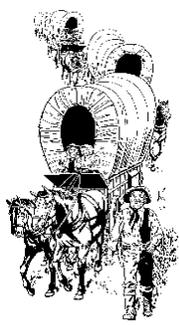


# Trail Dust

Newsletter of the Oregon-California Trails Association, Idaho Chapter  
 Vol. XXII Issue IV *Jerry Eichhorst, Editor* December 2010



## Byway Update

Article and photos by Jerry Eichhorst

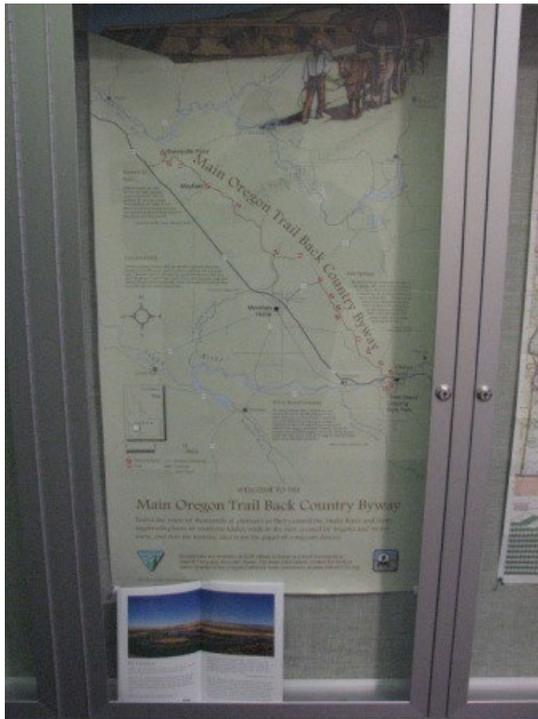


Mapboard sign at Mountain Home visitor center

The signs for the Main Oregon Trail Back Country Byway started going up this fall. The mapboard sign above was installed at the Desert Mountain Visitor Center in Mountain Home in November. Bill Wilson and I delivered 1500 of the reprinted booklets to the center in a snowstorm in late November. We also delivered 1500 booklets to the Glenns Ferry Chamber of Commerce, 300 to the Idaho Department of Commerce (Tourism Department), and 250 to the Idaho

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Department of Transportation. The BLM received 6000 copies which will be available at BLM offices in Boise and other locations around southern Idaho, including the I-84 Ontario rest area. The posters for the Blacks Creek and Bliss rest areas were delivered to ITD and have been installed. Ada County installed the small mapboard interpretive sign at their new OT center. My thanks to Bill for his help.



**Poster in Blacks Creek Rest Area**



**Terry Heslin of BLM at Ada County OT Interpretive Center and Trailhead**

## Oregon Trail Classes

*By Jerry Eichhorst*

Jerry Eichhorst will be teaching two classes on the Oregon Trail in the Boise Community Education program this coming March. Offered in local schools, community education provides lifelong learning opportunities for members of the Treasure Valley. A wide variety of classes, led by volunteer instructors, are available during evening hours.



On Monday, March 7, a class on the Main Oregon Trail Back Country Byway will be presented.

A second class on the North Alternate Oregon Trail will be offered on Tuesday, March 15.



Both classes start at 6:30 PM at West Junior High in Boise. The cost for each is \$15. Both will feature a slide show presentation of pictures along each route with diary quotes included.

More information is available online at <http://www.boiseschools.org/commed/index.html>



## Message from the IOCTA President

By Jerry Eichhorst

Warm wishes for a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to everyone. I hope you enjoy this special holiday edition of the Trail Dust.

Let us think back to our friend Virginia who passed away this year and our friends and members who have endured health issues and accidents through the year. I hope that everyone is blessed with health and happiness in the new year.

It is during this cold and snowy time of year that the memories of the past summer's outings bring back a smile to my face. It was a busy year, although it seems like not enough was completed. There was so much to do with the byway but it finally is taking shape. I can see the end in sight next spring. There was excitement at finding an apparent emigrant graveyard and the intense research which followed. And of course, the convention in Elko was a lot of fun.

Now is a time for continued research and planning. Research to hopefully find a diary or other material to solve another mystery about the trails in Idaho. Planning to determine what activities to do with the chapter next year. I will be working with the chapter leadership through the winter to develop some ideas for the upcoming year.

I welcome your input and encourage you to let me know if you have ideas to increase interest in the chapter or trail sites which you would be interested in visiting next year.

Merry Christmas!



Welcome to IOCTA's newest members. Please join us in the chapter activities.

Stephen and Marylyn Pauley,  
Ketchum, Idaho

**We are starting to plan chapter activities for next year. Please let me know which Idaho trail sites you would like to visit next year.**

# Virginia Ricketts

*Contributed by Peg Cristobal*

We sadly note the passing of Virginia Ricketts on Saturday, November 27. She and her husband, Clair, were very instrumental in the establishment of the Idaho OCTA Chapter in 1985. Idaho became the second chapter of the national OCTA organization. Virginia served as Secretary Treasurer for a number of years. Clair served as a Board member from 1985 to 2008.



**Virginia**

Both had a deep interest in local history and spent many years reading and exploring all that could be found about the local area. While working as the Jerome County Clerk, Virginia ran across an old survey map of the area. This map had a trail noted "emigrant road" which was near their home. They began exploring which lead to more reading and interviewing older

residents. This resulted in the North Side Trail marking and documentation of parts of it from the Cedars to Box Canyon.



**Clair and Virginia**

Virginia taught local history classes at CSI for a number of years. She and Clair regularly lead groups to interesting spots in the Magic Valley. It is unknown how many people they sparked the interest in history in the past 40 years. They held a wealth of information and were very happy to share this with everyone.

This couple was active in all phases of local history. It is hard to define all of them, but they included the Jerome Museum, Jerome Idaho Farm, and Stricker ranch. Virginia wrote several books on local history and had a column in the local newspaper for a number of years, all meticulously researched.

When age was setting in and it was evident that they were not going to be able stay in their home, they donated all their research, books, and notes to the College of Southern Idaho. This collection is now available for researchers to use.



# Diaries Across Idaho

## Summer Snow

by Jerry Eichhorst

The onslaught of winter brings cold temperatures and snow to Idaho. Oregon Trail emigrants frequently reported seeing snow on the mountains in eastern Idaho as snow-capped mountains were part of the majestic scenery. Some pioneers dealt with freezing temperatures and snowfall, even in summer.

*Mon July 28 Went about 10 miles today leaving Bear River on our left and camping near a spring slightly impregnated with soda...the climate rather cold at nights and there is once in a while a snowdrift to be seen on the mts. along the rivers.*

*James Field, 1845*

*[August] 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, moved on down Bear [River] fine roads. Snow on the mountains*

*Aug 14, 1852 14 Sunday [at Big Spring] Lay in camp all day...8 took a tramp out to the top of a mountain peak where I procured some fine specimens of Rock. Got some snow as I came down. I commenced the ascent at 10 arrived at top of peak ¼ past 3 Started down at 4, arrived at starting point at 8... on the top of the mountain the grass was green and flowers in full bloom the snow was really refreshing I think that the peak is one thousand feet above the snow,...*

*John G. Glenn, 1852*

*Sunday, Aug. 15. Sun very pleasant. Can see snow on the mountains... Encamped tonight at Soda Springs.*

*Cecilia Adams, 1852*

*On the night of June 27, in the Bear River Valley, we experienced quite a storm, the snow falling to a depth of two inches, going off, however, by 10 o'clock the next day.*

*Isaac V. Mossman, 1853*

*Monday, July 4th -- It has been very warm today. Thermometer up to 110, and yet we*

*can see banks of snow almost within reach...*

*Sunday, July 10th -- ...travel 8 miles up a mountain, and camp near the top, close to a very large spring of clear, cold water [Big Spring], running from under a snowy mountain [Mount Putnam].*

*Amelia Stewart Knight, 1853*

*As we journeyed over a high ridge [Mount Putnam] we had an extensive view of the surrounding country. The great panorama of nature presented a wide diversity of scenery. Mountains reared their lofty peaks, treeless and bare, far up into the sky; while others were capped with a soft mantle of snow, their broad sides clothed with timber.*

*Phoebe Goodell Judson, 1853*

*July 3 came about 20 miles to day over the longest and roughest mountain [Sheep Creek Hills] we have passed yet and came down [Big Hill] to bear river again...see snow all the time on the mountains. have warm days and cold nights.*

*July 5th this morn the weeds and bushes were froze stiff, and plenty of snow in sight on the mountains the days are very warm, and the night cold enough for 4 blankets.*

*Sarah Sutton, 1854*

*Sabbath, July 9th Ice frozen in camp [Sheep Creek Hills] this and the two preceeding mornings...*

*Phillip Condit, 1854*

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