



TRAIL DUST



Idaho Chapter
Oregon-California Trails Association

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“ROLL ON COLUMBIA” 2004 OCTA Convention is Now History

The 2004 Convention of OCTA members and guests at Vancouver, Washington, sponsored by the Northwest Chapter of OCTA, was successfully concluded during the second week of August. The NW Chapter members did an outstanding job of planning and presenting the Convention, and all programs, field trips, and times of music and enjoyment were top-notch events. Field trips and historic researched papers presented covered many subjects related to not only the Oregon Trail times in Oregon and Washington but also the exploration and travel of Lewis and Clark many years earlier.

Among the I-OCTA members attending the convention there seemed to be agreement about the quality of the enjoyable pre-convention trips, convention times, and post convention trips offered to participants, going to historic areas and sites. Some members went along on the Cowlitz Trail (Columbia River to Puget Sound) trip north from Vancouver, and others traveled one or several directions on various trips.



OCTA MEMBERS AT OREGON CITY TRAIL INTERPRETIVE CENTER

Field trips included visits to trail-related historic sites upriver, east along the Columbia Oregon Trail route, to the Barlow Road around Mount Hood, to the Willamette valley, and down both the Oregon and Washington banks of the Columbia River. The boat route of the Lewis-Clark expedition on the Columbia and their camp sites were explored. Afton Patrick and Peg Cristobal took a personally planned trip to Mt. St. Helen!

The I-OCTA delegation was asked once again about the possibility of hosting the 2007 Convention. The only commitment that was made was to seek more information about the possibility and to allow the I-

OCTA membership to consider this in the fall. That will be an item of business in the fall Membership Meeting at Mountain Home.

One discussion at the OCTA Board meeting was the plan for a grant to promote trail mapping training, following the MET guidelines. This Manual gives all the information that will be included on the 7.5 quad maps to be completed for all sections of the various trails across the western U. S. In the present plan the three States that will have a 2-3 day training in 2005 are Utah, Idaho, and Wyoming. All Chapters will be trained in the next 3-4 years to bring to conformity the mapping done in every State. Presidents and Preservation Officers, and other members that want to be involved are welcome.



NEW I-OCTA AND OCTA MEMBERS, PHIL AND WENDY MILLER, ON THE LEWIS-CLARK TRIP, AT THE OCEAN—THEIR FIRST CONVENTION. WENDY IS THE CAN. CO. HIS. SOCIETY MUSEUM DIRECTOR
Training will be planned with the Chapter for a time and a central location so the maximum number of members can attend to prepare them for mapping. In the spring (April-May) the National Park Service will be offering a training session on using the new GIS equipment, a

computerized information storage and GPS unit. The NPS Manual of terms, indicators, and other data to be used for entering information is now completed.



OCTA MEMBERS AT THE YELLOW BLUFF LOCATION WEST OF LEWIS' AND CLARK'S STATION CAMP—IN DIARIES THEY WALKED AROUND "A BLUFF OF YELLOW CLAY AND SOFT STONE"

Various verbal commendations were given to I-OCTA in some of the meetings for the work of the past year in trail marking, for the new Web site, and for the Paper/newsletter, *Trail Dust*. Our Chapter report to OCTA also included the information about our Chapter activities, the good working relationship we have developed with the BLM, and the work that is in progress now on the new Memorandum of Agreement.



PATTI MCGILL AND SHERRY THACKREY, ANN ARBOR, MI, IN THE ROOM OF THE WINTER 1805 LIVING QUARTERS OF SACAGAWEA AND FAMILY—IN RECONSTRUCTED FORT CLATSOP, OREGON

A GRAND PASS OVER GRANITE PASS

The I-OCTA field trip on July 24-25, over Granite Pass, SW of City of Rocks on the California-Applegate Trail, was a success for those who enjoyed seeing the country and the Trail ruts. It may have been an even more important trip in that I-OCTA members were able to discover most roads to access the various sections of Trail. I-OCTA can now plan a later Trail marking trip.

A marking trip on the Idaho portion of the Trail would require hiking of some ruts between the access roads in some places, and probably more than one day of work! But the scenery and views of the historic Trail and sites would be an important asset that would turn the hikes

into pleasurable activities. Other members who missed this trip can also participate later.

Though some of the Trails West railroad iron markers still mark the route periodically, not many carsonite markers remain in a closer proximity to keep the continuity of the full Trail easy to trace. A marking trip would need to be at least a two day affair for the sections of the Trail in Idaho. The remaining ruts are quite impressive in some areas.

Seven members of I-OCTA and one guest, Dona Bell from Pocatello, were joined by Gar Elison, Utah, three men from Elko, NV, and two married couples from Burley, ID, on the trip to Granite Pass and along the California Trail through part of Nevada. Gar Elison and Bob Pearce, led the group for the first day along miles of the old Trail ruts, but not necessarily in a direct order, from the top of Granite Pass to Register Cliff in Nevada. The trip was an excursion for many who had never been along that route of the historic trails.

Bob brought Ralph Gamboa and Dave Park with him from Elko, and both Bob and Ralph provided trail information and maps. A handout was also provided by Gar with emigrant diary and historic information. Gar is the object of much of our gratitude for planning and inviting Bob Pearce along, both of which had traveled some or all of the route and knew much about the same. Tim and Renae Preston and Lona Phillips and husband from Burley also traveled with the group. They are members of the Utah Chapter of OCTA.

The trail has been disrupted in places by weathering and erosion and cannot be followed along a single path. For this reason part of Saturday morning was spent looking for a route or road to access some of the ruts that run somewhat NW, west, and then back south before crossing Birch Creek and Road, 2.5 miles east of Goose Creek Road. All the ruts were not accessed that were hoped to be found. A later trip could reach them.



ERODED RUTS APPROACHING BIRCH CR. FROM THE SOUTH

The group traveled the Goose Creek road from Oakley, ID, toward the SSW, and later approached Granite Pass from the western side, driving to the top for a lunch break. Then backtracking west along the Trail and taking

a cross-connector to the Birch Creek Rd., the group went on across the remaining route in Idaho, along about 1.5 miles of the NW corner of Utah, and then into Nevada for the remaining trip.

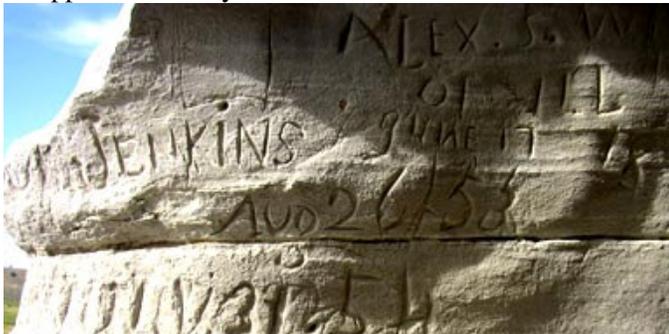
Cornelia Ferris wrote about crossing Granite Pass on June 23, 1853: “We rested under two or three spreading stunted cedars, near the summit, to enjoy the prospect, in a spot where weary ones, bound for California, had wept bitter tears—a few graves, the scattered fragments of wagons, the bones of dead animals, furnished abundant and speaking evidence of their sufferings. The journey is only for those who have health and spirits to enjoy and to endure: to those who are unfortunate, it is a chapter of woe.” (Gar Elison handout) The 2004 Trail travelers witnessed one of those graves at the top of the Pass.



ONE OF “GRAVES” CORNELIA WROTE ABOUT ON GRANITE PASS

Jim and Jean Thomas, followed the California Trail in Idaho only the first day, but Dona Bell, Lyle Lambert, Bill Wilson, Jimmy Oldfield, and Jim and Patti McGill camped near Little Goose Cr. and traveled on through Nevada the second day. The Back Country Biway across Nevada makes that part of the trip rather easy, but the road itself has covered a great many miles of the Trail.

Bill Wilson had before been over part of the California Trail, and he was able to return to see the badly deteriorating face of Register Cliff in Nevada, where many emigrant inscribed names are disappearing and have disappeared already. The sandstone Cliff is too soft.



IN ONE BETTER SHELTERED AREA OF REGISTER CLIFF THESE NAMES WERE PLACED ABOUT 150 YRS AGO. IN '48, '53, AND '54. Several I-OCTA members look forward to returning to Granite Pass, and others who had to miss the trip for various reasons surely hope to make it next time.-----

-----**The Maughns and Janece Thornton**
The day before the trip began Patti and your Editor were privileged to visit with I-OCTA members, Mr. and Mrs.

Ralph Maughn and Janece Thornton, all of Burley. Ralph and his wife were in a very severe auto-train accident in December 2003, and have had a long and difficult recovery period. Janece is the wife of former I-OCTA President, now deceased, Ralph Thornton. These elderly members are not able to get out on the trails much any more, but enjoy the reports of activities.

Janece had contacted your President about some carsonite markers that Ralph had stored years ago, and that no one had ever picked up. Twenty one new markers were good to obtain as we are continuing to use many in our remarking of trails. The visits with these members were cherished opportunities for this writer and wife!

SOON-FUTURE ACTIVITIES—HIKING, MEMBER MEETING, TRAIL MARKING

The next scheduled **Field Trip**, with very little if any marking of the trail, will occur on **September 25, 2004, from Mountain Home**. We will meet and organize in the rear parking lot of **AJ's Restaurant, a bit east of the freeway, 1130 Hwy. 20, 9:00 AM, Saturday**.

Members and visitors will begin a bit north of the east end of Hot Creek Rd., west of Mountain Home. They will hike along a trail-scenic area, about 1.5 to 2 miles NW on the North Alternate Trail, toward Teapot Dome. Vehicles will take the hikers to the Trail and then go back around to the north and be ready to pick them up from a point easily accessed on the Trail without damaging the ruts. (The hiked area is composed of soft earth and some erosion features, easily damaged by vehicles.)

Depending on the time required for the hike, other parts of the NA and/or the Kelton Road on to the NW can be driven and viewed. The hike is through one of the most interesting and attractive areas of the NA, with the view of the outstanding landmark, which emigrants looked for, Teapot Dome. There was also in trail days a hot springs nearby, now dried up, which became a widely used camp site for trail travelers.

Those who cannot do the hike can travel in the vehicles and still have part in the field trip, able to see the same areas of the NA. Along that part of the route are some outstanding dry stream-bed crossings and deep and multiple ruts. That part of the trail was marked last year.

Cameras, lunches and water, and other comfort items are advisable, with high top shoes for possible cheat grass areas. Bring a friend too.

The Membership is reminded that the **fall I-OCTA Member Meeting** is planned for **October 9, 2004, and we will be meeting at the same AJ's Restaurant (See above),**

at Mountain Home, at 10:00 AM. The Restaurant will be prepared to have participants purchase lunch there, and use their meeting room from 10:00 AM-1:00 PM.

We will have annual elections of Officers and Board members. Wally Meyer, Peg Cristobal, and Doug Jensen make up the Nominating Committee, and they should be contacted if a member is interested in serving I-OCTA in some capacity. Email addresses are below. Anyone interested also in helping plan next years activities or other event, please let one of them know.

Other business items of importance will be conducted as well. But the business meeting will be expedited and as short as possible so that those who desire to follow an afternoon trip to the Danskin Peak area, and some of the Jeffrey-Goodale Cutoff ruts that drop down from the hills to Ditto Creek, will have time to enjoy an outing.

Newer members who have not gotten involved in our activities are encouraged to attend, and any visitor that wants to come along will be very welcomed by I-OCTA people. Members of other preservation and/or historic groups who have similar interests are welcome to share this time and follow the historic route of the afternoon activity.

Some participants will be given a free lunch; members not formerly active and visitors will all have the highest priority for this honor! Active members have a great amount of pride in the historic trails we travel, maintain, map, and enjoy, with historic emigrant sites well known.

Trail marking activities will continue on a regular basis. Besides the regular schedule to mark all of the Hudspeth Cutoff possible (Soda Springs to near the California Trail along the southern Raft River valley area) on October 23-24, August 28 and September 11 was earlier designated as possible days to mark trail. This somewhat depends on the heat and weather. These dates are not firm, and could be changed to other days if members or visitors would like to be involved.

Your President and several other members are available much of the time, and planning any marking activity can happen quickly if people are available and want to help. In the next few weeks some Boise area members will be marking 3-4 short sections of the North Alternate, from near Blair Trail reservoir NW of King Hill to the east end of Hot Creek Road where the September 25 Field Trip will begin. Ruts needing marking are back to the SE. Some of us can go any day of the week! Let this Editor know if you would like to be involved.

All marking is coordinated with area BLM field representatives, our good partners especially since our

productive, combined meeting in January of 2004. The BLM has purchased plenty of marking supplies for the trails across our many-routes State!

At the Vancouver OCTA Convention a member of the NW-OCTA who lives in Hermiston, OR, said that she reads about out great activities in Idaho in all of our *Trail Dust* issues, and longs to be involved with us sometime. Patti and you Editor told her to let us know some various times that she might be able to come over, and we would plan an outing for her and others—most anytime!

Starting next spring NW-OCTA is starting at the Oregon-Idaho border and remarking all necessary trail routes westward in Oregon. Some I-OCTA members may be involved in helping that effort too. It may be that during some time(s) then we will help mark the Meek-Elliot Cutoff, the route partially covered by a cooperative I-OCTA/NW-OCTA Field Trip in 2003. That was led by Don Clark, Caldwell, I-OCTA member.

There is some more work to be done on the Jeffery-Goodale variants east of Big Butte, marking the McTucker Road route and many areas near and west of Arco, to the Wood River valley. Dick Hill, BLM, Idaho Falls, is also planning to soon remark the J-G near the Stoddard homestead cabin (See in the McGill, *Champagne Station* book) west of Arco, and do some GPSing. About 1.5 miles of the J-G, Lost River route, west of the INEEL land may be finished during the same time.

About 6-7 miles of the Oregon Trail west of Raft River and the Parting of the Ways, (Oregon and California Trails separate) will need remarking also. On that section some cement markers also need to be reinstalled, with concrete in the holes to help make them permanent. Gar Elison, raised on the Raft River, said that the frost-heave in the area gradually pushes them out of the ground!

Trail marking people are also waiting, and hopefully planning, for an opportunity to mark some of the North Side Trail near Twin Falls/ Jerome, as well as other trail segments in that area of Idaho. Your President, now also the OCTA National Trails Mapping Committee Chairman, hopes to help in that area, and catch up some of the mapping that needs to be finished on the quad maps.

These places of needed attention are detailed here to help members understand some of the tasks ahead, not needing to be laborious drudgery but enjoyable accomplishments. We are willing to go where needed to assist almost any time. Hard work is not necessary or expected, preferring rather that people take leisurely trips to enjoy the trails and help in marking and preservation as we go! Tell us where you might help!

TRAIL DESTRUCTION

The following picture is a stark contrast between part of the remaining ruts (Light Arrows) of the Jeffrey-Goodale Cutoff east of Big Southern Butte, and a Rancher "improved," 40-50 ft. wide road. Without BLM



permission 9 miles of the Cutoff was graded into oblivion, with only a few short sections of the original ruts untouched. In this instance about .5 mile of the Trail swerved to the north, away from the grading and survived, though ingrown with brush. In the 9 miles there are only about 7-8 sections of Trail remaining, most from 50 to 100 yards long each, where the ruts went around land features—rock piles, etc.

A trail preservation related article will be printed in one of the 2005 editions of the *Overland Journal*, featuring this and one other shorter damaged areas of the Goodale. This was discovered in April 2004, when a group of I-OCTA members were marking that part of the Cutoff, with Dick Hill of the BLM along on the trip. Every year miles of the trails disappear by similar irresponsible actions, and from ignorance about historical importance!

Books Available

By the time this Paper is sent the Ward Massacre 150 year memorial date will have passed, August 21, 2004. Activities for much of the day at the Ward Park near Middleton, ID, will commemorate the deaths of those emigrants in 1854. However, Don Shannon's book that includes the whole story, *The Boise Massacre on the Oregon Trail*, is now available. It also includes other Massacres of 1859.

BOISE MASSACRE ON THE OREGON TRAIL

By Donald Shannon

This is Don's long awaited book on the "Ward Massacre" near Middleton, ID. It includes much information about the whole story, the real events that occurred between 1854 and 1860!

It also contains broad coverage of the Perry Train attack--Camas Prairie, the Ward Train, the punishments, Wallen Expedition, Shepherd Massacre--Hudspeth Cutoff, Carpenter Train attack and the Miltimore Massacre--American Falls. Contact Don at:

208 459 9233 dshannon2@mindspring.com

One more notice about Bill Wilson's Book:

Hells Canyon Romance was originally the autobiography of Murrielle McGaffe Wilson, prepared in 1987 for his mother's family members, and is now 263 pages with 130 photos! Its subject matter is about growing up in ranch life in the Canyon area with information about both Oregon's and Idaho's sides of the Snake River. It covers his mother's family and marriage up until 1939, when they moved to Riggins, ID. It is a rich account of ranch and river life on the central part of the Snake River.

Contact Bill at:

208 343 7301 ma_bill@msn.com

ELECTIONS IN THE FALL

The Nominating Committee is still looking for people who want to participate and help in leading I-OCTA! We need at least 2 Board members, other officers, and a second Vice President. Contact Wally Meyer, wallywanch@worldnet.att.net Peg Cristobal, crisp@mindspring.com or Doug Jenson, jensond@ida.net for information or to let them know of your interests. **Not much work but great pleasure!**

OCTA and I-OCTA Membership

We have a number of I-OCTA members who did not renew their memberships this year. Where we have an email address, after several reminders, we have moved the sending of *Trail Dust* to an email attachment on an email list. If you get this Paper by email instead of by snail-mail as usual, you may have forgotten to renew! We do welcome anyone who would like to read this Paper to be placed on the email list. Send the address of others if you know someone who would like to obtain the Paper.

One of the items of business that was conducted at this year's Board Meeting and Convention was the continuing work on the process and on a member form whereby national OCTA will collect both OCTA and Chapter dues, and then forward the Chapter's portion to the treasurers. This will simplify the process of having separate payments and dues needing to be paid at separate times. The dues will be paid whenever each Chapter's member-renewal dates are already set.

We are still accepting I-OCTA member dues for this year, \$10 per person, sent to **Bill Wilson, Treasurer, 5204 Waterwheel Dr., Boise, ID, 83703-3130**. Send name, address, phone, and email address to Bill with payment.

We encourage new members to strongly consider becoming involved in activities, as they can, and are open to suggestions for trips and trail related activities.

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