



TRAIL DUST



Idaho Chapter
Oregon-California Trails Association

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EXPLORING THE GOODALE ROUTE NORTH THROUGH CENTRAL IDAHO

On May 13, 2004, a project that has been pressing the thoughts and ambition of your I-OCTA President for about 3 years began to take shape, yes, even to take feet! That morning Dean Shaw, BLM Archeologist, Boise, led I-OCTA members Bill Wilson, Wally Meyer, BLM retired, Jerry Eichhorst, and Patti and Jim McGill to the southern beginning of miles of the remaining Goodale variant ruts near Emmett, ID! The Goodale north, beginning in 1862, took emigrants to Oregon across the Snake River by way of the Brownlee Ferry, NW of Cambridge, ID, took miners to central Idaho, and allowed back-traffic from Oregon to the gold fields of Grimes Creek and Idaho City. The ruts need to be identified, mapped accurately, and marked.

The 1862 Goodale Wagon Train, and few other travelers afterward, went west from Boise down the Payette River, and followed along the Snake and Weiser Rivers to near the Cambridge area. Because of so few wagons that traveled there, and land development, probably little evidence of that route could now be found. His train was made up of mostly miners, bound for both ID and OR!

From an Idaho State Historical Reference Series report we read, “**Later in 1862**, eager miners tried out a much more direct route to upper Payette valley than Goodale’s road via lower Weiser and Payette. Old Indian trails via Crane Creek and upper Willow Creek gave them access [back south] to upper Payette valley a little north of Pickett’s corral. . . where they connected with another Payette gold rush route that came from Burnt River and Old’s ferry [near Farewell Bend, OR].”

The route from Emmett north, west of the present Paddock Reservoir, through the present Crane Creek Reservoir and on NW to along Dixie Creek, to the later town of Salubria, then became the variant of Goodale’s route to the mines. This is the route indicated on virtually all of the old maps, called “Goodale,” and has been substantiated by several modern researchers and historians. But the exact route all the way and the still existing ruts has yet to be explored, accurately mapped, and marked. There are some difference in opinions and map indications of the approach north through Crane Creek Reservoir, and also several miles on NW toward

Dixie Creek. Present research and exploration will hopefully clarify the exact route, though some changed variants could also be expected. MCGILL PHOTO



DEAN SHAW WALKED GOODALE RUTS ALONG FOURMILE CR., NORTH OF CONFLUENCE WITH BIG WILLOW CR.

There also still exists some of the ruts and road between Boise and Emmett, but Wally Meyers and others having explored what is left there, those miles were saved for a later date for further identification. Beginning the trip north on Van Dussen Rd., then Big Flat Rd. and Four Mile Rd., near the end of the valley’s private land and the beginning of BLM land, about 5 miles north of Emmett, traces of the old ruts began to appear near Van Dussen Rd. A branching and reconnecting of two routes of the present road, for a little over one mile, provided two possible route choices and maybe two variants.

Some evidence of ruts up a valley on the east side of the eastern branch first caught the attention of the hiking participants, but faded rut areas where the loose soil has

much eroded down the foothills also fostered questions. The return trip back south on the western branch later that day gave evidence of some deeper ruts near the present gravel road, which may have been the most used route. Having earlier viewed and printed internet satellite photos to assist in beginning the search greater traces of the possible route(s), pictures seemed to favor the western branch. Records study and exploration will be needed to determine if both routes could have been used!

After topping the summits that both branches of the road cross going north, and also after the branches reconnect, more continuous evidence of ruts along the existing roads do appear. Long stretches of old worn trail sometimes cross and re-cross the newer straightened and leveled road. There are also some alternate segments of later *graded* routes of the present road. (In looking for ruts the trained explorer looks for natural areas with worn passage by much traffic, without evidence that equipment once worked on a road.) Wagon-worn swales and ruts became very evident along the road north.

Good ruts were found along Big Flat road all the way to Big Willow Creek, some near the road and some wandering away closer to the stream drainages. Beyond lunch at Willow Creek, along Four Mile Rd. rut segments continued. In some places the old ruts ran away from the drainages on parallel flats or benches below the foothill peaks, and in places the remaining rut traces crowded the stream bottoms in narrow canyons. The positive side was that even with some eroded-away and missing ruts in places, there was found very continuous rut traces along the many miles traveled, where the old travelers, without road equipment, would have been expected to seek the best routes and easiest accesses.

MCGILL PHOTO



OBVIOUS RUT ACROSS A ROCKY POINT, AWAY FROM THE STREAM. WHERE ROCKS WERE MOVED TO CLEAR A PATH
The travel, hiking, and exploration that day followed all the way to a sheep camp on private land on Little Willow Flat. From there nearly 8 miles of mostly private land will need several permissions to cross and explore if the ruts are to be followed toward Crane Creek and the Reservoir. Much more time will be spent in verifying this complete route so that it can be marked accurately with identifying markers and possibly historic signs!

A quick trip was traveled several miles north on Four Mile Rd. and to the south end of South Crane Cr. Rd., to one undisturbed area about one mile long through a canyon, to see if any evidence of ruts could be found along that possible route toward the eastern end of Crane Creek Reservoir. Nothing definitive was found.

Someone associated with the BLM once mapped the route for the BLM without details, following down South Crane Cr. and up North Crane Cr. and Hog Cr., through the east end of the present Reservoir. With only minor discrepancies compared to satellite pictures of apparent ruts, these maps seem fairly accurate as compared to present information gathered and old descriptions of the route traveled.

The route north of the Reservoir may follow near Hog Cr. Rd. before turning NW toward Dixie Creek Rd. The BLM will be looking for aerial photos that could give some good information, and land plats will be examined.

NEWS WITH A PHOTO OF INTEREST

Dear Gang,

The **Sutter's Fort wagon** is just about ready to ship to Sacramento. We are excited about it. For those who do not know, I planted a thought with people at the Sutter's Fort some seven years ago. A committee was formed and we began a long and at times tedious process.



We received a grant for \$20,000 dollars. With lots of people working together, the wagon is now a reality. We hope to have it by mid June. Thanks to all those who gave of their time and energy to make this happen. No one person could have made this happen,

Frank [Tortorich, in California]

[Great looking emigrant wagon, isn't it? This would look good with any trails display! Information from Frank, wagonwheel@volcano.net --- Ed.]

MORE GRAVES IDENTIFIED

Yesterday [May 15, 04] Lynn Porter and us checked the graves that have been on our agenda for so long. In

addition to Hannah, Lynn had her new trainee dog, Fallon, with her. RICKETT PHOTO



PROBABLE EMIGRANT CHILD'S GRAVE NEAR TWIN FALLS
One grave near Shoshone Falls Lynn wanted to show us is north of the North Side Trail and Hannah the expert dog has already affirmed it. The [other] grave west of Blue Lakes on the private property also was affirmed by Hannah. We agreed that it is probably an infant or small child's resting place since Lynn's probing shows it to be smaller sized and somewhat shallower. *Clair & Virginia Ricketts*

NORTH ALTERNATE MARKING TRIP

As planned in the Spring the May Field Trip to work on marking some more of the N.A. Trail westerly from King Hill was a good outing for five I-OCTA members. Evidently other obligations and day experiences occupied many members! Though there was some hiking and marking the whole trip, as usual, could have been driven by those who can no longer hike when necessary along some ruts.

We do not plan monthly trips for I-OCTA without keeping in mind the inabilities of some of our older members, and we do want to encourage all to come along on the outings to enjoy the trail ruts, scenery, and fellowship. **There is always a way for some non-hikers to ride along and be involved!**

The first 1.5 miles of the remaining ruts NW of King Hill, and from the old King Hill Station site, were uphill. The old markers were still in good condition, but needed the faded decals replaced. Then the next half mile of ruts running along the west side of the present King Hill Rd., just prior to climbing to the top of the steepest grade, required several new markers.

One of the obvious conditions of the ruts along that Road is the piles of rock that line the sides, a rough area that required often removing large stones to make way for passage. At the top of the grade, where the trail had crossed the area now covered by the road, Wally Meyer got a *rare treat* for himself. Our "Eagle Eye Eichorst" (Jerry), discovered a 100 yard section of ruts on the east side of the pass that had before been overlooked. Wally had missed these when he originally placed markers while working for BLM!

Rock lined trails, with some short parallel variants, were remarked on north toward the small Emigrant Crossing Reservoir that lies more than a mile east of Blair Trail Reservoir, T4S, R10E, Sec. 19, Elmore Co. At the Emigrant Crossing lake, more than one set of ruts sloped down the NE end into the edge of the water, across greatly worn basalt rocks. The deepest ruts showed double trenches cut 4-6 inches across the largest permanent rocks by iron wagon wheel rims. MCGILL PHOTO



UNDER THE ARROWS A CLOSE LOOK REVEALED ROCKS GREATLY WORN, LEAVING TRENCHES OF WHEEL WEAR. From the west end of the first Reservoir on to the Blair Trail Reservoir the eastern end of the ruts have been erased when earth was scraped from the surface to assist in building the Reservoir. Most of the more than a mile on is somewhat eroded and very much sage brush filled. Five old markers were discovered, broken and down, probably by cattle wear and tear! MCGILL



WALLY AT A WORN, ROCKY DRY STREAM CROSSING
The crew chose to return another time and hike these ruts with an ample supply of markers, because these ruts need to be marked more closely in order to maintain the continuity of the Trail here. Only two markers were placed near the Blair Reservoir to mark the ruts so they could easily be found upon returning. One marker replaced a broken one on the west side of the Reservoir

at the beginning of a three mile route that must also be hiked another day.

There are also 2-3 short segments of ruts to be remarked on NW, between sections of private land, and the North Alternate will be finished from King Hill on NW, to its junction with main the Oregon Trail.

BIG HILL AGAIN---ENJOYMENT

For **June 19-20, 2004**, the I-OCTA planning group set a time for another trip to the Montpelier-Big Hill area, for some who could not stay last year for both days when the ruts were all remarked and for pure enjoyment and sight seeing for everyone who participates. The time last year was strictly working days, though it is often hard for a real rut-nut to separate any trail travel and marking from enjoyment! (See pictures on IdahoOCTA.org)

This trip is encouraged for all who have any interest, whether one has been there before or not. Last year some variants were marked for the first time ever, following the routes shown in Idaho's *Emigrant Trails* book. These may have been followed before, some in difficult canyon terrain, but no evidence was found that indicated many people had seen one particular route up the east side of the western ridge of Sheep Creek Hills. Some markers will highlight ruts not seen by many rut-nuts! One or two probable emigrant graves were also found in the area.



FROM PART WAY UP BIG HILL, MARKERS ON SOME RUTS
The group will meet at the **Forest Service, Oregon Trail Center in Montpelier**, easily seen on the east side of Highway 30, middle of town, at **9:00 a.m. on Saturday, June 19**. The trail-viewing part of the trip will begin near the Wyoming border on the east side of the eastern Sheep Creek Hills. Both ridges of Hills will be crossed. Lunches and drinks will be necessary to carry. High clearance vehicles are necessary, but some may group up with others in such vehicles. **Contact the Editor to make arrangements for this.**

Big Hill's multiple ruts down west, near the final part of the presently existing ruts, are some of the steepest and most spectacular on all the Oregon /California Trails system! Surely no wagon ever climbed back up to the east, though as many as 24 variant routes/ruts can be counted across that slope. The scars on that side can be seen as far away as the view of the Hill permits, and are

easily defined at least 1.5 miles away! Saturday will be a long day, but tiring participants can easily exit the group a several point along the way! **DON'T MISS THIS!**

On the return trip west, Sunday, June 20, a few miles of existing ruts will be checked and remarked near and over the Georgetown pass, closely along the sides of old Highway 30. Reservations can me made as follows:

Motels: **Best Western** 1-866-729-0918,
Super 8 1-888-563-4464

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 Boise's side of Idaho---Contact Wally Meyer, wallywanch@worldnet.att.net Peg Cristobal, crisp@mindspring.com or Doug Jenson, jensondd@ida.net for information or to let them know of your interests. **Not much work but great pleasure!**

TRAIL DUST EMAIL LIST GROWING

Each month our list grows of people receiving *Trail Dust* by email. We are now attaching it in both Word and PDF files so that it can be opened by everyone. Even people with Mac computers, not compatible with Word, can easily open the PDF files! And these files are small.

Saving postage is a small benefit, but reaching so many people who could not otherwise get the Paper is a big plus. If you would like to try this mode of getting the Paper earlier on your computer, please send a note to jwmcgill@pobox.com and simply write "Trail Dust email." Include your name for our records. If you are a *subscription member* and change your mind, we will put you back on the snail-mail list!

Trail Dust can also be found on I-OCTA's wed site, IdahoOCTA.com!! See much more information there!

OUTPOST DAYS--By A Companion Group

On June 5-6, the Owyhee County Historical Society held their annual Outpost Days at Murphy, ID. Outpost days has many historical artisans displaying their craft, and other displays and activities related to western history. This is a group with which several I-OCTA members have close connections, that has very active historical interests and activities. In the last 2 years a close and cooperative relationship has been developed with the Society in field trips offered and other shared interests.

During the visit to Outpost Days this year your President was reminded by other attendees of our historical and trail related trip in April on part of the South Alternate. Some OCHS member only then visited trail ruts within 2-3 miles of Murphy, *sites that they had not seen before*

though many OCHS field trips have covered much of the large Owyhee Co. During O.D. people expressed their pleasure in that trail-educational activity. Others wanted to know where to go to see those ruts, *that day!*

One of I-OCTA's most pleasurable duties is educating the public about trails, preservation, and the historical perspectives offered by these remnants of our past and of our ancestors. We have something to share that can offer a pleasurable escape from the pressures and daily grind of life, something that many people have no idea still exists across many States! Let's "show and tell" often!

LEWIS AND CLARK HISTORIC COIN

OCTA has had minted 1000 uniquely designed Lewis and Clark Commemorative Coins, of .999 pure silver. This is the Series 1 minting, and is a collectors coin that OCTA people can be proud to own. These are now being offered, with registered minting numbers. MCGILL



ONE SIDE OF THE NEW COIN---SIDE TWO HAS THE ASSOCIATION NAME AND IS DESIGNED WITH LEWIS-CLARK PEACE INSIGNIA--CLASPED HANDS/CROSSED AXE & PIPE! Call OCTA at 1 888 811 6282 to reserve your low serial number, and make arrangements for purchase. This can be done on the web, OCTA-trails.org. \$29.95+3.85 S&H

OCTA's 22nd Annual Convention Vancouver, Washington Aug. 11-14, 2004

RENEW MEMBERSHIPS (DUE APRIL 2004) FOR CONTINUAL TRAIL DUST, FIELD TRIP PRIVILEGES & BENEFITS! \$10 per person, to Bill Wilson, Treasurer, 5204 Waterwheel Dr, Boise, ID 83703-7301

2004 REMAINING I-OCTA EVENTS

- June 19-20**—Big Hill FIELD TRIP, Montpelier, ID, FT and marking Georgetown area ruts
July 10—Trail ruts marking
July 24—Granite Pass FT, assistance of Gar Elison
Aug. 9-14 OCTA Convention, Vancouver, WA
Aug. 28—Trail ruts marking (Hot weather?)
Sept. 11—Trail ruts marking
Sept. 25—North Alt. FT north of Bennett Road, **partial hike but rides as needed**, Teapot Dome FT
Oct. 9—Fall Members meeting, Mountain Home, ID--Danskin Peak-Goodale ruts FT
Oct. 23-24—Hudspeth Cutoff ruts marking trip

**REMEMBER TO GET THOSE VOTES SENT IN FOR OCTA DIRECTORS-----
BILL WILSON WOULD CERTAINLY LIKE TO SERVE AND REPRESENT IDAHO IN THE ASSOCIATION WORK!!**

BOISE MASSACRE ON THE OREGON TRAIL

By Donald Shannon -- Available in July 2004
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

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TRAIL MARKING GROUPS, KEEP PLANNING THOSE ACTIVITIES, AND INVITE EVERYONE ALONG!

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