of the Main Oregon Trail Back Country Byway to create a

video of the byway for the OCTA YouTube channel. The resulting three-part video series should be released soon.

I have been working with the BLM to revise and reprint the byway booklet. Several years ago, the Idaho Transportation Department moved the signs that were located at Rattlesnake Creek, so the byway route needed minor changes. The booklet has been reprinted and should

now be available at Three Island Crossing State Park and the BLM offices in Boise. This booklet has proven to be

extremely popular with many fourth-grade teachers using it for their Oregon Trail programs. Hopefully, the upcoming byway videos will assist those teachers as well.

Cory Donelly and three members of her team from the NPS Trails Office visited Boise in September. I took them on two days of tours of the Oregon Trail to the east and west of Boise. It was good to see Cory again and meet the new members of her team. Our partnership with the NPS Trails Office is extremely important because we work with them on our sign projects throughout the state.

A few days later I did an interview for BSU Public Radio about the Oregon Trail in Idaho and then conducted a class for the BSU Osher program. About 150 people attended the class in person with many more on a Zoom call of the class.

IOCTA member and

fur trapper expert Jim Hardee and I have been working with the Utah Westerners organization to develop and lead a 4-day bus tour for their members next September. The organization is dedicated to learning the history of the West and conducts an annual bus tour. Jim and I will lead them on a tour of the Oregon Trail from Pocatello to Walla Walla, then back across to Salt Lake City. Jim and I



Old Westfall general store, Linda Mae's house now



Oregon Trail to the West tour participants at Henderson grave near Vale, Oregon



Cory Donelly and her NPS Trails Office team at Three Island Crossing overlook



Ditto Creek cadaver dogs and GPR outing

combined on a tour of the Oregon Trail near Fort Hall last year for Idaho's Heritage Conference and it was an amazing collaboration. I am sure this tour will be as well.

Gary Makey led a tour of a few people on the Lander Road in eastern Idaho on September 30. I was unable to join the tour but heard good things about the outing and saw pictures of the beautiful scenery. That section of trail is one of the prettiest roads that emigrants traveled in Idaho. I hope we can do the outing again with more participants.

About 25 people attended our fall chapter meeting on Saturday, October 14, in Boise. It was nice to see old friends again and meet some newer members. Preservation continues to be a major focus for the chapter with more power projects being proposed across the state. The new Idaho chapter's Facebook page is up and looking great. The membership voted to increase the annual chapter membership dues beginning January 1 to \$15 for an individual and \$20 for a family or couple. This is the first dues increase that I am aware of. Directors Jim and Dawn Fazio, and Betty and Pedro Celeya, were re-elected to three-year terms. I appreciate their continued service to the chapter. Mountain Home historian John Hiler then

spoke to the group about early explorers in Idaho. After lunch, John Briggs led a group of people on a walk around the Ada County Oregon Trail Recreation Area.

In mid-October, John Briggs and I traveled to the tiny hamlet of Westfall, Oregon, to meet with a local woman and explore the Meek's Cutoff in the area. Linda Mae turned out to be a charming and vigorous woman who loved sharing her knowledge of the area with us. We found a short section of what appeared to be trail ruts. It is an area that we may do more exploring in the future.

Finally, I was recently accepted to be a speaker for the Idaho Humanities Council Inquiring Idaho program. Inquiring Idaho is a program that serves as a bridge between organizations interested in hosting presentations on a variety of humanities-related topics and speakers who are passionate and knowledgeable about a specific topic. This acceptance should provide opportunities for talking to groups across the state about the Oregon and California Trails in Idaho.

Activities are already being planned for next year. Please watch the chapter website calendar page for details.

Jerry Eichhorst

GATEWAY

There was no better way to celebrate the year than by having our Annual Meeting. The Gateway Chapter Annual Meeting was held on November 14th. It was full house with 32 attending. We celebrated our partnership with Pony Express Museum and thanked the speakers from Gateway that were a part of Tuesday Night Talks. We celebrated Richard Hunt for producing videos on Joseph Robidoux and the Pony Express riders. We celebrated the involvement of the Board and members in the Journey West Symposium held in St. Joseph last spring. We celebrated our new partnership with Robinson Kansas

History Society as another mile on the St. Joe Road. And, we learned about the Bu3erfield Stage Trail from one of our members. Dr. Bob Corder was the featured Speaker who gave a recap of the OCTA's National Convention.

At the Annual Meeting we elected officers. President Dave Berger, Vice President Jackie Lewin, Secretary Sandy Smith, Treasurer Fred Sawin and returning Board Members Corky Smith, Diane Waddell, Karen McClellan, Sarah Elder, Kim Schu3e, Jerry Mogg, Bill Leppert and new member Wendell Granstron. We look forward to planning for this next year. *Dave Berger*



The Gateway Board for 2024: front row (l to r) Karen McClellan, Sandy Smith, Jackie Lewin, Diane Waddell; back row (l to r) Fred Sawin, Dave Berger, Wendell Ganstrom, Jerry Mogg, Bill Leppert and Corky Smith. Not pictured are Kim Schutte and Sarah Elder.



Dr. Bob Corder, first time OCTA convention attendee, told of his experiences in Gerring last summer.



A full house of members visited before dinner.

COLORADO-CHEROKEE

Our chapter meeting was held on November 19 and our new board will take over leadership of the chapter on January 1:

- Ethan Gannett, President
- Tim Kelly, Vice President
- Ginny Dissette, Secretary
- Peggy Watson, Treasurer
- Sharon Danhauer, Board member at large
- Larry Obermesik, Board member at large

Sue Heifner has agreed to coordinate event planning and Nancy Prince will assist with outreach in Southern Colorado.

I have enjoyed serving as President and appreciate all the support of our members and friends over the years. I am grateful to Ethan for his vision and plans for leadership of the chapter. I also want to express appreciation to the others who have served as President since the reactivation of the chapter in 2005: Richard Deisch, Sharon Danhauer, Berl Meyer and Mark Voth.

Ethan will also continue as Mapping Chair and his report follows.

Camille Bradford

Mapping Committee Report:

The Cherokee Trail Mapping teams have grown considerably and been very active this quarter. In northern Colorado, a new property, Stonewall Creek Ranch, has the team trail-finding around Grayback Ridge to connect the Cherokee Trail between two properties of Roberts Ranch. Multiple spurs were discovered rounding the ridge and even at least one over the ridgetop. The team was rewarded with strong class one trail evidence with swales paralleling the northern side of the ridge traveling uphill and in line with General Land Office section crossings. The preserved 1871 Barlow Ranch residence on the property foretells the story of the blacksmith/wheelwright and nurseryman who once homesteaded at these crossroads. Nearby emigrant era Livermore Cemetery was recently searched by the team with the help of cadaver dogs to

discover many unmarked graves for the landowner.

Back on Roberts Ranch, Steamboat Rock, a Cherokee Trail

landmark, was climbed to rediscover period signatures etched in the stone, some dating back to 1849! An additional archaeological dig site was discovered and investigated near Wheeler Springs which is at the intersection of the Overland and Cherokee Trails. Significant artifacts at this new location were discovered that warrant further investigation in conjunction with the Northern Colorado Chapter of the Colorado Archaeological Society. While evidence of a blacksmith shop has not been discovered at the three dig sites in this locale, the Wheeler Springs site offers a tantalizing glimpse into an heavily occupied location at these crossroads with many period artifacts: broken pot belly stoves pieces, ceramics, and pane glass to name a few.

Ethan Gannett presented an Overview of the Cherokee and Overland Trails for the Chapter at our October Zoom meeting. He also gave an update to the Indian Peaks Chapter of the Colorado Archaeological Society

on the topic of Roberts Ranch trail-finding and recent archaeological dig results.

Our new Cherokee Trail South Team has been busy. In September, the team made their second visit to Colorado Springs' Bluestem Prairie Open Space, where they learned how to collect emigrant trail data using the Gaia application on their cell phones. Then, under Bruce Watson's tutelage, the team learned how to share the trail data they'd collected in a standardized format.

Since their initial visit to the Bluestem site in June, the Cherokee Trail South Team has identified additional trail segments at Bluestem that require further investigation. The team's goal in 2024 is to finish documenting all of the trails that passed through there and, with Bruce and Ethan's assistance, create a comprehensive report about their findings.

Ethan Gannett



NEBRASKA

California Hill Maintenance

"After fording [the South Platte] at the Lower California Crossing near Brule, Nebraska, the trail climbed up California Hill." So wrote Bill Hill in *The California Trail Yesterday and Today* (p. 129). Once up California Hill the trail remained on the highland until descending down Windless Hill at Ash Hollow.

Jeff Uhrich, retired Superintendent of Ash Hollow State Historical Park, and Bill have been keeping an eye on California Hill. Jeff had contacted Keith County Roads Department about maintaining the site pull off; unfortunately the county was not able to do so. However Jeff, along with Don Engel, were able to weed-whack and mow an area large enough for two cars to fit comfortably off the county road.

Meanwhile, Travis Boley sent Bill two of the smaller/newer NPS Oregon Trail and California Trail signs. In mid-October Bill and Jeff met at the site to paint the mailbox protecting the sign-in book, put up the new signs, and do other maintenance.

Bill's email:

We were there for a couple of hours, and during that same time we had three cars stop at the highway sign and walk up to the area. We talked to two couples and one lone traveler about the history of the hill. Only one might have signed in, two told me they did not.

During that time Jeff worked some more in the parking area and painted the sign-in mailbox, took down the old sign I had helped put up years ago, and we put up the two signs. There were two sign-in books in the old mailbox. Jeff gave the older full book to me, and I later gave it to Loren Pospisil at Chimney Rock [National Historic Site].

Bill provided some final thoughts:

The area does need more inspections and scheduled upkeep which can be influenced by the weather. The "V" shaped entrance through the fence needs to be repaired. The old 3/8" plywood panels are weak and battered and need to be replaced by something heavier and thicker, perhaps 3/4" plywood. It would need two c. 4' x 8" sheets. A sturdier sign-in box might be considered. More

interpretive signs at the entrance there would be helpful. Perhaps there could be a sign with a map of the trail as it goes up the hill crosses the dirt road and winds up to the top of the plateau/hill. All three of the people who stopped asked me about that. Possibly more info about the upper site down at the highway sign should be considered to further encourage visitation of the trail swales up the hill.

Note that there are two sets of four California Hill. The first is on US 30 about four and a half miles west of Brule,

Nebraska (41° 5.46' N, 101° 58.732' W). At the northeast corner of a rural road intersection there are three markers: a Nebraska State Historical Society marker for California Hill, a stone "Great Western Trail" monument erected in 1912. and a more recent (2021) granite marker for the



"Diamond Springs Pony Express Station."

About one-half mile north up the gravel road behind these markers are the actual trail ruts and the pull off with the markers repaired by Bill, Jeff, and Don.

After Bill's email appeared in an article on the boys' efforts on California Hill in the Nebraska chapter newsletter, Nebraska members Dixie and Glenn Colson contacted them to donate two 4'x8' 3/4" plywood panels for the V-shaped pedestrian entrance.

Mormon Trails Across Nebraska

Recently "Mormon Trails Across Nebraska" (MTAN) was registered with the Secretary of State as a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization. MTAN's mission is to document, promote, preserve, and publicize the Mormon Trails across present-day Nebraska.

Dues are \$35 per year by sending a check, with contact information, to Tom Bryan, 2652 Prairie Place, Columbus, NE 68601. More information can be obtained by emailing Harlan Seyfer at Plattsmouthhistorian@gmail.com.

Previously only the Iowa Mormon Trail Association was active. This year also the Wyoming-Utah Mormon Trail Association was formed.

The formation of a Nebraska Mormon Trail association was suggested by Dick Bennett during the "Mormon Trail Symposium" held at the Mormon Trail Center, Omaha, in August 2022. His suggestion was eagerly taken up by Fred

Roeser (Grand Island), Erick Wadsworth (Nampa, Idaho), Tom Bryan (Columbus), and Harlan Seyfer (Plattsmouth); respectively: President, Secretary, Treasurer, and board member. Dick, at the time, was transitioning from Director of the Mormon Trail Center to (alleged) retirement, but has since been elected to the board, along with Bill Bolte (Central City).

Plans are underway for a mini-conference and bus tour – tentatively scheduled for Saturday April 27 next year

(about the time of year when grass is green enough for livestock travel). MTAN is also discussing cooperation with the National Park Service, National Historic Trails. The goal is to identify projects which benefit both groups.

MTAN members Tom Bryan and Harlan Seyfer recently verified that the “Jail and Courthouse Rock” marker east of Bridgeport along US 26 is missing and needs replacement. The two narrowed down the date it went missing to late last August. *Harlan Seyfer*

REMEMBRANCES



Turner Rivenbark receiving the Gregory M. Franzwa Award for Meritorious Service from Association Manager Travis Boley at the 2019 OCTA Convention in Santa Fe, New Mexico

Turner Rivenbark 1940-2023

We are very saddened to report the passing of our friend and colleague, Robert Turner Rivenbark, who departed on Halloween. Turner was a long-time OCTA member who became Treasurer of our organization way back in 2006. At the time, our then-Treasurer Doug Brown was leaving Independence for Niagara Falls to take over his family's concessionaire. So, our then-President, Vern Gorzitze of Salt Lake City, put out the word to the OCTA membership that we were on the hunt for a new Treasurer. Enter Turner Rivenbark.

Turner hailed from a small town in eastern North Carolina and was every bit the consummate Southern gentleman. He worked with our headquarters staff Kathy Conway and Travis Boley to prepare all of our financial statements. Turner was one of those quiet volunteers that most people never met but who likely did more for this organization than anyone else in terms of the time and effort he put in and the duration over which he did it. Though he formally stepped down as Treasurer several years ago, he stayed on to assist our new Treasurer, Jerry Mogg, to continue to provide the reports and support needed to keep the board informed of our finances. Though he no longer traveled to board meetings, Turner was still very much involved in the day-to-day financials of the organization. In fact, our fiscal year ended on September 30 and right up until last Friday he was

working with Jerry and HQ staff to finalize year-end reports. He quite literally volunteered for OCTA right up to the very end of his life, even though he was quite fatigued these past few months.

We were thrilled to give him our Gregory M. Franzwa Meritorious Achievement Award 2019 Turner Rivenbark. It might as well had been the Volunteer of the Decade Award by that point; he meant that much to our operations. Treasurer Jerry Mogg placed a value of about \$20,000 a year that Turner was saving us by offering his financial skills. Taken over the course of 17 years, that's about \$340,000 in savings. And he wasn't just doing that for us. He also volunteered to keep the books at his church and another non-profit in his home-state of North Carolina.

But beyond all of that, Turner was a wonderful, kind, thoughtful man and he meant the world to us. Those of you who were fortunate enough to know him and work with him know what we mean. Rest easy, Mr. Rivenbark. Your work was very much appreciated and will not soon be forgotten.

Here is his obituary:

Robert Turner Rivenbark Sr. of Wallace, N.C. passed away peacefully on Tuesday, October 31, 2023.

Turner was born March 10, 1940, in Wallace, N.C. to the late Horace Rivenbark Sr. and Mary Fulton Rivenbark. He graduated from Wallace Rose Hill High School in 1958 and attended the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Graduating from UNC in 1962 with a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration, he embarked on a long and distinguished career as a certified public accountant becoming a senior partner at Cherry Bekaert & Holland.

Turner's career took the family to Raleigh, Wilmington, Birmingham, AL and Greensboro before settling in Gastonia, N.C. for twenty-six years. Following his retirement in 2003, Turner returned to his hometown of Wallace. He was a devout member of First Baptist Church of Wallace and served as its treasurer for many years. He also served as the Coordinator for the Feed the Hungry Children Back-Pack Ministry and as the Treasurer of Duplin

County Outreach Ministries working to support those in need in his community.

Turner possessed a real joy of life. He enjoyed the outdoors whether it was swimming in the surf at Wrightsville Beach, biking, or kayaking. He loved the natural beauty of the American West where he traveled frequently. That passion called him to serve as Treasurer of the Oregon California Trail Association. He was big supporter of WRH Bulldogs football, where he played during his high school days. Undoubtedly a Tarheel, he loved tailgating in Chapel Hill and cheering for the light blue. Turner appreciated the simple pleasures of a Paul's Place hot dog or a peck of fresh steamed oysters. Most of all he loved his family.

A loving and faithful husband, father, grandfather, brother and friend, his caring heart and warm smile truly will be missed.

Turner is survived by his son, Robert Turner Rivenbark Jr. and his wife Lesa of Lowell, N.C.; daughter Shelly Rivenbark Hill and husband Lee of Cary, N.C.; brother William Rivenbark and wife Gail of Sarasota, FL, sister Mary Emma Rivenbark of Wilmington, N.C., and sister-in-law Mary Sue Rivenbark of Wilmington, N.C.; grandchildren, Tyler Rivenbark, Kayla Rivenbark Wallen (Cody), and Taylor and Dunning Hill; and many cousins, nieces and nephews. He is predeceased by his loving wife of 58 years, Barbara Hall Rivenbark, and by his brother, Henry Ray Rivenbark.

A celebration of Turner's life will be held 11:00AM on Saturday, November 4, 2023, at the First Baptist Church of Wallace with a reception to follow.

The family thanks everyone for their kind wishes and prayers.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests those wishing to express sympathy to consider making a donation to Duplin County Outreach Ministries or Feed the Hungry Children whose missions he supported so strongly.



Bill Petersen

1943-2023

We are sad to report the death of Wilbur "Bill" Petersen. A long-time member of our Nebraska Chapter, Bill chaired the 2014 convention in Kearney. He was also featured for an entire chapter in Rinker Buck's #1 New York Times Best Seller, *The Oregon Trail: A New American Journey*, as he helped guide

Rinker across Nebraska, showing him the important trail sites in his home state. Bill was a great guy and will be

sorely missed by all who knew him. Here is his official obituary:

Wilbur "Bill" P. Petersen, 80, of Minden, passed away on Friday, September 29, 2023 at his home, with his family by his side. Funeral services will be held on Wednesday, October 4, 2023 at 10:30 a.m. at St. Paul Lutheran Church in Minden with Rev. Donald Becker officiating. The service will be streamed to the church's YouTube page. Interment will be held later that day at 1:30 p.m. at the Minden Cemetery with military honors presented by the Minden American Legion, Heartwell Veterans of Foreign Wars, and the United States Army Honors Team. Visitation will be held on Tuesday, October 3, 2023 from 4-6 p.m. at Craig Funeral Home in Minden. Memorials in Bill's honor are kindly suggested to the Kearney County Historical Society or the Minden Senior Center. Arrangements are under the care of Craig Funeral Home in Minden.

Wilbur "Bill" P. Petersen was born on September 1, 1943 to Harold and Florence (Rients) Petersen in Worthington, MN. The family later moved to Upland, NE where he graduated from high school.

He joined the Army National Guard in 1964 and after serving 31 years he retired as 1SG with HHC 1-195th AR out of Kearney.

In October of 1964, he married Nancy Mitchell and to this union two sons were born, James and John.

Bill had many jobs in his lifetime. He installed sprinklers for Bob Lundeen, was a custodian at the Kearney County Courthouse, a deputy sheriff for Kearney County, then Bill was appointed as Police Chief of Minden. After retiring from law enforcement, he and his wife managed the motel at Pioneer Village.

He was a member of the St. Paul Lutheran Church, American Legion OCTA, Kearney County Historical Society, and the Nebraska National Guard Retirees. Bill enjoyed reading, traveling, and visiting with everyone about history, especially the Oregon and California Trail.

Those left to cherish his memory include his wife, Nancy; sons, James "Jim" Petersen of Minden and special friend, Hydie Shiers of Kearney, and John Petersen and his wife, Pam, of Blair; grandchildren, Ali Holmes and her husband, Sabastien of Blair, Evan Petersen and special friend, Karsen Winn of Lincoln; brothers, Warren Petersen and his wife, Christy, of Minden, Ric Petersen and his wife, Dawn of Boynton Beach, FL; sisters, Margaret Griffith of Neligh, Joy Sinsel and her husband, Randy, of Minden, and Ada Petersen of Minden; as well as a host of nieces, nephews, extended relatives and close friends.

He was preceded in death by his parents, sister, Linda Slade; brother, Lance Petersen; and brothers-in-law, Randy Petersen, Frank Griffith, and Lee Slade.



Lorna Waltz, 1928-2023

Lorna entered the world in Kokomo, Indiana, the oldest child of Lois Comstock and Homer Leffel. Lorna and her siblings, Janet and John, lost their mother when Lorna was TEN. This event would shape her life in two ways.

She learned the importance of family from the support of her mother's family, especially her aunt,

Lucy. Secondly, the family enlarged when Homer married Leona McNamee Leffel. The addition of two additional siblings, Jim and Mary McNamee, also influenced her greatly. This all occurred in La Grande, Oregon, where she was raised.

These two important events shaped the life she led that you all knew and loved. She held family close and friends as well. Many of you felt the reach and depth of her love and openness to you when she included you in her life. She had room for everyone in her heart. This included the residents and young women and men who were her caregivers at Hillside. It's often been said that Lorna never met a stranger.

Lorna had many passions, interests, and spheres of

influence. First and foremost was family, friends, reading, skiing, birding, traveling, camping, hiking, Blizzards at DQ, tai chi, the RAC, her church family at PPC, her sisters in PEO, the members of the bird club, and all the thousands of students she taught in Pendleton.

Lorna was also an adventurer. She and C.J. traveled extensively. Later she traveled to Antarctica, north of the Arctic Circle in Finland to see 24 hours of daylight, Cuba, traveling the Lewis and Clark Trail in 2004, several river trips in Europe and many other great adventures.

She married C.J. Waltz in 1949. They were married for 52 years until his passing in 2001. It was a difficult match since he was attending the U of O (Ducks) and she was attending OSU (Beavers). Two sons were born to them, Bruce and Alan; she was up to that challenge. The family moved to Pendleton in 1959, where she lived until moving to McMinnville in 2021.

As she grew older, she threw herself into her six grandchildren, Brett, Garrett, Sara, Megan, Jessie and Micah; followed by the addition of Jason, Bjorn and Solvig through marriage. This has led to 15 great-grandchildren.

Lorna was preceded in death by her husband, CJ; her grandson, Brett; her siblings, Jim, Mary and Janet. Thank you, Lorna, for a life well lived as an example for all. Gifts in honor of Lorna can be made to Blue Mountain Wildlife at 71046 Appaloosa Lane, Pendleton, OR 97801.



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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The Guernsey Gazette

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Tuesday, October 3, 2023

\$1.25

Local landowners cited for historical commitment

BY VICKI HODG
Contributing Writer

GUERNSEY – Every vacation season, hundreds of people from across America pack up their families and travel the nation's backroads, spending some time visiting historical sites where special events by noted Americans are remembered for their contribution to the evolution of our country.

When they come to eastern Wyoming's Platte County, they find the undeniable evidence of how difficult travel was before the automobile. They find themselves standing anywhere from ankle to waist deep in the ruts that thousands of wood and steel wagon wheels carved into the limestone surfaces and soft grasslands of the wild and untamed West in the 1800s. The promise of lush farmlands in Oregon or the gold in California's hills and streams enticed thousands of pioneers to bet what they had for a chance at better lives. The roadways their wagon traveled, forever known as the Oregon, California and Mormon Trails, are difficult to see now. All that remains today are these ruts, some visible but many lost under the cover of dirt, sand and sagebrush that has blown in by the constant Wyoming

winds. Fortunately, there are people who believe in preserving the history and telling the story. Randy Brown and others like him, who are willing to do the work it takes to make sure that generations who follow will be able to see our historic sites first hand.

Randy is a member of Wyoming's chapter of the Oregon and California Trails Association—a group with chapters in 11 states that promote the preservation of these and other trails such as the Pony Express and their history through a variety of activities and work the group does, including ruts that allow members of the public to visit some of the sites located on private property.

But the preservation of these trails relies on the cooperation of landowners where the trails and trail ruts are located—and many of the very best examples of deep limestone trail ruts that remain are located in eastern Wyoming.

The cooperation of landowners is critical to the Association's mission and on September 27th, Randy Brown presented their "Friends of the Trail" award to Cleo Jones and the "Trail" award to Ed Jones and



COURTESY PHOTO

Oregon-California Trails Association member Randy Brown made a trip to Guernsey last Wednesday to present Cleo Jones, and her late husband Ed Jones with the group's "Friend of the Trail Award." The award honors the Jones' outstanding cooperation with the Trails Association in providing access to a number of sites on the Jones' property that are part of the original Oregon Trail. Members of the O-CTA have spent years working with many Wyoming landowners to identify, expose and preserve numerous sections of the original trail where thousands of covered wagons brought pioneers from the east to places such as Oregon and California, in search of new lives as the country expanded during the 1800s.

see COMMITMENT page 5



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Cleo and Ed Jones Receive OCTA Award

On September 27th, 2023, Oregon-California Trails Association member Randy Brown presented Cleo Jones, and her late husband Ed Jones with a Friend of the Trail Award for their willingness to allow access to several of the outstanding rut sites located on their land. Mrs. Jones gave OCTA permission to clear the ruts several years ago in the Fall. The ruts had been completely covered in dirt and efforts continue to expose them. She commented that the ruts had been visible when they bought the property in the 1960s and that she appreciated the award.

"We felt their work was important. We want future generations to be able to see this too."

The original article appeared in The Guernsey Gazette, Tuesday, October 3, 2023 edition. Thanks to Randy Brown for sending this in. The Guernsey Gazette can be found online at <https://guernseygazette.com>

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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 \$1,500 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:

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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: March 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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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.

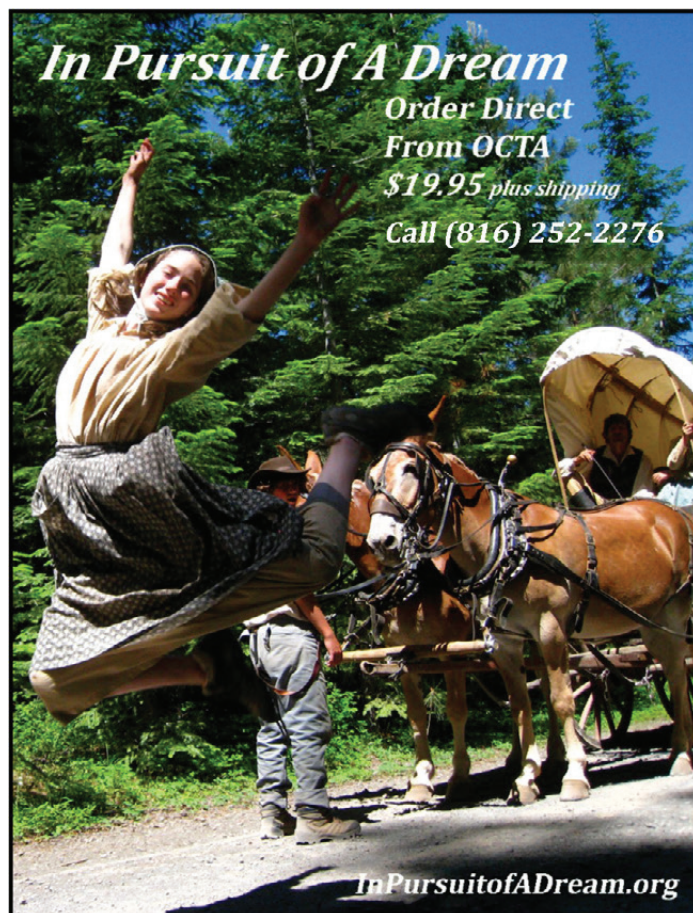


P.O. Box 1019
Independence MO 64051

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NATIONAL FRONTIER TRAILS MUSEUM

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

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

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

416 W. Maple • Independence, MO 64050 • www.FrontierTrailsMuseum.org