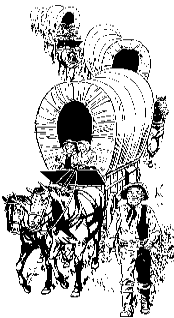


Trail Dust

Newsletter of the Oregon-California Trails Association, Idaho Chapter
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Presenting: The Award Winning--Fred Dykes!

By The Idaho State Historical Society

Last October, the Idaho State Historical Society presented long-time IOCTA member Fred Dykes an *Esto Perpetua Award*. The Historical Society uses this award to honor individuals or groups for professional accomplishments, public service, volunteerism and philanthropy related to the preservation of Idaho's heritage.

Fred grew up within sight of Big Butte, that landmark noted by many 19th century emigrants. This personal experience with a treasured landmark stimulated Fred's lifelong interest in the Oregon Trail. He is the editor of a significant Oregon Trail diary, a frequent contributor of articles to the *Overland Journal*, and the author of *A View of Idaho History as Seen from the Big Butte*. He also frequently leads tours along the Trail, teaching others about this significant Idaho story.

Fred also grew up along the railroad tracks in Pocatello, experiencing first-hand the trains that helped shape that city's history. He worked for a time for Union Pacific, the railroad that donated a steam locomotive and a caboose for Pocatello's Ross Park in the 1950s. Years later, Fred led the efforts to carefully restore both the engine and the caboose after years of vandalism and neglect had left them badly deteriorated.

In the 1940s, Fred experienced a different aspect of history and helped to preserve that story, too. He served in Korea with the Army, taking dozens of photographs. A few



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years ago, Fred returned to Korea and donated his photos to the Seoul Museum of History. Fred visited again in 2008 when the Seoul Museum used his photos in a special exhibit and book entitled, *Three Foreigners' Reminiscences of Seoul*.

One might expect that a person who worked as a chemist for 41 years at what is now Idaho National Laboratory might have written some articles with titles like "Remote Inductively-Coupled Plasma Atomic Energy Emission Spectrometry." And Fred did—along with others with titles more daunting to pronounce. But Fred's lifelong habit of experiencing history, and then preserving it, followed him when he went to work at the Laboratory.

The INL site was home to more than 700 homesteads, a rich archaeological source of information about Idaho's early settlement. Archaeologists at INL today note the importance of Fred's efforts to record those homesteaders' stories, particularly in his publication, *Homesteading and Other Activities on Idaho Desert Lands*.

And when Fred was not writing scientific articles with hard-to-pronounce titles, he wrote frequently in the INL newsletter about the fascinating Oregon Trail history of the site where all those scientists worked, teaching them about their environment.

In 2010, the Bannock County Historical Society recognized Fred with an "Honorary and Life Time Member Award" –most fitting. Fred has served as President and Trustee, spent many winter days shoveling the Museum's walks, and salvaged, preserved, donated and

installed a working Bannock County windmill on the Museum grounds.



Always humble, Fred is one of the most knowledgeable people on the Oregon Trail in Idaho. We are fortunate to have him available as a resource for the chapter. Thanks Fred for all of your years of study, preservation, marking, and leadership!

Fall 2011 Chapter Meeting

The IOCTA fall chapter meeting was held on Saturday, October 15, at the Idaho State Historical Society Archives. The business meeting included approval of revisions to the bylaws and the election of officers and directors. Officers elected for a 2-year term include:

- Jerry Eichhorst, President
- Doug Jenson, Vice-President East
- Suzi Pengilly, VP West
- Bill Wilson, Treasurer
- Liz Heil, Secretary

Directors elected for a 3-year term are:

- Lyle Lambert, East
- Dave Taylor, West
- Ron Tugby, West

Jim Payne and Wally Meyer will continue their terms as Directors for the West.

Appointed positions include:

Historian -- Peg Cristobal
Membership Chairman -- Bill Wilson
Preservation Off. East -- Lyle Lambert
Preservation Off. West -- Wally Meyer
Trail Dust Editor -- Suzi Pengilly
Webmaster -- Jerry Eichhorst

Thanks to all of these people for being willing to help serve the chapter.

The chapter also voted to purchase a lifetime OCTA membership for the Idaho State Archives. Due to statewide budget cuts in the last few years, the Archives has been unable to continue its OCTA membership. This membership will ensure that the *Overland Journal* will continue to be available for everyone on the archive shelves.

After the meeting, archives staff led a tour of the facility. The highlight was the original hand-written notes from Ezra Meeker for a speech he gave at Fort Hall in 1921.



Message from the IOCTA President

By Jerry Eichhorst

My first year as IOCTA president has gone by so fast! We had several good outings, made a lot of new friends, added a number of new members, several of whom are involved in the chapter leadership already. I am already looking forward to next year. I hope to keep the momentum that we started this year going strong for years to come.

Several Community Education classes on the Oregon Trail are being planned for Boise next spring. The winter classes are scheduled for March 13 and 20. Another round of classes will be held in April. A field trip will be planned for the class participants which will be open to others as well. This is a great opportunity to share the emigrant trails, OCTA, and the Idaho chapter with other people. Check the Boise Community Education schedule for more information.

You can help plan the chapter activities and outings for next year. Please let me know the areas and ideas which are of interest to you. There are a lot of areas which the chapter has not been to in many years. Some of these include the California Trail from Raft River to Granite Pass, the Hudspeth Cutoff, and the South Alternate. We will have some planning meetings in the spring to set an agenda for the rest of the year. Please let me know if you would like to participate in the planning. We should also be thinking about maintaining and improving the marking of the Trail across the state. I encourage all of you to become involved in the planning process.

Happy New Year!

Grave Site Scanning

By Jerry Eichhorst

On Saturday, September 17, Dean Shaw of the BLM, IOCTA member Wally Meyer, ranch owners Nick and Betty Ann Nettleton, and Russ Wilcock, joined me to meet Ken and Molly Cannon and their assistant Courtney, to survey the possible mass grave and massacre sites on the North Alternate Oregon Trail. Ken and Molly are archeologists at Utah State University and have done a lot of similar work for the BLM in Wyoming. They brought ground penetrating radar (GPR) and a magnetometer with them for this project.

After bouncing our way to the mass grave site, Ken, Molly, and Courtney carefully laid out a 20 meter square block oriented on a north-south axis. Molly then ran the GPR machine over the block on one-half-meter lines.



Anomalies, or irregularities, were clearly shown in the suspected grave areas. She then used the magnetometer over the block in 1/4-meter lines. We assisted by helping to move the ropes to mark each line. Meanwhile, Russ used a special HDR photography technique in an attempt to clarify the letters and dates carved on some of the rocks on the graves at the massacre site.



Molly Cannon performing ground penetrating radar, a remote sensing technique.

We resumed the scanning effort on Sunday by laying out three blocks at the lower massacre site. Because of the number of rocks and boulders in the area, the GPR could only be used on one of the blocks. Betty Ann and her friend, Gretchen, struggled with Molly and Courtney to scan a block containing tall sage brush.

At the end of the day, we headed home while Molly and Courtney returned on Monday to finish up their work before heading back to Logan.



A report will be generated from the data gathered during the field work. Hopefully, it will provide a great deal more information about what lies beneath the surface of these sites.

Help plan the future of City of Rocks!

By Kristen Bastis, City of Rocks

City of Rocks National Reserve is developing a General Management Plan (GMP), and we want your input.

What is a General Management Plan?

A General Management Plan answers the question “What kind of place do we want this park to be?” It serves as a guidebook for the future to help managers make decisions about how to protect resources, what levels and types of uses are appropriate, what facilities should be developed and how people should access the park.

In early 2012, a post card will be mailed to everyone who signed up on the mailing list. This post card will alert readers of the availability of the summary of public comments on the preliminary alternatives newsletter that was distributed last spring. The post card will also contain information about the next steps in the GMP process and how you can participate in this exciting process.

How do I get involved?

To receive additional information on the planning process, email the Reserve Superintendent at Wallace_Keck@partner.nps.gov, or review our newsletters, which are posted on the Reserve’s website: <http://www.nps.gov/ciro/parkmgmt/gmp.htm>.

In addition, the Reserve’s website has up to date information and a link to the National Park Service’s Planning, Environment and Public Comment (PEPC) website:

<http://www.nps.gov/ciro/parkmgmt/gmp.htm>

You can also submit your mailing address or comments to:

Wallace Keck, Superintendent
City of Rocks National reserve
PO Box 169
Almo, Idaho 83312



City of Rocks Stage Station (or relocated remnants of it) with Twin Sisters in background

Stabilization of a Short Section of the Oregon Trail Hagerman Fossil Beds National Monument

By JoAnn Blalack, National Park Service

Mid-afternoon on August 21, 2010, lightning ignited the Long Butte Fire west of Winter Camp Butte on Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land, about 35 miles southwest of Hagerman Fossil Beds National Monument. Sustained winds spread the fire into the Monument in the early morning hours of August 22. By the time the fire was contained on August 30, approximately 4,190 acres of the Monuments 4,351 acres had been burned.

In the southern portion of the Monument, approximately 8,324 feet of the historic Oregon Trail was burned. Because of the

slope, lack of vegetation due to the fire, and the fine sandy soils, it was feared that this segment of the Oregon Trail would erode to the point of loss of integrity. It was determined that biodegradable erosion control netting, wattles and planting of sagebrush seedlings were the best options to stabilize the area. This work was completed in April 2011.



Steepest section of the Oregon Trail after the Long Butte Fire, September 2010.



Erosion control matting in place along with wattles and sagebrush seedlings, April 2011

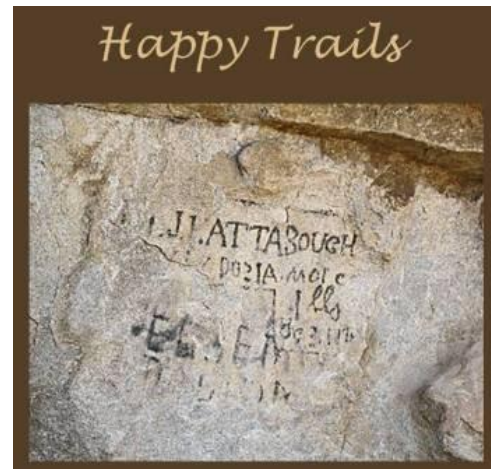
The Monument worked with the American Conservation Experience (ACE), a volunteer group of 11, 18 to 25 year olds from around the world. The ACE crew spent a week at the Monument installing erosion control matting and planting 1,666 sagebrush seedlings within

the 16,000 square foot segment of the Oregon Trail and on the side slopes to reduce soil erosion and help establish a seed bank of native plants. Once the plants have become established, the wattles will be removed. The erosion control matting will stay in place and eventually biodegrade.

So far, the project looks like a success. Soils have stabilized and a majority of the sagebrush seedlings have survived the first summer. Native grasses have also come back, stabilizing the soils.

Membership Reminder

Please make sure that you are current on your national OCTA membership, and that you also request to be a member of the IOCTA. We need you! OCTA memberships are offered at various levels for various dues, but all levels receive a copy of the quarterly magazine *Overland Journal*. Adding IOCTA membership is only \$10.00—a heck of a deal!



Please let us know if you have changed your email address.

Diaries Across Idaho

By Jerry Eichhorst

Messages on the Trail

Emigrants often left messages for others as they crossed the plains heading west. They wrote messages on buffalo skulls along the Platte River. They scratched their names on Independence Rock and many other places along the trail. They wrote their names on large boulders with axle grease. These names are still clearly visible at City or Rocks and several other places in Idaho. Letters were often written and left at forts or trading posts along the route to be carried back to families in the east. Signs and notes were often left on sticks along the route for those who followed.

Wednesday October 26th - We did not get under way until 8 O'Clock; soon after starting, it commenced snowing and raining and continued raining until we arrived in Camp. The roads were slippery in consequence of the rain and travelling disagreeable. Two of our work cattle gave out and one of them had to be left a mile and a half from camp but was brought in alright. We found here, a written Message from our friends ahead of us, who were compelled to proceed some ten or twelve Miles. We had a most uncomfortable day's travel; distance some 12 or 13 Miles over the Mountains with one very steep descent to a creek, which we crossed safely.

William Hoffman 1853

Those ahead would often leave letters at their camps with information for those that might follow them, telling distances between watering places ahead and other facts of value to the traveller. These instructions they gained from their pilot who was quite well acquainted with the country through which they were passing. A stick would be driven into the ground near the camp-fire and the letter

would be clamped in a spit at the top. These letters were often of much value to me and saved us from much suffering on the dry parched prairies.—

Rinehart, James H. 1854

Near the Platte crossing one of our pilgrims discovered a tent with a sign board daubed in wagon grease, "Post Office." "Letters to the states 50 cents." Two "Johnnies-come-lately" had set up a tent, cut a slit in aboard large enough to pass a silver dollar, and laid this across a barrel, into which they dropped half a dollar for each letter delivered. While waiting to have letters checked off and the mail "made up" a rider mounted on a cayuse pony would ride up in great haste and call for "mail" saying, "Can't wait," "behind time," etc. He had just come out of the river and wet to the back. When the bag of mail was handed he was off to ride further down the Platte, dump the mail into the river, turn his pony out and wait for the arrival of the next train of pilgrims. Sergeant Snyder at Fort Laramie said, "It was nothing but a 'dam schwidle,' but dey made a pushel o' money mit it."

John S. Collins 1864

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