



# TRAIL DUST



Idaho Chapter  
Oregon-California Trails Association

XVIII Issue 11 December 2005

James McGill, Editor  
208 467 4853/ Cell 250 6045

[jwmcgill@pobox.com](mailto:jwmcgill@pobox.com)

## **DESERVED RECOGNITION: CLAIR & VIRGINIA RICKETTS** Peg Cristobal

Clair and Virginia Ricketts have walked and thoroughly researched the North Side Trail in Idaho, which runs from Fort Hall to Bliss. This trail was originally used by the Hudson Bay Co. to travel between its two Forts, Fort Hall and Fort Boise. This route also became used by emigrant wagons. The western part of this trail became part of the Kelton Freight Road and was used by the Kelton Stages, along with the emigrant wagons, thus making rather deeper ruts in places that we can still find during the present time. Clair has also been interested in other trails through the Magic Valley area, and has done much research and recording of the facts concerning them. But that is only part of their accomplishments in the area of Idaho history!

When Virginia was working for Jerome County she came upon some old survey maps with "Emigrant Road" noted on them. This piqued her interest and led to her researching and information gathering about this trail.

Both Clair and Virginia have always had an interest in history. They worked in the core group to form the Idaho Chapter of OCTA in 1985. They have been very active in the group since that time and have accumulated a wealth of information in records and in their heads.

The Ricketts' involvement in history all their lives and their sharing with others has brought them high respect for their knowledge and for their involvement in historical organizations. When Idaho hosted the OCTA convention in 1989, Virginia wrote the tour guides.

Virginia wrote articles about local history for the *Twin Falls Times-News* for many years and she has authored a number of books on the history of the area.

The college of Southern Idaho, CSI, at Twin falls, ID, has been enlarging its campus library. Clair and Virginia have been great supporters of the College. They have accumulated an extensive history library of their own, and felt that by donating it to the research section of CSI the records would be available to the interested public. A special section of the new library addition has been created to hold the Ricketts collection of historical books and documents. The *Times-News* offered an article about the donations, Oct. 12, 2005, in the **Community** section.

Clair was a Boy Scout leader in Jerome and was instrumental in forming the youth involved in his troop for many years. He also flint knapped arrow heads. The couple has farmed for many years South East of Jerome. The area where they live is Falls City. **McGill**



**VIRGINIA AND CLAIR (CENTER) TALK WITH ONE LAND OWNER NEAR OREGON TRAIL ROUTE, NW OF FILER, ID.**

Both were instrumental in the North Rim Park area preservation, where the North Side Trail goes by Shoshone Falls. This BLM land was headed for development. They helped in turning that around and getting the park area set up for preservation, very much in its pristine trail-times form. They were also influential in some of the preservation of City of Rocks area.

Virginia was featured in the fall I-OCTA Membership Meeting report, in *Trail Dust*, November 2004, when she was soon to be given Idaho State Historical Society's *Esto Perpetua* award for her dedication and contributions

to historic preservation.

Virginia now has a new book out, *Shoshone Falls: The Magnificent Spectacle*, and is available through them as well as other places in the Magic Valley. Shoshone Falls was first discovered by white men when the John Jacob Astor Co. found it in 1811. **Book Cover Reproduction**



**Book Cover:** Virginia Ricketts, a former Jerome County Clerk of the District Court and chair person of the Idaho State Historical Society Board of Trustees, especially enjoys researching to “document the real story.” She is the author of “Then and Now in Southern Idaho” and “The History of the North Side, the first 75 Years,” reports for government agencies, [and] newspaper columns. She taught classes about Magic Valley history; and, conducted tours for the College of Southern Idaho, and has helped start several history related organizations including the Jerome County Historical Society, the Friends of Stricker [stage station], and the Idaho Chapter of the Oregon-California Trails Association. The Esto Perpetua award is among several honors she has received. She is listed in *Who’s Who in America* and *Who’s Who Among American Women*.

### **LOOKING BACK: An Encouraging Review**

In Idaho the OCTA Chapter has been working together with the BLM in an intensive effort to remark many miles of historic trails with carsonite markers. Many of the routes, cutoffs, and variants had gone wanting for about 15 years, since the BLM first marked them. One new State BLM leader has been very influential, and helped turn the interests and focus of field officers and archeologists back to trail preservation interests, and a renewed partnership with I-OCTA. Much of our marking materials have been purchased/supplied by the BLM, and their personnel always encourage I-OCTA workers with verbal and written expressions of appreciation!

In a concentrated effort in the last three-years we have

succeeded in remarking all of the South Alternate Trail, almost every segment of the North Alternate Trail, and most of the California Trail that crosses southern Idaho, as well as all but 3-5 miles of the remaining ruts on the Hudspeth Cutoff. About half of the Jeffery-Goodale Cutoff across south-central Idaho is also finished. We are also working on detailed identification and mapping of the Goodale Cutoff north of Boise to the Brownlee Ferry site, mostly ignored before, with more marking of this prior-unmarked trail considered for next spring.

And the main Oregon Trail has not been ignored. Remaining ruts of the combined Oregon and California Trails that enter Idaho from Wyoming has been visited with necessary markers all the way to Pocatello. Across to the west from there to the area of the parting, where those trails divided at Raft River, several miles of both routes are finished. On the western side of Idaho the Oregon Trail has been renewed with the white posts all the way from Glens Ferry through the Boise Valley, with the exception of only about 2 miles.

We have also involved ourselves in the early stages of the new NPS GIS mapping procedures, with one 3 mile segment of the Oregon Trail finished SE of Canyon Creek Station in Elmore County. The finished trail work is mainly the on-the-trail accomplishments for I-OCTA. There are also many other on-going efforts related to research, history preservation, mapping and documentation of trails and sites, and other behind-the-scenes involvements, which are also important.

Persistence and trail pleasures for many workers have paid dividends in Idaho. We have more marking and much more remapping to do and everyone is welcome to visit and help, even from other OCTA chapters. Inquire if interested in sharing!

**Jim McGill, I-OCTA Preservation Officer**

### **LOOKING AHEAD: I-OCTA Challenges**

Besides the need to recheck and mark the North Side Trail, more segments of the Oregon Trail, some sections of the California Trail near the drainage area of Raft River and more of the Jeffery-Goodale Cutoff across south-central Idaho, there remains miles of the extended Goodale’s Cutoff NW of Boise, north and west of Emmett, and from Cambridge to the Brownlee Ferry site on the Snake River in Hells Canyon. Recent communications with NWOCTA have set the possibility of a joint effort with I-OCTA in searching the area of Brownlee Ferry and identifying the old trail there.

Some OCTA staff members that are conducting *MET Manual* training have discussed with Dave Welch, OCTA Preservation Officer, the possibility of doing some inter-chapter trail marking, etc. Cooperative efforts with our sister chapters seems like a good way to go to

help chapters with few member who can still get out on the trails. We hope that I-OCTA can be a part of this and give opportunity to visit trail remnants in other states.

## A ZIG-ZAG ROAD: GOODALE'S TRAIN

Gary Franklin, OCTA member from Cambridge, recently sent an email report of his flight over some of the Goodale Cutoff in that area, and over Hells Canyon to look for the "zig-zag" road that the Goodale Train members built up from the Brownlee Ferry on the north side. He has concluded that there is probably not a road up the steep hillside to the west of a later old road that follows Road Canyon. A trail went up somewhere and to the Powder River Mines, the destination of many on the Goodale Train. One map had been marked to estimate the location to the side of that canyon, built in a zig-zag pattern in order to climb the steep slope. Gary's effort offered a lead for the exploration at the site.

The term "Zig-Zag" was printed in 1948. Here is part of a report sent in November to BLM Archeologist, Mary Oman, at Baker, OR, who has now been stirred to an interest and involvement in this project:

-----  
"The origin of the term "Zig Zag" appears to come from a write-up in the Oregon Historical Quarterly 49, 1948. W. W. Melhorn and Edna A. Melhorn wrote a little history when a marker dedicated to "the Tim Goodale wagon train" was placed in Pine valley on September 3 of that year.

Some of the members of the Baker County Historical Society had known Dunham Wright, who was with the Goodale Train and lived to be 100 years old. He had told the story of the train many times and the road building. He may have used the term "zig zag" to describe the road, and when the Melhorns had interviewed these acquaintances of Wright they recorded the information. The account below says the name "Brownlee Canyon" was known in the year of this writing, 1948, but the language leaves the probability that Wright may have used the term "Zig Zag!"

"They decided to send men over this [pack] trail [from the Salubria valley] to Brownlee Ferry and look the country over. Mr. Brownlee returned to the camp [now near Cambridge where the teen-age Martha Roberts' grave has just recently been relocated] with the men and offered to ferry the train across the Snake River without charge if they would make a road from Cambridge [sic] to the ferry, which they did. Mr. Brownlee crossed them over and told them he would pay each able-bodied man \$2.50 per day [wow] in gold dust to make a road up what is now known as Brownlee Canyon to the top of Zig Zag Hill.

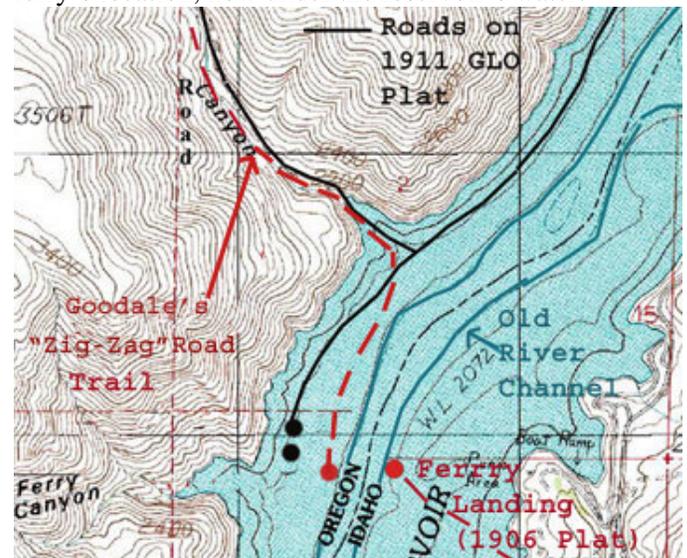
"Then they could drive into Pine Valley. His proposition was accepted and the trail was made."

It is now known that the name "Zig Zag" was printed even earlier. A **satellite photo search** exposed an older trail up the same Road Canyon. There appears to be some sections of the old trail in the bottom of Road Canyon, going toward the top, which were not covered

by the obvious later graded road. Part way up Road Canyon where the improved road crosses a section line, on the 1911 GLO plat is found a weaving trail to the west of the road, with the word "Trail" recorded. And the Surveyor's notes named this the "Zig Zag trail."

Dunham Wright's and other accounts give information that the many Goodale Train members worked for many days in building that road, in order to get out of the Snake River Canyon. The ferry was waiting, but there was no road on to Oregon. It appears in trail-reasoning that they had to leave the ferry area and get across to the only possible route out—up the present Road Canyon!

The internet satellite photo that overlays the map below does show part of the trail up what was first called Spring Canyon. It is, however, impossible to reproduce the trail remnants in a small photo here and still be obvious. The Idaho side 1906 GLO plat shows the ferry's location, now under the reservoir's water.



### **BROWNLEE FERRY SITE AND GOODALE TRAIN ROAD**

Several responses to an earlier email query about a possible joint trip with NWOCTA to the site brought replies from members of both chapters, and indicated high interests. Some pre-planning trips in the spring will probably be necessary before a full joint field trip would be set. Mary Oman will be involved, and this Preservation Officer will be cooperating with Mary and Stafford Hazelett from NWOCTA in the planning.

### **GOODALES CUTOFF (N.) MARKING**

Wow, was Gregory Franzwa right when he remarked, with a smile, to this Editor at the Salt Lake Convention that we never write anything about Goodales Cutoff? Well, Greg has been a constant source of encouragement as we have been working on this historic trail route!

Here is one step in the culmination of the work done the past 2-3 years—assisted by members of I-OCTA, BLM representatives, and even visiting field trip helpers. Credit for progress also goes to many who have assisted

in research and information gathering.

On November 17, 2005, Wally Meyer drove the first marker where the existing Goodale ruts begin north of Eagle, ID, and at the top of the ridge that follows north from Skyline Drive. Wally lives on Skyline, and some traces of a swale cross his pasture before getting to the BLM land where the continuous trail ruts begin.

McGill Photo



**SKYLINE RIDGE TRAIL BEGINNING—WALLY MEYER**

Most of the miles of ruts all the way to Jackass Gulch Road, east of Freezeout Hill near Emmett, are still quite prominent. Only the first one mile and the last couple of miles cross BLM land, and therefore are likely to be preserved. The remaining trail is on private range land, and the Boise/Eagle area development might one day destroy those swales. That is one reason to map, photograph, document, mark, share with preservation minded officials, and educate the public about this trail.

One good day was found before the big inversion and fog that settled into the area during late November, and markers were placed with the “Goodale” name—giving recognition to the mountain man who led the first wagon train NW from Boise and Eagle on previous Indian trails. This is the 1862 **Goodale Cutoff** only. The first part of the Cutoff from the Fort Hall site to Elmore County also gives credit to John Jeffery—known now as the Jeffery-Goodale Cutoff. With a ferry in place near Ferry Butte, upriver from the Fort Hall location, Jeffery had promoted the route in the mid 1850s.

The BLM land with good ruts/swales extends through the bottom of Little Gulch. On the private land, open range land that extends for about 3 more miles toward N. Fork Willow Creek, the continuing historic trail was dotted with a few markers averaging about ½ mile apart—with “Private Property” decals added. Though one property owner had declined to allow such marking, the continuation of the trail on the sections of BLM land from Willow Creek to Jackass Gulch road now has a few markers also. This completed most of the marking of the remaining trail to near the top of Freezeout Hill.

The year after the Goodale Train opened this Indian trail to wagon travel many emigrant wagons followed him.



**ON THE PASS BETWEEN LITTLE AND BIG GULCHES A DEEP SWALE MARKS THE 1962 GOODALE TRAIN ROUTE --NORTH FROM THE FENCE-LINE CARSONITE MARKER**

The Olds Ferry across the Snake River in 1863, west of Weiser, ID, allowed a large portion of Oregon bound emigrants to follow Goodale to the Payette River, then west toward the Snake River, up through future Payette and Weiser, and west across the ferry to the Burnt River route in Oregon. Goodale had, however, gone NW from the Payette area toward Mann Creek, through Middle Valley and on to the Cambridge area. Only the first part of his Cutoff became well used by many wagon trains.

This route also became the Boise City to Umatilla Stage and freight road in 1863-64, and the deep ruts/swales that still remain prove the heavy traffic use for several years. Tim Goodale started a good thing for emigrants!



**EVIDENT SWALE DOWN THE LAST RIDGE TO JACKASS GULCH, LITTLE CHANGED UNDER COVERING FOILAGE**

Next spring and summer should offer ample opportunity for others in marking and enjoyable trips to experience some of the historic wagon wheel cuts of 150 years ago! Few people have seen these ruts, or have understood the significance when they crossed them by happenstance!

**MINUTES--Meeting 10-22-05 (abbreviated)**

Doug Jenson (Idaho Falls), I-OCTA president, called the Fall Membership Meeting to order at 10:08 A.M. at the Elmore County Historical Society building—Thirteen members present. Afton Patrick (Twin Falls) handed out copies of the minutes of the August 17, 2005, Salt Lake meeting. Peg Cristobal (Filer)—motion to approve the

minutes as read. Gil Wyllie (Boise) second—motion carried. Doug Jenson read a Treasurer’s report in Bill Wilson’s (Boise) absence. He also reported for Webmaster Jerry Eichhorst on the website. Yahoo doubled storage for our site, but no new events so far web wise.

Instead of a librarian’s report from Wendy Miller (Nampa) Peg Cristobal gave a report on the new Ricketts Room being created at the College of Southern Idaho. Clare Ricketts (Jerome) gave a brief description of the contents and handed out the *Times News* clipping, [story p. 1]. Preservation Officer, Jim McGill (Nampa) reported that the GIS training and practice in Mountain Home was successful. Historians, Jane Wyllie (Boise) and Peg said the [I-OCTA history]CD is completed—available upon request from the historians.

Old Business—Doug reported the By-Laws have been up-dated and approved by the board. The [trail] diaries collection that Charlotte Meechan did for the BLM was discussed—Wall Meyer (Eagle) will get a copy to Bill Wilson to have copied or put on a CD. A Calendar of Events was discussed. The decision to hold a meeting of an appointed [planning]committee was made. Jim McGill will keep the E-Mailings up dated as to when cooperative groups and related associations are meeting.

Eulalie Langford’s proposal for the Montpelier sign was presented. The board had reviewed this proposal and had tabled it until changed could be made that reflect more emphasis on Ezra Meeker. The membership agreed with the board’s decision. Doug Jenson and Jim McGill gave a brief report on the GIS and trail marking outing around Mountain Home.

New Business—Doug reported on the City of Rocks funding. Another parcel is being considered. A discussion of the membership indicated that they felt individuals could make donations to the cause, but that our treasury was not in good enough shape to commit any funds for that purchase. Concern was also made as to the possibility of the National Convention being held here in the future and the need for [planning] for that. Elderhostel trips through National were discussed. Travis Boley has been notified of our interest.

Election of officers and board members: [*Nominated*]  
*President* -----Doug Jenson  
*Vice President*-----Lyle Lambert  
*Vice President*-----Jerry Eichhorst  
*Secretary* -----Kaye Koffman  
*Treasurer*-----Bill Wilson  
*Board Members:* Gil Wyllie expires 07,  
Peg Cristobal expires 07, Walter Meyer expires 07,  
Clare Ricketts expires 07

Nominations were made for one new board member from Eastern Idaho. Del Mangum was nominated by

Jim McGill and Lynn Porter was nominated by Lyle Lambert: Lynn Porter received the majority.

Peg Cristobal made the motion to accept the slate of officers and board members as recommended by the nomination committee. Clare Ricketts second—motion carried. Gil Wyllie--motion the Fall Membership Meeting of I-OCTA be adjourned. Lynn Porter second, motion carried. Meeting was adjourned at 11:53 A.M.

**Submitted: Afton Patrick, Secretary**

### **TIM GOODALE’S FAMILY--(AGAIN?)**

When Irving Merrill & Merle Wells published their last Goodale story in the *Overland Journal* (Summer 1999), little was known about Tim after his visit to his family in 1859. “We already know that *within months* of his visit,” they wrote, “Tim was back in the west, married to an attractive twenty-five-year-old Shoshoni wife named Jennie.” It now has become evident that his Jennie, “Virginia,” was closer to *15 years* old, born in 1845!

After much searching and finding Tim living at the Brownlee Ferry site in Hell Canyon on the Snake River, in 1864-65, and then seemingly going to Montana, he *almost disappeared from any records*. (The ferry site was at the crossing of the river by his own 1862 Wagon Train.) What about Jennie and possibly his children?

Recent research leads to some speculation that Tim, born in 1810, may have died in the late 1870s! Mrs. Jennie Goodale has now been discovered in Skagit County, Puget Sound area, Washington Territory, in 1870, with a 6 year old daughter, **Winona**. There she remarried a Mr. Jacob Highbarger. Tim had some relatives in that area, notably a Cousin, Phoebe Goodell Judson (husband, Holden). Phoebe spelled her name differently. Winona had been born during the Brownlee Ferry stay!

Jennie had 4 more children with Jacob, 3 found on the 1880 Census in Spokane, Maggie, Amos and Perry. She died April 8, 1897, at age 52! Maggie died at age 14, and Jennie has also lost another unnamed infant to death.

What about Tim’s daughter, Winona? Merrill and Wells had included a little story about Tim nicknaming his tiny niece, Delia, when he was visiting at home. She was then called “Winona,” Tim’s “favorite Indian name,” by everyone when her parents changed her name to please him! Six years later his own little “Winona” was born at the Brownlee Ferry site, on the Oregon side.

A search is on for any more records of Tim, but especially about Winona’s life and possible descendents. We are working with two researchers in Washington, Mary Michaelson and Noel Bourasaw, and they have already contributed to the latest Goodale information gathered. **See the first Goodale research paper on the Web at:** <http://www.idahogenealogy.com/goodale/index.htm>

## **I-OCTA OFFICERS AND STAFF**

**Douglas Jenson** - - President [jensondd@ida.net](mailto:jensondd@ida.net)  
**Lyle Lambert** - - Vice-Pres. [Antiquesaz@aol.com](mailto:Antiquesaz@aol.com)  
**Jerry Eichhorst** - - Vice-Pres. [jeichho@mail.com](mailto:jeichho@mail.com)  
**William Wilson** - - Treasurer [ma\\_bill@msn.com](mailto:ma_bill@msn.com)  
**Kay Coffman** - Secretary [minikatz2@aol.com](mailto:minikatz2@aol.com)  
**James McGill** - Preservation [jwmcgill@pobox.com](mailto:jwmcgill@pobox.com)  
**Jerry Eichhorst** - Webmaster [IdahoOCTA.org](http://IdahoOCTA.org)  
**Peg Cristobal & Jane Wyllie** - Historians (below)  
**William Wilson** - -Membership Chair (above)  
**Wendy Miller**- Library Chair - -  
[canyoncountymuseum@netzero.net](mailto:canyoncountymuseum@netzero.net)

### **Board of Directors**

**Peggy Cristobal** [crispp@mindspring.com](mailto:crispp@mindspring.com)  
**Walter Meyer** [wallywanch@worldnet.att.net](mailto:wallywanch@worldnet.att.net)  
**Gil Wyllie (Jane)** [gilwyllie@msn.com](mailto:gilwyllie@msn.com)  
**Clair Rickets** [virginia@northrim.net](mailto:virginia@northrim.net)  
**Lynn Porter** [k9hrd@hotmail.com](mailto:k9hrd@hotmail.com)

---

**I-OCTA Photo-History CDs available from  
Peg Cristobal or Jane Willey--emails above!**

---

Jane Wyllie has sent along the information about where those interested in pursuing the procedures for copyrighting their books, etc., can begin. Go to: [www.copyright.gov](http://www.copyright.gov)

---

**After January 1, 2005, a CD will be available from this Editor with the Trail Dust issues from December 2002 through December 2005. The reader can order in either Word File or PDF format. The progress of the Utter Project in marking all the historic sites of that tragedy can be followed through the issues, and the progress and work on the research, identification and mapping the Goodale Cutoff NW of Boise—leading up to date—can be discovered. Articles on trail information, marking, field trips, and other's can be also accesses, with multiple trail colored photos. Five dollars for each CD ordered can be sent to this Editor, or to Bill Wilson, I-OCTA's Treasurer. All received funds will be used for more trail preservation work. \*\*\*\*\***

---

James McGill, Editor  
Idaho Chapter of OCTA  
305 Melba Drive  
Nampa, Idaho 83686