



TRAIL DUST

Idaho Chapter
Oregon-California Trails Association

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JEFFREY-GOODALE CUTOFF & MCTUCKER ROAD DISTINCTIONS EDITOR

Our own Fred Dykes of Pocatello has had a positive influence on the historic trails across Idaho for many years, prompted by his determined and extensive research and conscientious writings about the trails. No greater influence had been exerted, however, than on the first accurately named and his adopted subject, “Jeffer’s Road,” but also the corrected information about the *supposed later variants tagged with the Goodale name*. Over the years Idaho folks somehow dropped the “Jeffrey” name, to then only reflect the 1862 connection to the Tim Goodale Wagon Train. The recently re-designated Jeffrey-Goodale Cutoff has begun receiving the new decal--changed from the earlier singular Goodale’s Cutoff--which name is more historically correct for the route from the Fort Hall site on the Snake River to the Ditto Creek meeting with the Oregon Trail. On September 9, these changes were begun SE of Big Southern Butte.

John Jeffrey promoted the route as early as 1852, with a ferry on the Snake River to start emigrants on the route, but Tim Goodale’s 1862 influence began an increasing and heavier use of the trail. On September 9, 2006, eight trail travelers began changing the decals on many of the existing markers, as well as adding new markers. The new markers were mainly added to recently exposed trail ruts brought to exposure by both a 2005 and a 2006 fire. Some new rut-braids were also found in heavier foliage, which had been before overlooked or unmarked by trail workers.

new name upon the same, and it was difficult after that keeping the carsonite pounder out of his hands! He did much of the heavy work for others, and few posts could resist his powerful blows—a genuine 19 years old John Henry! Thanks Josh, and Jim also, for bringing your fine son. Jim is an active, conscientious Baptist Minister!

Besides replacing many decals twenty one new posts replaced a few shot-up markers, and marked and remarked many sections of the Cutoff. This route had been marked in April 2004, but the two fires and some *expert marksmen*, fine shooters of those *swift-afoot carsonite posts* (!), had brought about the need for replacements.

The plan and intent included getting to the most northern route from Blackfoot to Big Butte—once designated as a variant of Goodale’s Cutoff—to add new decals to the existing posts. These indicate more accurately that this was “McTucker’s Road.” Opened in the late 1880s by a man of that name, this was firstly a road for a stage route from Blackfoot to connect to the Cutoff near Big Butte. Some emigrants did follow that trail in the 1890’s and after the turn of the century according to diaries and other accounts by the James C. Murray family of the Big Butte Station, operator during that time.

The lateness of the day upon finishing the Cutoff marking



JIM BALLARD & SON, JOSH, NEW BLACKFOOT RUTNUTS

Lyle Lambert brought two friends along and **Jim Ballard** asked almost immediately for information about joining OCTA! His Son, Josh, pounded the first marker with the

only allowed time for the replacement of six new decals on that road. These were all near its crossing of Big Butte-Cedar Butte Road. It is hoped that *another day can be found this fall* to finish that McTucker re-marking during another enjoyable trip!



KAREN ARGAST ON ONE NEWLY FOUND TRAIL SECTION

Another visitor for the day was Karen Argast from Idaho Falls, a sister to Patti McGill. This was Karen's second visit to the same trail. The first was about four years ago on a short portion of the trail west of Arco, quite near Champagne Creek, when we, Patti and this Editor, had discovered Bill Noyes' grave near the old Champagne Stage Station site. (Bill had been a murder victim at the station on July 30, 1881. His rhyolite grave stone, engraved by the hand of Adolphe Champagne upon Bill's death, still marks the burial site.)



DOUG JENSON & DICK HILL ATTEND NEW-FOUND SWALE

Once again the trail-related advantage of a range fire was witnessed as several new-found sections of the trail that paralleled the improved were found. Dick Hill, BLM Archeologist from Idaho Falls mentioned the need for accurate mapping and adding these sections to the maps!

ONE PURPOSE—3 RETURN TRIPS

On August 30, 2006, five I-OCTA members hiked more of **Goodale's Cutoff, 1863 variant**, north of Emmett and placed new markers. On September 6 and 14, some folks returned. These remarkable and continuous ruts/swales of that Goodale influenced trail, which almost completely replaced a segment of Goodale's early route 22 miles to the west, follow the valleys north for almost 20 miles. Only six months after Tim Goodale's train opened the

western route along an old Indian trail, which Tim had perceived would require much less road building to accomplish, W. P. Horton wrote and described the new central route north of the Emmett area. First opened by freighters and miners who offered more road building than Goodale's Train was willing to apply, emigrants followed.

The evidence today reflects several places where it had later required some extensive brush clearing, rock moving and probably shovel/tool work so that wagons could get through. That old trail was used long enough and heavily enough to impress the earth with long-lasting wagon wheel evidences. These are the precious remnants of emigrant and miner historical travels that we are now endeavoring to preserve and call historical attention upon.



GIL AND JANE—BACKGROUND LITTLE WILLOW FLAT

On August 30, 2006, Gil and Jane Wylie followed along that trail for the first time with Bill Wilson and the McGill couple. The group went as far as Little Willow Flat, and placed new decals on some prior set posts with only BLM decals on them. Dry grass prevented some trail coverage.

Markers were placed on some prior-unmarked rut segments along the trail, some which were new swales found on the same day. There is something trail-thrilling about stepping in and walking parts of the trail that have probably not been seen, recognized, identified or hiked for much more



SECTION OF NEW-FOUND ROCKY TRAIL—HIDDEN E. OF FOURMILE CREEK BY THE STREAM & HEAVY FOLIAGE

than a century. Even if some hunter or nature enthusiast had tripped over the deep ruts, he/she had probably only experienced some measure of wonder about the old wagon

traces! True rut-nuts appreciate and enjoy the delight of for the first-time standing upon places where hard-pressed emigrants trudged on and oxen or mules towed the wagons filled with most of their earthly possessions!

That day several markers were placed along a trail section from near Rock Creek, 13 miles north of Emmett, to the northern side of Little Willow Flat, about 12 miles more north. Early efforts have been accomplishing some of the marking along that route, but that day some sections were reached which required a bit more hiking than earlier accesses to the trail.

One week later on Sept. 6, the McGills were able to go along the same route in order to add to the marking and fill in some more difficult-to-reach trail ruts. It seems that no matter how many times one has looked along the present roads, not hiking every foot but searching from the road, a few sections of trail continue to appear. There is a lot of brushy areas and twisting stream beds along the route. On that date a few new sections were also found.

Seventeen more markers were placed. Except on a ¾ mile section of private land going north up to the Fourmile pass, 10 miles of almost continuous trail was then finished. That distance began at the start of the BLM land at the grade rising up north from the Van Dussen Ranch to Indian Creek in Washington County. The first marker is on the Mitchell family's private land (last *T. D.* issue).

For a third time, on September 14, the same route was continued by the McGill couple. Beginning near Indian Creek where the marking on Sept.6 was stopped, 20 new markers completed the trail that lies mostly on BLM land.



SWALE ACROSS PRIVATE LAND N. OF LITTLE WILLOW

After 1½ miles across Little Willow Flat, part of which had been marked on August 30, only private land lies for many miles. That completed almost 20 miles in all! Only the private land along Fourmile Creek still has unmarked trail ruts. Permission is being sought!

SHARING TRAILS WITH ELDERHOSTEL

Three members of I-OCTA attached themselves to parts of the early-September tour by seniors participating in the Elderhostle, Oregon Trail related learning experience. For

three sections of the areas of the historic trails across Idaho Doug Jenson, Jerry Eichhorst and Jim McGill rode with the bus load of people who were enjoying the tour from Independence, MO, to Oregon City, OR.

Sept. 2nd, Doug—My day with the Elderhostel group started at 07:30 AM. In Soda Springs we took in the Wagonbox grave, captive geyser, and ruts and springs at the golf course. Just past Soda we visited the turnoff to the Hudspeth cutoff, and followed some trail NW towards Chesterfield. Lunch was at the Ft. Hall replica [in Pocatello]. Then it was on to Register Rock at Massacre Rocks. We followed the road around the Raft River area towards Parting of the Ways [separation of Oregon and California Trails]. Last stop was Milner ruts. [The participants] walked a lot of trail there. **Doug**

Sept. 3rd, Jerry—I met the Elderhostel group at 9:00 am in Glens Ferry and took them to the Three Island Crossing, overlook on the bluff on the south side of the Snake River. We then toured the Three Island Crossing State Park and had lunch at Carmella Winery. After lunch I took them on the Old Oregon Trail Road where we hiked down to the old hot springs bathhouse. We then came back to Boise where we went to the ramp along Highway 21 and hiked again. After a scenic drive down Warm Springs Avenue, they headed for their hotel. It was a good group and I think everyone enjoyed the day. **Jerry**

On September 4, Jim met the bus in Mountain Home, ID, and rode with the group along the South Alternate Trail route, across Owyhee County, ID, and into Malheur County, OR. The historic sites of the Utter Train attacks and death sites were visited, and presentations were emotionally shared using Don Shannon's accurate-facts book, *The Utter Disaster on the Oregon Trail!* The sad but inspiring ordeal that occurred 146 years ago along that 45 day, 120 miles trek (tragic-start to suffering-finish), from which a few "walking skeletons" were eventually rescued, can tear at the heart of the involved story-participant.



FOLKS AT O. T. PARK WITH STARVATION CAMP SIGN

Along with all the other related misery suffered by many emigrants is an agony-inflicting tale of baby *Susan Utter*: On her first birthday her mother and father and four siblings were killed near Castle Butte. Then for days she was carried for 70 miles by 13 year old sister, Emeline,

and dedicatedly fed with only some of nature's poorly-nutritious plants and other bits of food. She endured the cold of the late-season nights with little clothing, kept warm only by the closeness and heat of Emeline's body.

After five weeks of starvation conditions her 9 year old sister, Libbie, died, and five days later Susan succumbed to the same wretched decimation. Soon Emeline reluctantly and grievously gave her permission for her two dead siblings' bodies to be consumed by the walking-skeleton survivors! Two death-starved Chase boys were also consumed in hopes of sustaining the lives others!

Readers, do obtain and read Don Shannons's heart-inspired production of the events of that long terrible ordeal! Don Shannon, *The Utter Disaster on the Oregon Trail*, dshannon2@mindspring.com 208 459 9233
Also obtain Don's book, *The Boise Massacre on the Oregon Trail*, the stories of the "attack on the Ward Party in 1854 and the Massacres of 1859."

MORE FIRE-BLACKENED TRAIL RUTS

The Oregon Trail on the west side of Teapot Dome, the famous landmark that emigrants watched for ahead as they drove NW from the Glens Ferry, ID, area, was effected by a recent range fire. Idaho has had many fires this



FIRE BORDER DOWN THE WEST SIDE OF TEAPOT DOME

summer including many forest areas. About 1.5 miles of the trail had the short grasses completely burned off, but the fast moving fire had not damaged the carsonite markers or bright decals.



OREGON TRAIL VIEW TO THE NORTH--NW OF THE DOME

Four markers across the area, about 50 yards east of and parallel to Teapot Road/Hot Springs Road, 6 miles east of Mountain Home, stood in contrast to the blackened earth.

On the way back to Nampa from the Arco area trip, on September 10, Patti and this Editor did take a short side-trip and checked the Teapot Dome fire area. It was encouraging to find the markers unscathed, and one new marker was added on the south end of the fire area where the exposed trail obviously crossed the road. The effect on the trail was to reveal all the ruts completely, and in one area the trail had once been worn about 30 feet wide.

GOODALE'S CUTOFF, CAMBRIDGE, ID

During September 19-21, Patti and this writer will again visit the Cambridge, ID, area where the Goodale Wagon Train of 1862 passed through. During May 2005, many miles of the remaining trail were discovered both from Little Willow Flat to Cambridge and from Cambridge over "Tim Goodale's Pass" to the Brownlee Ferry site.

Gary Franklin, I-OCTA member from Cambridge, will spend some time with the McGill couple in more searching, and in some possible marking of the trails segments already discovered. Gary's fly-over last fall of the zig-zag road up the Oregon side of the Snake River was one promoter of increased interest in the Oregon part of the Cutoff, and a search of that part of the trail during summer of 2006. Gary has been involved in Goodale research for many years, and we owe him much for sharing so many of his sources and materials for our own Goodale work!

Other trail-interested people in that area may also be involved, and the days are open for others who may desire participation. An Email has announced this trip earlier.

MCGUIRE SPRINGS TO DITTO CREEK

The continued field trip travels in completing another section of the Jeffrey-Goodale Cutoff beginning at the private property at McGuire Springs, 15 miles NNE of Mountain Home, ID, will occur on **September 23, 2006**. Unfortunately the trip is not wide open to all-comers because of the very rough and wild trail areas, and possible fire danger. **Arrangements must be made in advance** with Wally Meyer or James McGill, and the number of vehicles will be limited. The route will take a long day, and very heavy-duty tires with four-wheel drives are required.

Norma Dart of Middleton has made arrangements to pass over several areas of ranch lands. Her family has a ranch in the same area, and she is acquainted with the ranchers. This is very much appreciated, for that section of the Cutoff is one of the most difficult to access and to follow. It has been many years since it was first marked by Wally when he worked for the BLM.

Participants will meet at **AJ's Restaurant, in Mountain Home**, back parking lot at **9:00 AM**. That is on Highway 20, Fairfield exit from the Freeway, east side.

Norma Dart's Jeffrey-Goodale Area Book

Norma Dart is a local historian who made the arrangements for the September 23, Jeffrey-Goodale trip east of Danskin Peak. She has a recent publication that is about some of the areas crossed by the Cutoff and Oregon Trail. The Book's title is *Exploring the South Fork of the Boise River, Including Mayfield and Neal District*. The cost is \$12.95 + \$3.00 S & H. if needing to be mailed out. Her email is nodart@cableone.net. Norma will have book copies available during the trip on September 23.

TRAIL GISing CONTINUED FROM 2005

Bill Wilson, Doug Jenson and Jim McGill, National Parks Service trained workers with the modified GIS equipment for historic trails measurements, will continue the GIS work on the Oregon Trail. On Saturday **September 30, 2006**, part of the trail will be followed with the NPS equipment, continuing past Canyon Creek Station north of Mountain Home. Two or three miles of trail data will be collected to be uploaded to the NPS trails site on the Web.

Last season's I-OCTA achievements was topped off with more than five miles of hiking along the trail and braids to the SE of the station. The work was terminated at the trail connector that goes easterly to the Kelton Road, a trail segment that can be found on Map 40, page 57, in *Emigrant Trails of Southern Idaho*. From that same junction the trail will be followed, past the station about 1.5 miles NW, across parts of sections 13, 12, 11, 10, and 3, T2S, R6E. This **trail hike is open** to all who would like to see some great trail ruts and wagon wheel swales, as well as the old Stage Station walls and remnants. You can also *follow along most of it in you vehicle* if you please!

During *one day prior to that GIS work* (**probably Thurs. Sept. 28**) the same trail route will be pre-hiked to prepare paperwork, check markers, and list historic features that will become part of the entered data. This hike is also open, and/or some participants may be able to move vehicles along the route to assist in the preparation. Contact this Editor at jwmcgill@pobox.com or 208 467 4853 to become involved. Participation that day will be finalized earlier as others contact us. Bill Wilson may also assist during that preparation day.

On both days we will **meet at 9:00 AM, at the junction of the trail's crossing of Immigrant Road**, about ½ mile east of the intersection of Canyon Creek Road and Immigrant Road. That intersection is up on the highland just south of Canyon Creek Station. Both hikes/trips are open to all participants who have an interest!

G.F. OREGON TRAIL & KELTON ROAD

The continuation of the June 8-10, 2006, trail updating that began on the Oregon Trail SE of Glens Ferry, ID, will commence on **October 4-5**. A section of the Kelton

Road will first be checked and marked with Jeff Ross, Twin Falls BLM, assisting. Then the Oregon Trail to the SE, beginning near Pilgrim Springs will be followed. There will be two days of trail following again, over rarely seen ruts and remote locations. Most travel will be over some good roads, but with some four-wheeling necessary. Participants can group together in vehicles.

For this outing on **October 4**, we will meet again at **9:00 AM**, at the **Allan Thompson Ranch**, ½ mile south of the Paradise Valley exit from I84. That is Exit 125, and drivers follow the road south, around a small curve to Thompson Road, and all the way south to the foothills. The ranch can be seen from the Interstate exit!

The **Redford Motel**, if needed, is at 208 366 2421!

Fall I-OCTA Board and Member Meetings

Saturday, October 7, Fairfield, ID, at the Forest Service building, north side of Highway 20—east end of the town. **At 10:00 AM** the I-OCTA Board will meet first with officers, followed by the fall I-OCTA full Membership Meeting. Both board business and membership business will be completed during the two meetings.

Visitors from some of the other OCTA Chapters will attend with I-OCTA, with one of the purposes to discuss the possible co-sponsoring of the National OCTA Convention and having it in Idaho. The following is an email from Roger Blaire, President of NWOCTA.

“The NW chapter board voted to co-sponsor the [OCTA] convention if Idaho votes to go forward. I asked the [NW chapter] members at the picnic for a show of hands of those who might be willing to help. About a *dozen indicated their willingness*, which I thought was pretty good. Susan and I have the weekend of Oct 7 open and plan to attend the Idaho chapter meeting. See you there.

Roger
rblair@oregontrail.net”

Members of three area County Historical Societies have also indicated a strong interest in assisting with such a convention, and will be sending letters to I-OCTA expressing their support. Other groups who are on an email communication list of historical and preservation related groups have also expressed a supportive interest.

It is hoped that one item of business will address this issue, with information and data presented about such a possible OCTA convention in the Nampa, ID, area.

A possible Jeffrey-Goodale field trip in the afternoon, will lead participants toward Mountain Home on the trail over Castle Rock pass (N. of Cat Creek Summit) and along Highway 20. Some markers may be checked and noted along the trail route for later updating.

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ADA COUNTY'S GOODALE TRAIL

Wally Meyer has been working hard to communicate to many people involved in the Ada County land development planning the need to preserve Goodale's Cutoff across the County. He has written many letters, attended many meetings and provided research and support info. Here is a sample communication to one involved person.

“John:

During the May 6 meeting, I had a discussion with Jason Pfaff, Visual Genesis, Inc., regarding the Goodale's Cutoff. Although the city knows about this route of the Oregon Trail, Eagle never informed him that the historic wagon road crosses the planning unit. I left written comments at the meeting and followed with an email to Jason. I also mailed him some maps showing the location of the Cutoff.

In summary, my comments stated that Goodale's Cutoff on BLM and private lands should be protected and used as a non-motorized trail. I also stated that the corridor or viewshed along the route should be considered as high visual sensitivity and maintained in a natural state (open space corridor in other words). It would also be good to have a public access point at the end of No. Skyline Dr. or Curlew to provide access to Goodale's Cutoff on the BLM lands just north of Homer Rd. **Wally”**

----- THANKS WALLY -----

We also work closely with the BLM representatives at all levels to share trail information, provide them updated maps, and take them to see discoveries of the remnants of the historic trail, *which greatly influenced routes and levels of transportation*—emigrants, miners, freighters and stage riders—across central Idaho for several decades!

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