



TRAIL DUST



Idaho Chapter
Oregon-California Trails Association

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OCTA CONVENTION, 2004, VANCOUVER, WA.-----NW-OCTA INVITATION Inviting Summer Days and Nights in Vancouver: Roll On, Columbia!

An awesome OCTA convention is ready to unfold for you in Vancouver, Washington, this August, on the banks of the Columbia River—and it is still not too late to sign up to participate in all the festivities! Expect seasonably mild weather. There will be excellent speakers, engaging workshops, entertaining re-enactors and musicians, extensive tours. The book room will offer you opportunities to browse for rare and new books and chat with authors, while the raffle and auction will give you a chance to obtain something special. Variety will abound in the meals being offered—the banquet, the barbeque, and dining “on location” during tours.

An exciting innovation is being offered for the first time at this convention—teachers will be able to earn undergraduate or graduate credits. Anyone interested in participating is eligible to sign up at the opening workshop. NW OCTA is supporting several teachers with partial scholarships in the belief that the knowledge they gain will translate directly into developing potential new OCTA members by getting them interested while they are still young.

program by Marv Ross and the Trail Band.

NW-OCTA WEBSITE PHOTO

Four historical strands will weave together the convention theme, Roll On, Columbia! River Trail of History. Papers offered at the convention will cover diverse aspects of Native American culture; the Lewis and Clark expedition and its impact on the region; Fort Vancouver and the fur trade; and emigrant travel and subsequent Willamette Valley settlement.

A number of challenging and enlightening workshops will be available. Trace your ancestors, experience pioneer music, check some archeological digs at Fort Vancouver. Alternatively, learn techniques for teaching pioneer history, or preparing interpretive media for a trail site. Or brush up on the latest in chapter building and convention methods.

Convention evenings will offer several options. Tradition, as well as good food, will be served at the awards banquet and the barbeque. See some special people at authors' night, the re-enactors' night, and the



Highlights of any convention are the tours. This one is so jam-packed with tours, and convention tours, that the first pre-convention tour begins on Sunday, August 8th, and the last post-convention tours occur on August 15th. Take a two-day auto tour from Hermiston to The Dalles while coming along the road to the convention, visit two “ends” of the trail at Fort Vancouver and Oregon City, or drive on from Vancouver to another “end” by taking the Cowlitz Trail to Puget Sound in Washington. While at the convention, choose from a journey through the Columbia Gorge, a trek along the Barlow Trail, an excursion down the Willamette Valley, or an exploration

of Lewis and Clark's route along the Lower Columbia. To wind up the week, there are tours to see a Chinook plank house, or Oregon City; or take off on your own to visit Mt. St. Helens or tour the Columbia River on a Sternwheeler.

If you haven't registered yet, do it now! If you find that rooms are no longer available at the Red Lion at the Quay, numerous alternative options are noted in your convention brochure, available with the registration form, online, at the Northwest Chapter website, <http://nwocta.com/>. We look forward to seeing you in Vancouver, Aug. 8-15.

**Marley Shurtleff
Convention Publicity**

[Sign up for the Convention by July 15 to avoid late fees, and to get your choice of activities—ED.]

OCTA CONVENTION READY TO ROLL

The fun is about to begin! After two years of planning and preparing, the Northwest Chapter's presentation of the 22nd Annual Convention of the Oregon-California Trails Association is almost here. Do you have your reservations for the convention? If not, do it now.

A multi-themed approach was selected for this convention to take advantage of the unique history of the Columbia River and its role in the Native American, exploration, fur trade and emigrant stories. We will also be able to celebrate the 199th anniversary of the arrival of Lewis and Clark at the mouth of the Columbia. Under the leadership of outstanding and experienced tour planners, these stories will be told in visits to the key sites such as The Dalles, starting point of the Barlow Road and the descent of the Columbia, the Cascades, Fort Vancouver, Fort Clatsop, the Pacific "Ocien," Champoeg, Laurel Hill and others.

Most days will be capped with a special meal at the Red Lion followed by entertainment. We have The Trail Band, Carl Allen (Woodie Guthrie), Susan Butruille, Tom Laidlaw (William Cannon), Phil and Vivian Williams, the OCTA Band and a special surprise guest. You won't want to miss the closing event at Pearson Airfield with a special musical and entertainment program. The sun setting over Fort Vancouver will make up for the omission of fireworks. There is an air show.

So make your plans now and bring a friend. The convention is open to the public. Additional registration materials and the convention registration booklet are available through headquarters or online at <http://nwocta.com>. If there are any questions please contact Dave Welch (253-584-0332 or welchdj@comcast.net).

Dave Welch, Chairman

I-OCTA Memberships Due—Last Trail Dust by mail!

SHEEP CREEK HILLS—BIG HILL!!

On June 19, several I-OCTA members, including two relatively new members, Kay Coffman, Bill Wilson's cousin, and Jimmy Oldfield, met in Montpelier, ID, for what will probably be the last I-OCTA field trip to Big Hill for some time to come. On that day both the eastern and western ridges of the Sheep Creek Hills were traversed, following the old Oregon-California Trail as much as possible.

Big Hill is the extreme down-slope of the most western part of the two ridges, dropping into the Montpelier valley. It was truly a one-way down route, and almost too steep and dangerous even for the downward travel of thousands of trail wagons! But the extensive scarring of the main ridge and the slopes and valley to the north and west of the ridge tell of the brave people who chose the route. At least 24 sets of trail ruts across the hill have been counted coming down to the valley floor.

One benefit of this trip was that with careful examination of the routes over both the first and last ridges some variant ruts were discovered that had not been marked before. The variants were shown in "Emigrant Trails of Southern Idaho," but records or trail markers had not clarified the locations before. On Map #1, page 13, both of the two northern variants that run down west from the top of the east ridge to meet the single route running WNW, and then curving westerly, were clearly seen from the below the ridge. MCGILL



FROM THE PRIVATE PROPERTY FENCE UP THE NORTHERN VARIANT, A NEW DISTANT MARKER SHOWS THE TRAIL. On top of the western ridge, Map # 2, page 15, the loop that is shown as being about ¼ mile long in Section 10, on the SE part of the remaining multiple variants was clearly defined in a short hike, and a marker placed at the northern end. The marker is about 100 yards south of a fenced vertical mine shaft.

Big Hill, which ends the remaining ruts across both ridges, was view from the top, from near the bottom after driving several miles around and down the later northern route (Map #2), and then also seen from a distance away. Several views from various angles revealed so many scars on the hillside, once carved by emigrant wagon wheels.

MCGILL



FROM THE TOP OF BIG HILL LOOKING DOWN UPON THE MONTPELIER VALLEY, THE TRAIL DROPS ALMOST 900 FEET IN ELEVATION IN THREE-FOURTHS MILE DOWN!

On the second day, June 20, the remaining Trail ruts that run near Highway 30 over the Georgetown Pass were rechecked. Georgetown is about 15 miles NW of Montpelier. Rain showers during both nights previous to the trips cause muddy roads near the western end of the remaining Georgetown ruts, and about one mile could not be accessed. Markers do remain near the road fences.

On the eastern side of the Georgetown Pass is a half-mile section of land with multiple ruts, on the north side of the highway. For the first time some of these ruts were marked with Trail and Private Property decals. The land is currently for sale, and Lyle Lambert is acquainted with the realtor. He may talk to the realtor about a possible donation or acquisition of that strip of land with those pristine, deep ruts! MCGILL



PLACING A MARKER ON THE WESTERN END OF THE PRIVATE LAND BETWEEN 4 SETS OF RUTS IN THE BRUSH Rain showers wet those marking the ruts on the second day, but real rut-nuts pay little attention to the weather!

I-OCTA TO GRANITE PASS, JULY 24-25

The July field trip scheduled for Granite Pass, on the California Trail, SW of City of Rocks, will begin with a meeting in the **City Park at Oakley, ID**. At **9:00 AM, on July 24**, members and guests will meet to follow Gar Elison to the Trail sites and ruts that lead into Nevada.

The trip is a four-wheel drive excursion, which in part will be slow and careful to follow some of the primitive route. Gar will lead the participants to maximize the views of the ruts and historic sites. This is a two-day trip, and it is recommended that preparation be made for

a camping night between the days. Motels would be too many miles away for access for the evening.

There are emigrant names inscribed in sandstone along the way. The trip will pass through the NW corner of Utah, Box Elder County, and into Nevada, along Goose Creek toward the Humboldt River. The trip will end somewhere south of Jackpot, Nevada.

Be prepared for spectacular scenery, and part of a historic Trail that carried thousands of emigrants on to California. For information call Gar at **801 955 3990** or email him at gtelison@sisna.com.

BILL WILSON'S NEW BOOK

Below is a picture of Bill Wilson with the cover of his Book about his mother's family. It is supposed to be in print within weeks. WILSON PHOTO



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.

Bill--208 343 7301 ma_bill@msn.com

June 24-25, a good Trail College Class with 16 teachers on Hagerman and Glens Ferry ruts!!!!

JWMc

PASSPORT-IN-TIME (PIT) FOR RUT NUTS

Passport in Time (PIT) is a volunteer archaeology and historic preservation program of the US Forest Service. We work with professional archaeologists and historians on projects including archaeological excavation, rock art restoration, historic structure restoration, and locating and mapping emigrant and military roads. Does this sample sound familiar?

These are real, ongoing research and management projects for which the Forest Service is responsible. The Forest Service professional staff of archaeologists and historians are the hosts, guides, and co-

workers. There are usually from 10-20 volunteers selected from submitted applications.

Because PIT is a volunteer program, there is no fee to participate. However you must get to the project site and provide your own food and lodging. We stay at local motels or RV Parks and travel to the site each day. Some of the more adventurous camp at the work site. Most projects are for one week.

In the last couple of years, we have volunteered for over 1000 hours. If some of the PIT projects sound like they could be OCTA projects – you're correct!

Modoc National Forest - Locating the Applegate Trail, June 2000; Wallowa-Whitman National Forest - Oregon Trail Survey, June 2001; Shasta-Trinity National Forest - Emigrant Wagon Road Survey, June 2002; Modoc National Forest - Applegate Trail Marking, June 2002; Stanislaus National Forest - Tracing a Trans Sierra Wagon Road, July 2002; Shasta-Trinity National Forest -

Locating the Military Pass Road, June 2003; Deschutes National Forest - Locating and Mapping

the Huntington Wagon Road; Lassen National Forest - Nobles Trail Historic Identification, July 2003; Shasta-Trinity National Forest - Lockhart Wagon Road, June 2004; Deschutes National Forest - Finding the Elliot/Huntington Roads, June 2004!

Two samples of the pleasures in this work are: (1) With my metal detector, I found the campsite of the US Cavalry at the edge of Yosemite National Park. We were near Soldier Creek, on the old road, where we saw only one car all day! (2) At the base of Mt. Shasta in California, in the thick forest, we located the old emigrant and military road by finding artifacts with our metal detectors. The following week we did the same thing on the flank of Mt. Lassen. That day a beautiful Red Tailed Hawk flew over carrying a snake in its talons. **Gail Carbiener**

Web page: <http://www.passportintime.com> or call **(800) 281-9176**-mail list-Catalogue of PIT Projects!

The Goodale North Cutoff/Road project is still in the works. Much information has been collected--photos, land plats, maps, and historical documentation--which indicate the route(s) usages!

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