

# TRAIL DUST

Idaho Chapter  
Oregon-California Trails Association

**All I-OCTA Members have National OCTA Membership. Dues Paid to OCTA, Box 1019, Independence, MO 64051-0519**

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## ONE EMIGRANT TRAIL FAMILY: Huntington / Mellen

Donovan Yingst

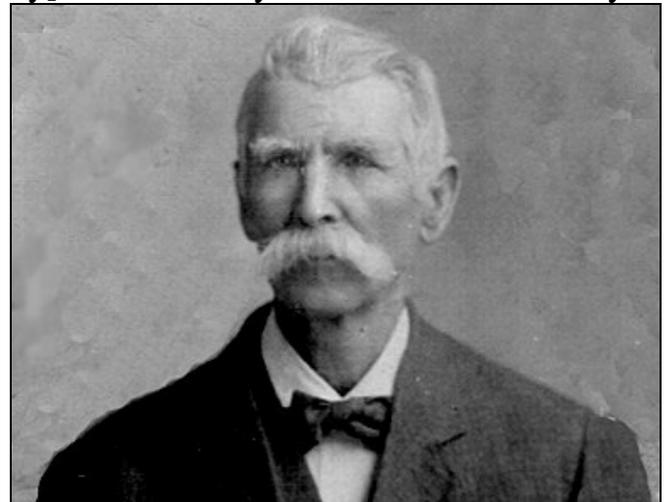
Dimick Baker Huntington's family had its start in America with the Puritan, Simon Huntington, who died of Small Pox in 1633 on board ship. His spouse, Margaret (Baret) Huntington and at least three children survived. The Huntington migration to the West began with William Huntington, Dimick's father, who established his family in Watertown, NY soon after his marriage to Zina Baker, 28 December 1806 in New Hampshire. William began his trip West in 1836 to Kirtland, Ohio, and eventually to Nauvoo, Illinois. He died in 1846 at Mt. Pisgah, Iowa, where he is buried. William was the father of six sons and four daughters. Dimick Huntington, b. 26 May 1808, married Fannie Maria Allen, 28 April 1830 at Watertown, New York. Following in his father's footsteps, he headed for Kirtland, Ohio and later to Nauvoo. In contrast to William, however, he [finally] made his way to Utah with his family.

Dimick joined the Mormon Battalion and started the walk from Council Bluffs, Iowa to San Diego, CA, during the winter of 1846-1847. His wife Fannie and children, Clark Allen, Lot, and Martha Zina were allowed to accompany him—Fannie was signed on as a laundress. Dimick was one of a group that split off from the California trek in September and headed north to intersect the Oregon Trail and proceed on to Utah.

The party wintered at Pueblo, Colorado until moving on in the spring of 1847. While in Pueblo, a girl (Presendia) was born to Fannie; Presendia died shortly after birth. It is said that she was attended by Indian women who gave her Indian Root Tea to drink and tossed her in a blanket to attempt to save her life.

When spring arrived, the Pueblo contingent joined the Oregon Trail near Fort Laramie; then branched off on the Salt Lake Trail at Fort Bridger in southwestern Wyoming. They arrived at Salt Lake on 29 July 1847. Dimick carried on with church and community work until his death in 1879. He was prominent in Indian affairs as an interpreter, a drum major in a martial band, and one of the first settlers of Provo, Utah.

Julia Caroline Huntington, Dimick and Fannie's daughter, was born 21 June 1848 at Salt Lake. She first mar-



**JOHN R. MELLON**

Yingst Historic Photo

ried John Hancock, 24 June 1865 and then John R. Mellen, 7 June 1885. John R. Mellen, born 27 May 1838 at Bolton, Lancashire, England immigrated to Utah in 1848 with his parents, John Mellen and Jane Ramsden as members of the Erastus Snow Company. Very little appears in the written record that I have found about Julia Huntington, John Mellen and Jane Ramsden beyond their devotion to family and church. John R. Mellen was a Pony Express rider, miner, farmer and stockman, and a veteran of the Black Hawk

Indian War. He died in 1916 and Julia in 1925.

The marriage of John R. Mellen and Julia (Huntington) Hancock produced one child, Theresa Julia, born 23 November 1887 at Salt Lake. She married Martin T. Larsen 13 November 1905 at Salt Lake. They lived at Hunter, Utah where they ran a truck farm and coal delivery business. Martin and Theresa moved their family to Jerome, Idaho in 1916, where they farmed. Florence Julia Larsen, their first child was born at Salt Lake City. She has many interesting tales to tell about her early life on the Jerome Tract. Among them, she drove a horse-drawn school bus while in the seventh and eighth grades and had to harness and feed the horses on her own at the school barn.

Florence married Aubrey Johnstone at Shoshone, Idaho. Aubrey's father, William Johnstone, drew a Carey Act Homestead on the Jerome Tract in 1907. Florence and Aubrey moved onto the homestead after their marriage to live in the original "prove-up" shack, where William had raised all his children. Both of their children (Dale and Alice) were born while they lived in the shack.

Thus ends a brief look at one Emigrant Trail Family line, starting with William Huntington. Much could have been learned about the family history simply by asking questions of Grandma Theresa Larsen. Dimick Huntington died before she was born, but she lived during the time of her other Trail ancestors—Fannie Maria Allen, John Mellen, Jane Ramsden, and John R. Mellen. Had we been interested during Grandma Larsen's lifetime, just think of what could have been recorded first-hand to add to the history already in the books. This surely would have filled in the gaps to round out our knowledge of the family.

My advice is, don't wait until they are gone to obtain first-hand family information—**DO IT NOW!**

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## **Part One   A Six-Husband Hitch:** **The life of emigrant Frances Adelia Maxon**

William J. Wilson (some editing, Maureen Gobel)  
**March 3, 2008** *This story proves that the Internet makes the world even smaller. Who would have thought that, generations later, descendants of Idaho ancestors would discover so many similarities when a genealogy researcher "Googled" the surname McGaffee.*

"Frances Adelia Maxon b. 7 Jul 1850 Albion Township, Dane County, WI." George Brinckerhoff [1st] b. 31 Aug 1839, "Married [Frances Maxon] 24

Dec 1864 Walla Walla, Walla Walla County, Washington Territory." "Daughter Carrie Brinckerhoff born Jan. 1866, Washington Territory." "25 Jan. 1867, George Brinckerhoff died in Walla Walla, Walla Walla County, Washington Territory, age. 27." "1 Oct 1867 Frances Maxon Brinckerhoff married 2<sup>nd</sup> Seneca Samuel Coston [2<sup>nd</sup>], Walla Walla, Walla Walla Co., Washington Territory,...." Coston had son, Frank, born about 1864. Frances had children by Seneca: Hugh Maxon, 1868; Ruth, b.1870-d.1879; Lois, 1872; Jay, 1878; Edgar, 1881; Rubert Frederick, 1888.

**Wilson/Gobel Historic Photo**



**FRANCES ADELIA MAXON BRINKERHOFF**

Sometime after 1889 they moved to Grangeville, Idaho County, ID---and divorced (no record found). "17 Nov 1894 Frances A. Costin of Grangeville married Manuel Romero [3<sup>rd</sup>] of Grangeville in Grangeville, Idaho County, ID." 9 Oct 1896, Frances Romero was granted a divorce from Manuel Romero. "30 Oct 1896 Frances A. Romero of Grangeville married John Sybille McGaffee [4<sup>th</sup>, my great grandfather] of Grangeville in Grangeville, Idaho County, ID."

John had been a widow since his first wife, Melissa, had died of breast cancer in Aug 1894 (many of you may remember his story in the March 2005 *Trail Dust*). 24 Nov 1899: "Frances A. vs John S. McGaffee, suit for divorce granted." "6 Feb 1900, Mrs. Francis A. McGaffee married Aldie W. Davis [5<sup>th</sup>] in Grangeville, Idaho County, ID." Aldice W. Davis and Frances may have been the proprietors of Newsome House, a well-known stage stop on the way to the mining town of Elk City, Idaho County, ID (as they show in the Newsome Census Precinct for 1900 as "hotel keeper"). But by the 1910 census they were living in Seattle, WA, near her son Rubert Frederick Coston. By the 1920 census she was a widow, living alone next to Rubert. And by the 1930 census she was again a widow, living in her son Rubert's house, with

last name of Hart [presumably her 6<sup>th</sup> husband's name].

The following is part of an email forwarded to me by Jim McGill: "I read with interest the article on John S. McGaffee in your March 2005 issue of "Trail Dust" online after it popped up in a Google search for McGaffee genealogy... If you are in touch with the author of that McGaffee piece--William J. Wilson-- would you be willing to give him my email address? I would love to find out if he knows anything about the marriage. I found the marriage license on the Idaho County GenWeb site. Thank you for whatever help you can provide. Maureen Gobel, Fairbury, NE"

I wrote her back the next day, telling her a little bit about my side of the McGaffees. Thus began an on-going correspondence of emails, as Maureen and I both discovered new things about this connection. (Most of the material on the six husbands, above, came back to me in Maureen's first email.) I next wrote back to tell her that I didn't know much about Frances, except my mother related that her father, William E. "Billy" McGaffee, who was 17 in November of 1996, and who owned a team of horses and a wagon, was supposedly legally disowned by his father (John S. McGaffee), so that Frances couldn't attach the team and horses from what would be her step-son, in the upcoming divorce. I've not done any research to find court records to verify that story, but maybe someday....

Having recently acquired a two-volume "index" to genealogical items in the *Idaho Co. Free Press*, compiled by Carol Anglen in 2004, and retitled: *Idaho County News, 1886-1903*, I was able to provide several answers about divorce and marriage dates to Maureen. One of the items in this volume 1, was the story of the death of Jay Coston, who froze to death while hauling the mail between Slate Creek and Florence (*I.C.F.P.*, 17 Feb 1899). That article mentioned that his body was brought to Grangeville on Saturday morning and "The internment took place at 4 o'clock this afternoon from the house of Mrs. McGaffee, deceased's mother."

**(Frances: continued in next *Trail Dust*)**

### **MORE CONVENTION GOOD THINGS**

**BOB MILLER BAND**—Bob and June Miller are part of the popular Bob Miller Band in the Treasure Valley. Bob plays acoustic bass guitar and June plays banjo. Other members play guitar, mandolin and do vocals. The band plays classic country western, as well as rock and roll, old ragtime tunes and gospel. They have performed at the Country Jubilee in Oregon, Performing Arts Center near Seattle and at dances, charitable and community functions and private

celebrations. Sing along and enjoy yourselves. That Saturday evening will offer good entertainment and food as a closing to a week's fine OCTA celebration!



**JUNE AND BOB MILLER**

Miller Photo



**CATHY BOURNER—WHERE HAVE YOU SEEN HER?**

### **HIGH DESERT BAND—REMEMBER**

**CATHY BOURNER?** Yes she worked at the Idaho 2007, Convention table in Gering, NB, and she is a great musician! Her **High Desert Band** will lead the entertainment at the opening reception for convention participants, Tuesday, August 5, 2008. Members of the OCTA band *who bring instruments*, and some added local musicians will also follow along and do a little 'jamming' with Cathy's group. **WELCOME ALL MUSICIANS—OCTA people don't forget your instruments—and send your music suggestions!**

### **February Planning—Convention 2008**

On February 20, the planning committee—represented by members of most of the sub-committees—met to continue the progress of finalizing all activities and related events for the Nampa, ID, OCTA Convention. Every time the group meets things look better and more attractive for trail-buffs/rut-nuts. Our speakers list is set: **Bob Meinen**, *Keynote*, Children and Nature; **Dave Welch**, OCTA Preservation; **Donald Shannon**, Indian-White Relations; **Paul Nettleton**, Owyhee

Trails, Miners, Ranchers; **Lynn Porter**, Trail Angels--Death and Graves; **Jacqueline Williams**, Meals on the Trails; **Mary Michaelson**, Phoebe Goodell Judson; **James W. Henderson**, Preservation of Emigrant Inscriptions; **Ray Egan**, Ezra Meeker and friend George Bush; **Patricia Packard**, Plant Use on the Trails; **James McGill**, Goodale's Cutoff in Oregon.

The workshops will be: **Kathy Hodges**, Oral Family History; **Kenneth Swanson**, Firearms on the Trails; **Norma Dart**, **Jim Payne**, and **Mary O'Malley**; Fur Trapping and Trade; **Wendy Miller**, Adapting Trail Clothing; **Sharon Brown**, Interpretive Planning for Four National Historical Trails.

The schedules are just about completed for the whole week, including the three Pre-Convention Tours. Of course there will be almost a full month of the Wagon Train across Idaho, and there will be a week of Indian Jamboree at Fort Hall, near Pocatello, after the convention. Companion groups will be offering activities across Idaho for travelers, and those who want to extend their vacations. More of these independent activities will be announced in later *Trail Dust* issues!

**MARCH 19, NEXT PLANNING MEETING!**  
**All local members and guests are welcome, and spring-fever travelers! Nampa Civic Center, 6 PM.**

## **TRAILS JUNCTION—SHEEP ROCK**

**Eastern Idaho:** I would like you to know that the Pioneer Historic Byway Committee received a Scenic Byway grant several years ago to place a *basalt rock kiosk*, similar to others along the trail in Idaho, at Sheep Rock just 6 miles west of Soda Springs. The kiosk should be completed by late summer, or hopefully earlier. As you know this site is where [two] trails split with the main [Oregon trail] route going to Chesterfield, the Hudspeth Cutoff going to the City of Rocks, and the Bidwell-Bartleson Trail going southwest to Utah.

We have funding for interpretive signage in and around the kiosk. The Caribou Historical Society also has 14 interpretive signs from south of town on US 30 to Chesterfield that are erected that coincide with the sites listed in our brochure "Travel the Oregon Trail in Caribou County". These signs are designed and constructed by funding from the Salt Lake City Long Distance Trails Office through a grant the CHS has with them.

We are looking forward to the wagon train this summer and I have been in contact with the MUMBLIN' MULE about putting on a Dutch oven dinner when they stay near Soda Springs and having some kind of

program. We are looking forward to it. We hosted the Ezra Meeker group when they came here in 2006 and had a good community turnout. **Tony Varilone**  
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[There should be a brochure in the registration packets with info about Chesterfield, etc., a potential site for visiting by travelers on their way to the Convention. If you need one contact Tony. [cariboo@dcdi.net](mailto:cariboo@dcdi.net) ]

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## **LETTERS AND NOTES**

Hi, The website of the Oregon California Trails Association has been updated for February. Check it out at <http://www.octa-trails.org/index.html> Some helpful PDF forms have been placed in the Member Resources section. These are the **Volunteer Hours Form** and the **Reimbursement Form for Cost Shares**. These come with an instruction sheet in case you have questions about how to fill them out.

*Marley Shurtleff, Web Editor*

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**Jim**, What if we held back enough money for a nice award for the best photo taken in Idaho, and presented it at the next convention? We could limit photos to swales or other aspects of significance to the trail, or open it to any picture taken on their [tours]! I think it could start a really great contest, and it could live beyond just this year! Of course, that is IF we have the luxury of extra funds. I really hope this convention ignites interest in the trail among Idahoans.

**Cathy Bourner** [Cathy is always our 'idea' Lady]

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**Jim**, *Here Rolled the Covered Wagons*, Albert & Jane Salisbury (they were from Seattle, WA). Third revised edition, published by Bonanza Books of New York. I hope this information is helpful to you in regards to **the reading list**. I enjoyed our conversation on the phone previously. Hope all is well with you and yours.  
**Roger, Class of 57** [Same class as the Editor]

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**Thanks Jim**. I did receive the Trail Dust for February. I will share it with my father, **Irving Merrill**. He is okay...had a pace maker implant in early December but was able to travel up the coast to Sea Ranch this weekend. I know he will be enthusiastic about all the plans for OCTA. **Thanks, Cindy Gonzales**

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**Jim**, We haven't been doing much with the Cherokee Trail, as the snow depth makes trail sleuthing difficult. The trick is to wait until there's only snow in the ruts, which makes things easier. We're having a Preservation Class here in the Denver area in June, and there's considerable interest in it. My wife and I are excited about Idaho's upcoming OCTA Convention, and plan to use Nampa as our base to explore Idaho.

**Bruce Watson**, Colorado  
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**Hi James...**In answer to your question, I just received the Feb 08 Trail Dust this morning (2/18/08). You had mentioned you sent it out the other day but I did not receive it that first e-mailing. Wondering if you have an *idea on when your book on Tim Goodale will be available* for purchase? My wife and I can hardly wait to read it! Thank you for your invitation to become a member of OTCA and attend the national convention and Friday's [Goodale off-spring introductions] activities. My wife and I plan on attending the convention, and one of my brothers has also confirmed his intent to me (and has asked me to convey it to you). We are both trying to get my father and mother to attend. Thanks, **Ed Petersen** [A Goodale g-g-grandson]

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**Thanks, Jim,** I got your newsletter. You really put out a gorgeous newsletter! I always love it and am *looking forward to seeing more of Idaho* this summer. We on the **COED committee** are almost ready to launch the new PaperTrail website which puts all of *Emigrant Names 2* on the web as an interactive database. I will notify newsletter editors of the details when it is up and running. **Sharon Manhart**

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**Hi Jim,** Wanted to respond so you know Trail Dust has settled 'mongst the believers and heathens. Will there be spring efforts to do more on the trail out of La Grande? Appreciate the newsletter and my wife and I are looking at plans to participate, after we get our [OCTA] membership in. **Brian and Sharle Kinnear**

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**Jim,** I got February's *Trail Dust* at the book store [mail]. Also got *membership application* a few days ago. Thanks! **Jan [Alexander, Owy. Co. His. Soc.]**

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**Hi from Japan,** As you requested I am writing to tell you that I received the trail dust attachment on February 19 (Japan time). This also gives me the opportunity to thank you for sending it regularly. I am sure you get feedback from many people, but probably not from most of us in the silent majority. I for one really *appreciate the information contained*, and more importantly, to see how much work you are all doing. Keep up the good work. **George Isted**

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**Dear Jim,** We feel sorry for the person that doesn't appreciate the Tim Goodale trail news! We love every mention and look forward to your book and any articles you have. We have personally hiked much of the trail (now under 4 feet of snow) that passes near our home. Keep up the *Goodale talk!* **Pearl and Vern Ketz** Cambridge, Idaho

### **More Nominations For OCTA Awards**

Go online the Web if possible and look at the forms, which explain what they are for, and think of someone

you know who is deserving—then take action. Go to [www.OCTA-Trails.org](http://www.OCTA-Trails.org) and follow the link, bottom left “**Member Resources.**” Then click in “OCTA Award Nominations,” and you will get a set of forms in MS Word. Read what they are for and fill in the appropriate form and info in the shaded areas—save, attach and email them to Roger [rblair@oregontrail.net](mailto:rblair@oregontrail.net). You can also **email this Editor and get the forms by email!**

Let's give away many deserved awards this year for people all across the country. Know a great BLM partner, a private rancher or trail colleague, or person from another group who fits the category—or even an exceptional and hard-working OCTA member? This is one way to reach out, obtain and maintain the interest of all kinds of people in OCTA's activities, services and great trail/emigrant resources!

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### **Wagon train Web Site Being Built**

Friends this is the address for the Wagon Train web site. It is still under construction and only needs a few more things. I hope to have a decent map added soon. [http://members.cox.net/ice\\_man1/index.htm](http://members.cox.net/ice_man1/index.htm)

**Dell Mangum**

**Dell Mangum Photo**



**DELL, 'NICK' & 'CHIP'--ALL 3 HAVE A LITTLE FLAW!**

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### **IOCTA BOARD MEETING—March 29, 2008, 10 AM. Snake River Grill, 611 Frogs Landing south end of Hagerman, ID.**

**Howdy folks:** The spring meeting of the Board of Directors of the Idaho chapter of OCTA will be held Saturday, March 29, 10 AM, at the Snake River Grill in Hagerman. While this is a business meeting for the elected officers, all are welcome to attend. The meeting will go until about noon. We will have lunch there from their menu. If I recall correctly, the menu includes dishes with alligator and sturgeon, both locally produced. After lunch **Jerry Eichorst will take us to some local trail sites** which will be part of the convention tours. Thanks to Jerry for making the meeting arrangements for us. **Doug Jensen, IOCTA Pres.**

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**I-OCTA OFFICERS AND STAFF**

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**James McGill**-Preservation [jwmcgill@pobox.com](mailto:jwmcgill@pobox.com)

**Jerry Eichhorst** - Webmaster [IdahoOCTA.org](http://IdahoOCTA.org)

**Peg Cristobal** – Historian (see below)

**Wendy Miller**–Lib. [info@canyoncountyhistory.com](mailto:info@canyoncountyhistory.com)

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**THE SPRING IOCTA MEMBERSHIP MEETING WILL BE IN NAMPA, ID**---- Saturday, April 26, 2008, time and location announced later. If possible, the **April convention planning meeting** may be set near that date so people traveling distances can attend both meetings if they choose to do so. All **new members** around the Boise valley are encouraged to attend to find out what IOCTA is all about—**visitors are also always welcomed.**

**JAMES W. MCGILL, EDITOR  
IDAHO CHAPTER OF OCTA  
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NAMPA, IDAHO 83686**

**NEW TRAIL BOOK IN PRINT!**

**Jim:** We just returned from a Tucson that-out. Thanks for the new *Trail Dust*, and tell them smart alecs that I had never heard of Tim Goodale until you came along. I read every word of *Trail Dust* and I'll . . . letcha know when I've heard enuf about old Tim!

We have a brand new book edited by **Dr. Harold J. Peters**, Santa Clara, Calif.--***Seven Months to Oregon: 1853.*** It's a compilation of several emigrant diaries--all traveling together. A fascinating part is the drowning of the oldest member of the party in the Snake River, opposite Fort Boise. It will be on our table and you better plug it in the next *Trail Dust*. [Greg Franzwa]

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**NEW TO I-OCTA AND/OR OCTA**

**William Neel**, Eugene, OR, **Jan Alexander/Owyhee Co. His. Soc.**, Murphy, ID, **Ed Peterson**, Sumner, WA, **David Shelton**, Indiantown, FL, **Herb Futter**, Ontario, OR, **Marje Elmaker**, Caldwell, ID.

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