



TRAIL DUST

Idaho Chapter
Oregon-California Trails Association

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MISSOURI TO IDAHO, 1881: EMILY TOWELL'S DIARY

Editor

One of the latest emigrant diaries discovered of all pioneers who came and settled in Idaho is that which was kept by Emily Towell. She was riding with a wagon train of 40 wagons that chose to go NW from Boise through the Emmett area, and followed the prevalent route of many other emigrants to the Middle Weiser River Valley. The significance of this train, as late as 1881, is more than what we can read in her diary and includes what the other settlers meant to the area towns along the river there. It is agreed among trail enthusiasts that we do not have in print all the diaries that people wrote, and many have been lost from ever being discovered and published. This *Diary*, does in a way speak for and reflect the adventures of many others.

Emily's account reflects one important Idaho historical fact, that the very route this train took was borrowed from miners and emigrants related to mining who settled the Boise Basin towns in the early 1860s. And this trail became an important emigrant route, *especially for Idaho settlers*. Even without other diaries we have the records of scores of emigrants that passed along this route for years before and after this train arrived.

the Payette Valley. [They camped on the south side.]

“August 7. The men returned. They could not find the Crane Creek Valley. A council was held to determine the number in favor of going on to a valley where a choice of land could be obtained. Everyone was in favor of going at once.

“August 8. We crossed the Payette River [at Goodale's original crossing]. An old man accompanied us as our guide to the Crane Creek Valley. Little Progress was made on August 9, as the roads were very rough [the first few miles]. The night was spent in a small valley [Corral & Bissel Creek]. When morning came we looked about us to see what the place was like. There wasn't sufficient water for irrigation, therefore, we could not stay here.

“August 11. Driving over hill and dale we reached Dixie valley, and from there we drove on to Middle Valley [Midvale]. Middle Valley was a very fertile little valley, nesting down among sage covered hills. The Weiser River wended its way, peacefully through the little valley. Great promises were held forth to the weary travelers. Nearly all of the little band decided to stay in Middle Valley. Others took land in Salubria [Cambridge area], Indian, and other valleys.



Internet Photo

EMILY TOWELL AS SHE APPEARED YEARS LATER

Emily wrote, in part, from the time they had camped on the Payette River: “August 6. We remained in camp while some of the men went to search for Crane Creek Valley. This [Crane Creek] was about thirty miles from

“There were new hopes, aspirations and ambitions as there was much work to be done. Homes must be made. At last the long journey with its hardships and heart-

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aches was over.” (Emily Towell, “Missouri to Idaho, 1881: Emily Towell’s Diary,” *Covered Wagon Women: Diaries and Letters from the Western Trails*, Vol. 10.)

In the total picture of emigrant travel from many eastern and middle states this route may not seem significant to some people because few reached Oregon, but to Idaho it became very vital in the settlement along the Middle Weiser River and beyond. Miners appreciated this Crane Creek route traveling both ways, and just as important to emigrants, who did not have mining interests and had traveled for months, this variant of the Goodale Cutoff north from Boise saved many miles and days of travel.

The original route of Goodale north from the Payette River to the Cambridge valley was difficult if almost impassible for several years. Very few wagons tried to follow Goodale’s Train along that part of the Cutoff. The Crane Creek route opening, with a little road work necessary, provided a direct route to central Idaho from Boise. Miners, freighters, stages and then emigrants, took advantage of all or parts of this variant, many the following year after Goodale followed his first route, with ever increasing use from only a pack train level.

By 1876, the Editor of the Boise, *Idaho Statesman*, was writing about the possibility that this would become the route of the major north-south highway through Idaho. Fortunately for rut-nuts that did not happen, and there are still many miles of pristine ruts still preserved through the valleys! That Editor, as well as many others during that period of time, reflected its importance by referring to this route as “Tim Goodall’s Road.” It was not his own route, but he began the traffic to the area that allowed it to be opened and virtually replace his route!

Some decisions will soon need to be made concerning the designations and marking of the Goodale Cutoff north from Boise, and a couple of variants that emigrants

used extensively, as evident in their diaries and other historical records. It is hoped that the **2005 Senate Bill 54, by Orrin Hatch, Utah**, which includes the *study of the Jeffrey-Goodale Cutoff*, will pass both houses of Congress this time around!

This Editor has written to Senators Larry Craig and Mike Crapo, both of Idaho, to ask them for their co-sponsorship of this Bill. Please write to these Senators and others from other states [to help get this Bill passed!](#)

GOODALE’S PAYETTE RIVER ROUTE

Research continues for information about the Goodale Cutoff from Boise across the route that was new to his train and all other emigrants, and which became so important to Idaho travel for many years. The footwork that accompanies such a study, and which can turn into enjoyable trips out on the trail, continues as spring approaches. Good weather has permitted a look at some newly found trail ruts along the Payette River north side.

As information has continued to fill a file about the routes possible, three routes which were used by emigrants and written about in diaries, the trail route north of the Payette has become very significant. Fortunately there are three sections of these good ruts still remaining on private cattle grazing land.

In the last issue of *Trail Dust* a reference was made to a report by W. P. Horton, which detailed the Crane Creek variant, mileages between creeks, etc. This was a two part road report written only 6-7 month (March 1863) after Tim Goodale took his train across the State of Idaho. Horton went from the Boise Basin to Walla Walla and back, and he actually traveled the route on the north side of the Payette River. He also gave all the mileages from Walla Walla to the Basin, following the north side.

Significant to that report and its timely nearness to Goodale’s Train, Horton verified that in fact Goodale did cross the Payette River near later Emmett, therefore following the north side of the river. We know now that was the only route along the river by spring 1863! He verified only the Crane Creek route and the north side of the Payette River route, thus eliminating a trail on the south side of the river that early. (Nellie Ireton Mills’ later writing also sent the Goodale Train down the north side of the river!)

Other information has now about eliminated any possibility that Goodale Train could have passed along the south side of the river, across swamps, slews, extra river channels, and areas that would have needed road fills and more building that was done by any wagon train! This Editor/researcher is convinced that we have identified the original Goodale route—the route before

Goodale's Train turned north through the Payette region!

On March 11, in 70 degree and perfect weather (and just before an extremely windy March 12th), this writer and Patti went back to two sections of that north side route.

McGill Photo



GOODALE RUTS WEST FROM WILLOW CREEK CANYON

In the January issue of *Trail Dust* were found a couple of pictures of the old ruts NW of Emmett and Sand Hollow. Those pictures were taken January 14, and the wet conditions had allowed only some brief glimpses of the trail where it was accessed near roads. However, March 11, offered some greatly improved conditions. McGill



ROAD DOWN HILL, PAYETTE RIVER IN BACKGROUND—SAGE BRUSH HAS ALMOST HIDDEN 2-3 FT. DEEP RUTS

Both sections of ruts were on private land—permission was sought to revisit one of the January sites and a new site where the Goodale route dropped down from the high bluffs to the river, at the mouth of Little Willow Creek. Ranchers, **Darla and Rod Johnson**, allowed us to cross their feed lot and we hiked the trail for almost 1.5 miles. Some deep and pristine ruts back to the east show the evidence of more use than had earlier been considered, before the Payette south side route was opened and became the Umatilla to Boise stage road.

Harriet Loughary's 1864 diary account of the train she was with followed that trail, and she had recorded one explanation for the deep ruts there--freight wagons:

“August 1st. This date the fifth month since leaving home and yet we are far from our place of destination. After fording the [Payette] river we traveled down it all

day. We are meeting long lines of pack animals, also large covered wagons called “Prairie Schooners” drawn by six mules or six yoke of oxen to each wagon. McGill



TWO ROUTES IN THE CANYON NEAR LITTLE WILLOW, VIEW BACK EAST FROM TRAIL SEGMENTS REJOINING

[probably large freight wagons, not the *Schooners*]; all laden with provisions and merchandise from The Dalles, Oregon, going to Boise City and other places.

“Aug. 2nd. Still going down Payette River. Met today a circus from Oregon going to the mining towns.

“Aug. 3rd. Warm Weather. Are *now on a stage line* and get news occasionally. Noon at Snake River, the same stream that we crossed two weeks ago [at the Fort Hall site]. . . .”

By August 3, **1864**, the Loughary wagon train had come down from the bluffs, across Little Willow and met the south side of the river route that was opened later than the north route. The south route followed the river for 20 miles from the Emmett area and crossed the Payette near the mouth of Little Willow. By 1864 this route had become the “Umatilla to Boise City Road” for stages. It had taken a lot of road work to make that travel route possible, but diaries indicate that by 1864 it was also being used by emigrants headed for the Olds Ferry at Farewell Bend—then crossing into Oregon.

The north side route of Goodale's Train was back from the river a ways, but it contained gradual slopes over the bluffs, was free from the meandering river channel and tributaries, and crossed several streams—one fresh water spring and two creeks in about 20 miles. (Dunham Wright, with Goodale, reported some road work to get through only after they had gone north, near the Weiser River Valley, but not along the Payette. Much road work would have been necessary had they tried to follow the south side of the river.)

Three segments of ruts remain on this route of about 1.5 miles each, and about another 100 yards along the present road up west from Big Willow Creek. **We hope**

to offer summer trips to all who have an interest, to various areas. New-rut searchers will also be needed!

Editors Note: Good readers and I-OCTA members, when you tire of reading about the Goodale North in this Paper, it is hoped that you will send other trail pictures, articles, trip information and personal emigrant histories for publication!! Please crowd out these Goodale stories, and at the same time [save this writer from most of the writing](#). Thanks for your support and encouragement!

I-OCTA Board Meeting—March 19, 2005

Board members and officers of the Idaho Chapter of OCTA met on March 19 at Twin Falls, ID. Several items of routine and yearly business were conducted. The schedule for I-OCTA summer activities was finalized and approved under the leadership of Doug Jenson, President. Some main items of business concerned the National OCTA Board meeting in Denver on March 5-6.

Doug and Bill Wilson, OCTA Board member, both attended the meeting in Denver. Bill was there appointed as the OCTA libraries Sub-Committee Chairman. An important approval at the National Board meeting concerned the new guidelines for OCTA's membership rates and the collection of dues by OCTA for both the Association and the Local Chapters. A new brochure is being printed that will contain member information and dues schedules for joining individual Chapters.

The need for many revisions and updating of I-OCTA's *BY-LAWS* was discussed and a committee appointed to study and make recommendations to the Board for revisions. Chapter Historians, Peg Cristobal and Jane Wylie, reported on the work that they have done, and discussed the CD that Jerry Eichhorst has help put together with the history of I-OCTA.

New business included discussion about the involvement and possible actions by the Chapter in the apparent threat to some trail ruts by a proposed Idaho Highway plan, which are now being considered as possible

Jenson Photo



STRICKER STATION CEMETERY, CHECKED BY FIELD TRIP PARTICIPANTS NEAR STRICKER AFTER BUSINESS
Goodale Cutoff north ruts. The Preservation Officer will work with the National Preservation Officer, and keep

the membership informed about this development.

A new set of *Web Site Guidelines* was presented to the Board by Webmaster, Jerry Eichhorst, for approval, and also a Summary of costs, pages, included information and site visitors on Idahoocata.org was handed out.

CD copies of the NW-OCTA *Leadership Handbook* was handed out to participants for review so that I-OCTA might consider creating a handbook for our Chapter.

I-OCTA Summer 2005 Activities Schedule

Mar. 19, '05 Twin Falls **I-OCTA Board meeting**, Perkins Restaurant; Field trip to Stricker Store.

Apr. 14-16 MMM (Map Mark Monitor trails) training, Elmore County Historical Society, 8:00 AM, 180 S. 3rd E. Mt. Home. (Ex. 95, W 1.5 mi. Amer Legion Blvd., S or left on 3rd St.) 208 467 4853 or jwmcgill@pobox.com

Apr. 23 General member meeting, 10 AM Jerome Pub. Library; Field trip-North Side Trail sites; Devil's Corral

May 21-22 Oregon Trail marking west of Raft River. Lyle Lambert. Meet Raft River Store 9 AM. Two days, will also check and reset concrete markers.

June 25-26 California Trail, Malta-City of Rocks-Granite Pass. Peg Cristobal, Leader. Two days. Camp or return to Burley for night. (Few members marking trail.)

July 9 Alkali Creek-Glenns Ferry, Oregon Trail marking. Wally Meyer. Full day, need high-clearance vehicle. Meet Glenns Ferry High School, 10 AM.

July 30 Proposed Goodale North field trip. Jim McGill. Meet at Forest Service in Emmett, 9 AM.

Aug. 17-20 National Convention Salt Lake City

Aug. 23-30 Trail marking from Idaho border to Huntington, based at Vale, OR; also along I-84 to Flagstaff Hill, based at Baker. *Activity organized* by Northwest Chapter OCTA, I-OCTA members invited.

Sept. 10-11 Hudspeth Cutoff marking. Jim McGill. Meet Lava Hot Springs. (More details later)

Sept. 17 Fall Board meeting 10 AM Arco location TBA

Oct. 1 Trail marking, Wildhorse Butte and INEEL ruts. Jeffrey-Goodale near Arco, 9 AM.

Oct. 8-9 South Alternate FT west of Glenns Ferry, joint with Owyhee County Hist. Society. Start south end of Hammett Bridge, 9 AM, (Hwy. 78 over Snake River). (Overnight camping--allow 2 days to see 9-10 sections of the S.A. which have been viewed by few people!)

Oct. 22 Fall general membership meeting. 10 AM. Probable Elmore Historical Society building, Mountain Home. Field trip to rock inscriptions near Ditto Creek.

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April 9 Invitation by Owyhee Hist. Soc.--Snake R. ferry boat sites field trip, 9 AM, Walters Ferry site--Hwy 45

April 30 The Gem County Historical Society will be led on an exploration FT up the Fourmile-Crane Creek route of the 1862-63 miner/emigrant and proposed Goodale North variant route. I-OCTA members and visitors are

welcome! (9 AM, 501 E 1st, Emmett—from south, turn right at second stop light from Hwy. 16, at Johns Ave., about ½ mile, turn left on E. 1st St.) Contact this Editor for more information. - - - - -

SOME EXTRA DATES will be set for *other trail areas that need remarking during summer*, and some for exploration of more of the Goodale routes north of Boise. Members will be notified in *Trail Dust* and by email as early as possible when trips are available for group participation. These are in areas that we *must coordinate with local BLM Field Officers*, and requires their input for times and locations.--Preservation Officer

OCTA & I-OCTA JOINT MEMBERSHIPS

New Method for Membership Bill Wilson

At Vancouver last summer, paying your local chapter membership with your National OCTA membership was suggested as an option that chapters could choose. But at the Board of Directors meeting in Denver on March 5th the Board decided to “bite the bullet” and make this a mandatory method for paying chapter dues. (Formal motions were passed on Sunday, March 6th, which I missed because I mis-scheduled my return flight for early Sunday morning. A motion to approve this change was passed by 8 in favor, with 3 against; Had I been there I would have voted for it, making the vote 9 to 3.)

As soon as the new national membership form is printed, it will have slightly different changes for national membership, and will include places to indicate chosen chapter memberships (with each cost). One can then choose, and pay for, as many memberships in local chapter as one wants. The two national memberships that apply to most of us are: *Emigrant (Individual)* - \$45; and *Pioneers (Family)* - \$60. That, combined with our I-OCTA Chapter dues of \$10 will make your total membership cost, for most of you, \$55 per year.

This will take effect at the beginning of OCTA’s next fiscal year, October 1, 2005. OCTA memberships are on a rotating monthly basis, not a calendar or fiscal year, on the month each person’s began. OCTA will change their membership card to show which chapter memberships you have chosen, and chapter memberships will consequently adopt the monthly date of renewal, also.

Making this change will require grandfathering chapter dues after current dues expire, until your next national dues come due. At our Idaho Chapter of OCTA Board meeting on March 19 the Board agreed to grandfather everyone’s dues during the interim while we make this change. What this means is that you will pay your Idaho Chapter dues to me, as Treasurer, for this current year; that membership will expire at the end of April 2006. You will pay your national OCTA dues in the same

manner as before, up to and until April 30, 2006.

After that date you will add your chapter dues to your national OCTA dues, on national’s form *For example:* if you pay your national dues in August 2005, you would send them the \$45 (or whatever rate you choose). Then the next time, August 2006, you would pay to national OCTA that amount plus your Idaho Chapter dues, making it \$55. You would have had, during the grandfathered overlap, a free membership in the Idaho Chapter from April 30 to August.

This overlap time of free membership will vary, depending on when you purchase your national OCTA membership. So, enjoy your free membership time, and look forward to being able to pay your memberships at chapter level and national level, all at the same time. And you will have a membership card showing both national and chapter (or chapters) memberships.

Bill Wilson - Idaho Chapter Treasurer.

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Editor’s Note: Technical requirements by National OCTA do specify that “local chapter members must belong to the National Association” to be covered by *member’s insurance*, other protections and the benefits afforded by OCTA. For this reason for individuals who have been affiliated *with this chapter only*, and who do not choose to join OCTA (**which we highly encourage for the good benefits of doing so**) will have a status change. This will not change the I-OCTA *field trip participation* by anyone or reception of *Trail Dust*.

People who choose to continue involvement with this chapter only will now **subscribe** to *Trail Dust*, and can be involved in activities as *guest to the member-ship*. The *transition times* into 2006, described by Bill Wilson, will give each present I-OCTA member time and opportunity to investigate to see if the National OCTA benefits will fit your needs and desires, and then to choose what you want to do! *A voting right in business meetings is extended to all who desire full memberships.*

We do want to respond to any questions this change will have upon present situations, and also to assure that this “must” change will not effect any continued participation in Idaho activities. *Guest injury insurance during field trips* will cover all participants. Both members and guests sign the required *Wavier*. This must be signed by everyone on every trip! **Member renewals will continue “as-is” through the 2006 renewal times.**

APRIL: RENEW I-OCTA MEMBERSHIP

Please send your \$10 (for individuals) to Bill Wilson, Treasurer, 5205 Waterwheel Drive, Boise, ID 83703-3130. New subscribers, please send your \$10, your full name, address, phone number, and email to Bill!

EMAILING *Trail Dust* REGULARLY

The I-OCTA membership strives to publish this quality news letter and circulate it as widely as possible. We are trying to increase our emailing list significantly to save on postage costs. If you are able to receive your copy by email, and your email service provides a large enough capacity to receive either a WORD or PDF file of *Trail Dust*, we hope that we can add you to a growing list of email recipients! You get the paper quicker too!

If this is not possible, we *do want you to have your copy of each issue* and will continue to mail to you! Before we make any changes we send a test copy to your email and let you assure us that *you can and want to obtain *Trail Dust* in this way!* **Please let us know if you consent to try email by sending a note to jwmcgill@pobox.com, and we will make it work for you *or make no change!***

We share with you the fact that without all the *time and labor* donations by members for getting out each issue, as well as donations of all the *paper* for printing and part of the *printing and ink* costs, we could not extensively circulate this kind of **quality paper**. *Only partial ink costs and the postage for each issue are now being paid by the I-OCTA treasury!* We care enough about historic trails, interested persons, the public's sharing of our field trip activities, and the continued publication of this long-time paper to continue this production as we do!

The paper is a part I-OCTA's public service that reaches into many places, and to many people in ways that are not always apparent. The intrinsic satisfactions to our "rut-nuts" make every effort and donation worthwhile!

We have chosen to go beyond a basic black and white paper, and have color pictures of the wonderful Idaho trails, people, and historic sites to share. One local Historical Society is loose-leaf binding this news letter into a colorful and attractive book of Idaho trail related history! Many back issues are available at minimum costs! **Thanks for all the help many of you give!**

General Membership Meeting—April 23

Saturday, 10:00 AM at the Jerome, ID, Public Library.

If you are coming from the east part of the state, Jerome exit 168, turning right (north) onto South Lincoln, and go 3 stop lights. The last stop light is the junction of Lincoln and Main. Continue on Lincoln one block, turn right (east) and you are at the library directly on that corner. Parking on the east side and the entrance is on the east side. Visitors welcome—**Pres. D. Jenson**

A Field Trip afterward will take members, *and visitors also*, to some **North Side Trail sites (n. of Snake River)**, including **Devil's Corral**, part of the new park being developed along that Trail there and a primitive area!

James McGill, Editor
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