

# Trail Dust

Newsletter of the Oregon-California Trails Association, Idaho Chapter  
Vol. XXIV Issue 1 *Suzi Pengilly, Editor* April 2012



**\*Next issue will be released June 15, 2012. Please have your submissions to Suzi by May 30th.**

## Spring Meeting and Byway Tour

By Jerry Eichhorst

The annual IOCTA spring meeting will be held on Saturday, May 5, at AJ's Restaurant in Mountain Home. AJ's is just north of the interstate on the east side of Highway 20 at Exit 95. The meeting will start at 10:00 am. Local historian John Hiler will talk at 11:15 about his relatives who traveled on the Oregon Trail and settled in the area. Following lunch, we will have a tour of the Main Oregon Trail Back Country Byway from Highway 20 to Bonneville Point. We will stop at two sites which are not available to the public as a special treat.

## Update: Main Oregon Trail Back Country Byway

By Jerry Eichhorst

The Main Oregon Trail Back Country Byway is finished! All of the signs have been installed, including an additional mapboard sign at the Bonneville Point BLM interpretive site. The byway is proving to be very popular which necessitated reprinting the booklet again last fall.

Frank Jenks of the BLM had the following to say about the byway project:

BLM has long worked in partnership with OCTA and the Idaho Historical Society to preserve some of the most intact portions of the main Oregon National Historic Trail. In the late 90s and early 2000s, southern Idaho entered a period of explosive population growth and development. Several huge residential developments between Mountain Home and Boise along the Oregon Trail were in the planning stages, and the agency's vision of a relatively intact Trail corridor from Three Island Crossing to Bonneville Point, preserved for public use and enjoyment, suddenly seemed in jeopardy. In response, BLM's Four Rivers Field Office developed an initial plan for an Oregon Trail Byway to give the public drivable, signed access to

### Contents

Spring Meeting	1
Main Oregon Trail Back Country Byway	
Message From the President	2
Goodale and Grimes	3
Preservation Month	4
City of Rocks	
Oregon Trail Monuments	
Get Territorial	
Diaries Across Idaho	5

portions of the Trail Corridor along with educational and historical information in maps, booklets and interpretive signage. The project was also envisioned as a tourism attraction that could potentially contribute to the economies of local communities and as a way of building public support for the long-term preservation of the Trail. We applied for and received internal funding for the first parts of the project. But we needed somebody with great energy, vision, and on-the-ground expertise to implement the plan. Jerry Eichhorst was that person, and we couldn't have asked for a more competent, tireless, and devoted person to carry the project forward. He attacked the project with remarkable enthusiasm and energy. Jerry refined and expanded the original plan and developed innovative ways to bring committed volunteers and thousands of additional dollars to the project. Thanks to Jerry, OCTA (including Wally Meyer), and BLM employees like Terry Heslin, Antonia Hedrick, and Signe Sather-Blair, what had begun as a somewhat sketchy vision became the fully realized project the public enjoys today.



## Message from the IOCTA President

By Jerry Eichhorst

Winter is slowly slipping away and Spring is nearly upon us. I am anxious to get back out in the field and explore new territory. We have some interesting activities planned for this summer. I hope that everyone will come out and join us. Please check the *Trail Dust* newsletter and the IOCTA website ([www.IdahoOCTA.org](http://www.IdahoOCTA.org)) for the latest information. Our first activity will be the spring meeting in Mountain Home. After lunch, we will tour the last half of the Main Oregon Trail Back Country Byway from Highway 20 to Boise. I have a couple of special sites in store for those on the tour.

I am pleased to report that IOCTA has purchased a lifetime OCTA membership for the Idaho State Archives. Due to several years of budget cuts, the Archives was forced to end their membership in OCTA a few years ago. This gift will ensure that the *Overland Journal* will be available for everyone to enjoy at the historical library.

I am also pleased to report that IOCTA has agreed to contribute half the cost of restoring the Canyon Creek stage station walls. As a small desert oasis on the Oregon Trail, the site was a popular camping area after 12 miles of rocky desert. It later became a freight and stage station. The station buildings were built in the 1860s and have begun to fall down. We are glad to be part of the restoration project which will start this summer.

Please join me on the trail this summer. It should be an interesting year.

## **Tim Goodale and the George Grimes Party: The 1862 Crossing in Idaho**

By James McGill

Two names historically prominent in the Boise Valley from the year of 1862 are those of Timothy Goodale of Goodale's Cutoff (and his emigrant wagon train), and George Grimes associated with the discovery of gold by several miners in the Boise Basin. It has long been thought that, on their travels, they encountered each other that year. Recent research has verified that not only did Goodale and Grimes not meet that year, but also the often recorded *supposed meeting* on the Boise River between the Grimes party of surviving men and the Goodale Train never did occur!

It is well known that when the Grimes mining party made their trip into the Boise Basin area, George Grimes was killed. The first hitch in this reported meeting is that Grimes had been killed by the time Goodale passed through the area. And when the surviving men returned to the Boise Valley, the nearest they got to Goodale was to see the dust from his train.

The correct facts have come to light during recent detailed research of the trail route of those miners, better identified as the Splawn-Grimes-Fogus party (Merle Wells, *Gold Camps and Silver Cities*, 1983, p. 3). The route is the same trail that they traveled both into the basin and back out to the Boise River. And that trail route, which no one before seems to have completely identified, is now fairly well documented.

It is necessary to describe the route of the miners in order to substantiate that

they could not have met Tim Goodale and his train. His approximately 70 wagons that crossed the Boise River near present 8<sup>th</sup> Street, in downtown Boise, began the route that would become Hill Road westerly to near Eagle. From there, they opened the first wagon trail that went northwest from Eagle to Freezeout Hill and down over a steep ridge to the Emmett area on the Payette River. This route is documented in *Rediscovered Frontiersman Timothy Goodale* by James W. McGill.

Writers have assumed without real evidence that the mining party had somehow used a route that followed northerly quite near the Boise River, Mores Creek, and Grimes Creek—in and out of the Boise Basin. Thus, it was believed that when they returned south, they met the Goodale Train somewhere along the Boise River some miles east of Boise (incorrectly described in the McGill book). The correct details, recorded mostly by *Moses Splawn* and *Joseph Branstetter*, and studied intently by Karen Fagan, Idaho City, and James McGill, have now cast almost complete doubt on that being their trail route. The Grimes men did not go near that area.

Following up on that early recorded information, it soon became apparent that the Grimes party had traveled from the Fort Boise crossing area of the Snake River and up the south side of the Boise River going east. But they did not go as far east as Boise. It is likely that Grimes and his men crossed the Boise River just east of the Eagle Island area and soon began a trail NE through a present *well known gulch*.

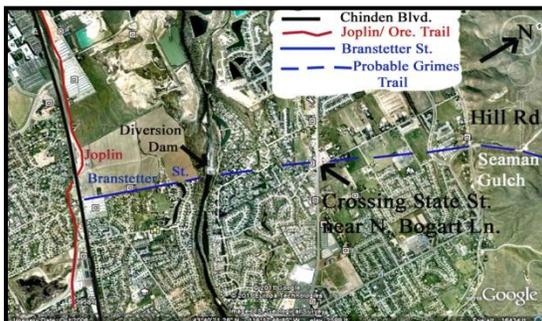
This information is based mostly upon an analysis of Moses Splawn's details in

his description. Looking from somewhere along the river toward the mountains he wrote, “At the *first canyon* [my emphasis], we saw granite hills [and] here we . . . crossed to the north bank. We went into the hills and camped.” Thus, it seems that they traveled several miles up to the first camp site, in the “hills,” but not yet starting up the mountain.

From where the Oregon Trail passed along the top of the higher plateau, the “Bench,” along the south side of the Boise River, to the rim a little west of the area of Joplin Cemetery, the base of the foothills begins to be clearly seen in the lower view. Along that area from the old trail route, the first canyon begins to show and viewing up that valley (just below the peak of the granite mountains) is the Seaman Gulch canyon!



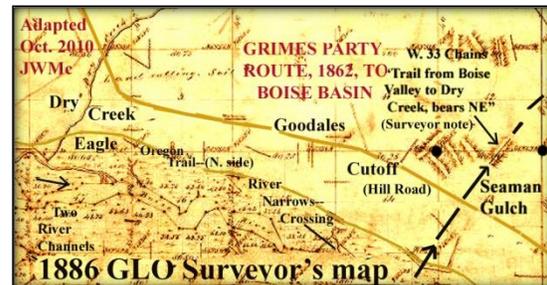
View of first canyon, Seaman Gulch, from former trail area.



Probable Grimes route from trail towards Dry Creek.

They were specifically looking for a way up to the granite formations in the mountains, and a well-used Indian trail, as described by a familiar Indian.

On the first map of the area (T4N, R1E, Sec. 13) and in the surveyor’s notes, an old trail up Seaman Gulch is recorded which supports this most likely Grimes party route: “Trail from Boise valley to Dry Creek, bears NE.” Undisturbed swale remnants of an old trail, beyond the area of their traveling up that gulch, are still evident. This trail would have been used extensively even that same year by many other early miners going into the Basin. This was the first and only route for a time into the Basin.



Early survey map with Grimes trail route documented.

From Seaman Gulch, they crossed a smaller drainage easterly to Pierce Park gulch, then departed from the present Pierce Park Road, and passed northerly to Dry Creek. Old map evidence shows this all to be a very early route. The description of going easterly and on up Dry Creek into the mountains fits the continuation of an old trail still evident there as well.

After spending some time exploring up Grimes Creek and on over Grimes Pass to the area of South Fork of the Boise River, where Grimes was killed by Indians, they returned toward the south. The route they followed back was

essentially the same as their travel into the Basin. When returning toward the Boise River, they looked backward and reported seeing a lot of dust “behind” them.

This view of dust could only have been easterly along the route of Hill Road—the first Goodale’s Trail. Early on, they crossed Goodale’s soon-to-be trail route before his wagons marked his trail. Their trail crossing was the first, twice used, coming out of the gulch before Goodale even arrived there in his travel. Goodale then would have crossed the Grimes trail! They may have come within an hour or so of meeting each other, near the intersection of the Seaman Gulch Road and Hill Road! More extensive information is now available to substantiate this discovery. Thus, we can say that the Grimes party did not follow the new Goodale’s Cutoff with him and his wagons, as has been written before.

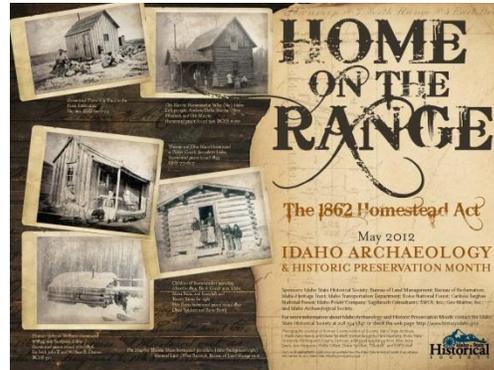
### **Idaho State Historical Society’s Archaeology and Historic Preservation Month, May 2012**

The theme for this year’s Archaeology and Historic Preservation Month is *Home on the Range: The 1862 Homestead Act* commemorating the sesquicentennial of the Act’s passage.

The new law, signed President Abraham Lincoln on May 20, 1862, gave each head of household—man, woman, minority, or emigrant—the opportunity to own 160 acres of public land. The cost was a small filing fee and residing on and “improving” the parcel for five years. After that, the settlers received ownership of their land.

During the homestead era, settlers claimed over 270 million acres across the county, with 9,733,455 of those acres in Idaho.

This year, like every year, events free to the public will be held across the state for the entire month of May. Look for an event in your community.



### **City of Rocks is turning 25!**

City of Rocks National Reserve was established by an Act of Congress signed on November 18, 1988. Its purpose was *to preserve and protect the significant historical and cultural resources; to manage recreational use; to protect and maintain scenic quality, and to interpret the nationally significant values of the reserve.*

Unlike other units of the National Park Service, the Reserve is co-managed by the National Park Service and a state agency--the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation. Its 14,407 acres preserve and protect a 6.2-mile-long segment of California National Historic Trail along with other trails and cultural features.

In November of 2013, City of Rocks will turn 25 years old. A celebration is being planned. We will keep you posted!

**Welcome** to IOCTA's newest members:

Terry Heslin, Boise  
Denise Tugby, Mountain Home  
Pati Sweet, Nampa  
Laura Kohler, Smithfield, UT  
Duane Iles, Holton, KS

## **Oregon Trail Monuments**

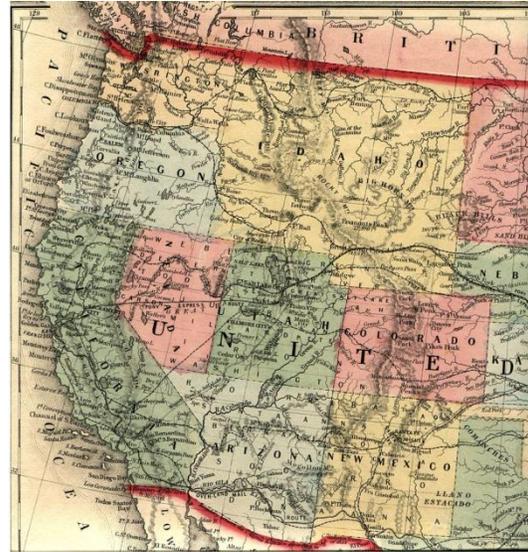
Dave Taylor is leading a chapter effort to create a comprehensive list of Oregon Trail monuments across the state. Several partial lists have been obtained, but it appears that no comprehensive list is available. We would like to create this list and have it available on the website for people to use. Please let Dave know of the monuments in your area.

## **“Get Territorial: Idaho at 150”**

March 4, 2013, will mark the 150th anniversary of the creation of Idaho Territory. The Governor has named the Idaho State Historical Society (ISHS) as the lead agency for the sesquicentennial commemoration. To encourage statewide participation, ISHS has created a framework for communities and organizations to design programs at the local level and is offering a toolkit as an additional resource. We invite all Idaho communities to create their own unique legacy to celebrate the 150 milestone.

For its part, the ISHS will be sponsoring several events, including:

*Essential Idaho: 150 Things That Make the Gem State Unique.* This is an upcoming exhibit at the Idaho State Historical Museum featuring places, people, and events from around the state that make Idaho—Idaho!



Map showing Idaho as part of Washington Territory before the creation of Idaho Territory.

*Lincoln Legacy.* This will be a permanent exhibit on display in the Idaho State Archives. This exhibit, created from a collection generously donated by David and Nancy Leroy, will represent perhaps the most significant group of Lincoln artifacts ever assembled that speaks to the relationship between Abraham Lincoln and Idaho and the Rocky Mountain West.

*Merle W. Wells Research Center.* On March 7, 2012, ISHS dedicated the "Merle W. Wells Research Center" at the Idaho State Archives. This dedication is long overdue, but the timing is appropriate. No historian has written more about Idaho's territorial period.

*Bear River Massacre National Historic Landmark:* The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) is working on a Historic Battlefield Protection Grant to review and understand the remaining archaeological signature of the massacre site and establish a local community advocacy group.

# *Diaries Across Idaho*

## **Rocky Road**

By Jerry Eichhorst

Soon after leaving Rattlesnake Creek, Oregon Trail travelers entered a very rocky stretch of the trail. Extending about 8 miles to Canyon Creek and a few miles beyond, this section was often noted in diaries for being quite rough. In later years, the Kelton Road veered north to avoid this rocky stretch. The trail is much the same today – littered with volcanic rocks that makes walking difficult.

September 15 We had a verry rocky road tho not hilley. We struck a creek cawled Shillot Creek & incamped. Grazing tolerable. Distance 13.  
William T. Newby 1843

looks like a field of oats. Plenty of good dry willows and good water. The road today has been exceedingly rough and rocky.  
Enoch Conyers 1852

Mon. [October] 9th. 15 miles in a N. W. course. Road rocky. Crossed a creek with high canons...  
Theodore Talbot 1843

Thursday, August 26 - Travel 14 miles - very rocky creek camp at Charlotte Creek no water for cattle grass and wood plenty.  
James Akin, Jr. 1852

[August] 18 The afternoon about 10 miles was the most Rocky rough road we have yet seen made 25 miles & encamped on a Small Brook running through a deep Kenyon  
James Clyman 1844

[August] T2-- Traveled over levl road very rocky Camped at Peters spring where Buck [ox] died.  
George Bond 1853

Aug Fri 15 The road to day has been verry rocky. Weather fine. Come about 7 miles and camped on Barrel Creek. Plenty of willows and grass here.  
Eli Casey Cooley 1845

August 13th ...Camped Rock Bluff Creek. Small bottom, good feed for first emigrants, good feed one mile off. Saw 5 graves 15 dead cattle rough roads. Traveled 15 miles.  
Maria Belshaw 1853

August the 13th ...then we traveled over the sage plain and came to Bearl creek which was 12 mills futher the road to day way level but very rocky A long chain of mountains on our right and we travel clost to them to day...  
Absolom B. Harden 1847

August 13—Friday.—... After lunch we traveled twelve miles to Barrel Creek and camped. Here we find excellent rye grass five and six feet high, and it



**Idaho Chapter OCTA  
5204 Waterwheel Drive  
Boise, ID 83703-3130**

### **IOCTA Officers and Directors**

<b>Jerry Eichhorst</b>	– President	<a href="mailto:jeichhotrails@gmail.com">jeichhotrails@gmail.com</a>
<b>Doug Jenson</b>	– VP East	<a href="mailto:jensondd@ida.net">jensondd@ida.net</a>
<b>Suzi Pengilly</b>	– VP West	<a href="mailto:suzi.pengilly@ishs.idaho.gov">suzi.pengilly@ishs.idaho.gov</a>
<b>Bill Wilson</b>	– Treasurer	<a href="mailto:runofthemillbill@gmail.com">runofthemillbill@gmail.com</a>
<b>Liz Heil</b>	– Secretary	<a href="mailto:bearcat11496@hotmail.com">bearcat11496@hotmail.com</a>
<b>Peg Cristobal</b>	– Historian	<a href="mailto:crispp2@gmail.com">crispp2@gmail.com</a>
<b>Wally Meyer</b>	-- Preservation	<a href="mailto:wallywanch@q.com">wallywanch@q.com</a>
<b>Lyle Lambert</b>	-- Preservation	<a href="mailto:Lyle.lambert@yahoo.com">Lyle.lambert@yahoo.com</a>
<b>Suzi Pengilly</b>	– TD Editor	<a href="mailto:suzi.pengilly@ishs.idaho.gov">suzi.pengilly@ishs.idaho.gov</a>
<b>Jerry Eichhorst</b>	– Webmaster	<a href="http://www.IdahoOCTA.org">www.IdahoOCTA.org</a>

### **Board of Directors**

<b>Lyle Lambert</b>	<a href="mailto:Lyle.lambert@yahoo.com">Lyle.lambert@yahoo.com</a>
<b>Dave Taylor</b>	<a href="mailto:DTAYLOR466@aol.com">DTAYLOR466@aol.com</a>
<b>Ron Tugby</b>	<a href="mailto:plumr12@q.com">plumr12@q.com</a>
<b>Jim Payne</b>	<a href="mailto:jimpayne@frontiernet.net">jimpayne@frontiernet.net</a>
<b>Wally Meyer</b>	<a href="mailto:wallywanch@q.com">wallywanch@q.com</a>

*Visit IOCTA online at  
[www.IdahoOCTA.org](http://www.IdahoOCTA.org)*

