

Trail Dust

Newsletter of the Oregon-California Trails Association, Idaho Chapter
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The next Trail Dust will be released September 15, 2012. Please submit articles by September 1.

Idaho OCTA Activities 2012

- June 16** Soda Springs Tour
 - July 21** City of Rocks Tour
 - August 6-10** National OCTA Convention
 - September 8** South Alternate Tour
 - October 6** IOCTA Fall Meeting at Fort Hall Indian Reservation with a tour of the Fort Hall National Historic Landmark site and Fort Hall Museum
 - October 7** Tour from Chesterfield over Mt. Putman to Ross Fork
- See IOCTA website for details on the tours.*

Spring Meeting and Byway Tour

By Jerry Eichhorst

Over 30 people attended the IOCTA spring meeting at AJ's Restaurant in Mountain Home on Saturday, May 5. After a short business meeting, we were treated to a lively presentation by local historian John Hiler. John spoke of his relatives who settled in southwestern Idaho in the 1880s. He also described the early history of the Bruneau Valley and some of the difficulties encountered. Thanks, John, for the great presentation!

Departing after lunch, the group traveled the Main Oregon Trail Back Country Byway from Mountain Home to Bonneville Point. Stops were made along the route to view interpretive signs, emigrant graves, Canyon Creek stage station, and Ditto Creek inscription rocks. Although the weather was windy and chilly, everyone seemed to enjoy themselves.



My thanks to all who attended the meeting and tour, John Hiler for his presentation, the Norstebon's and Damele's for sharing their trail sites, and especially Ron Tugby who arranged the meeting.

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Treasure Valley “P.T.” Club Cruises the Main Oregon Trail Back Country Byway

by Bill Wilson

IOCTA members, Bill and Mary Alice Wilson, led a tour of nine P. T. Cruisers and 18 members over the eastern half of the Main Oregon Trail Back Country Byway on April 28th. The Wilsons have been members of the Treasure Valley P.T.'s club since 2005 and have led several of their "cruises."

The tour began with lunch at the Carmela Winery and Restaurant in Glens Ferry and dessert at the Fudge Factory Grill. The group then proceeded along Rosevear Gulch Road to the Three Island Crossing Overlook. Several of the members had attended past reenactments and celebrations of the Three Island crossing -- but none had ever visited the Overlook site.



Cruisers at the beginning of Teapot Road

From there, we traveled on by the Slick Ranch bridge and up to the Old Oregon Trail Road north of I-84 where we stopped at the pullout. Here the Trail goes northerly to the sand ramp up to the bench top. We then went to the Trail crossing of Bennett Mountain Road.

Further stops allowed the group to see Trail remnants where Teapot Road begins and where the North Alternate connects back to the Main Oregon Trail.



Cruisers at Rattlesnake Station

After a stop near the Hot Springs area, with a hike down to view the Trail where it passes near the old Hot Springs Resort stone buildings, we continued out to Highway 20 with a final stop at Rattlesnake Station pullout. After a break at the Pilot Truck Station in Mountain Home for refreshments, everyone headed home.

The other “cruisers” expressed how much they enjoyed the tour. Having heard about the second half of the Main Oregon Trail Back Country Byway, many of the members are now interested in touring that part soon. Bill and Mary Alice are planning for the follow up tour, perhaps in late September.



Three Island Crossing from overlook

Message from the President

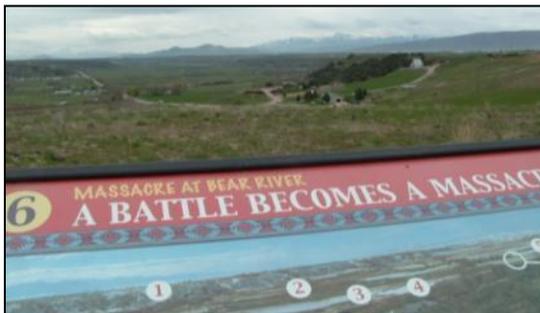
By Jerry Eichhorst

Our spring meeting on May 5 served as the unofficial kickoff for the summer of IOCTA activities. Over 30 people were treated to an excellent presentation by local historian and author, John Hiler. Most joined me on a tour of the byway after lunch. It's always good to get back out on the trail and share the stories of the sites along the way.

My thanks to the Norstebon's of Canyon Creek and Damele's of Ditto Creek for being great hosts and allowing access to their historic sites. These were special treats for everyone. Thanks also to John Hiler for a fantastic presentation. It is exciting to see so many people interested in the Oregon Trail joining us.

We had 5 people mark the North Alternate Oregon Trail/Kelton Road on King Hill on Saturday, May 19. The area has burned badly over the last 2 years. As much as we hate to see such destructive fires, they do expose the trail remnants and enable us to easily mark the area.

We have a great lineup of remaining activities planned for the summer. Local expert Tony Varilone will lead an outing of the Oregon Trail sites in the Soda



Interpretive sign at Bear River Overlook—one of the stops on the Soda Springs tour

Springs area on Saturday, June 16. I am looking forward to this as Tony will take us to places which I have never seen before.

Wallace Keck, Superintendent of the City of Rocks National Reserve, will lead us on a tour of the California Trail sites in City of Rocks on July 21. This should be another great outing and once again I will see sites I have not seen before.



Twin Sisters at City of Rocks

Later activities include the OCTA convention on August 6-10 and a tour of the South Alternate on September 8 led by long-time member Wally Meyer.



South Alternate ruts

Finally, the fall meeting is planned for Saturday, October 6, at the new hotel in Fort Hall. After a short meeting, we will have a special speaker followed by a visit to the Fort Hall site and the Fort Hall museum. A tour of the Oregon

Trail from Chesterfield over Mount Putnam to Fort Hall is planned for the following day, Sunday, October 7. Please contact me if you are planning to go to the Fort Hall site or on the Mount Putnam tour as we must make arrangements ahead of time. There may be a small fee for the Mount Putnam tour.



Group at the monument marking the location of the fur trade post of Fort Hall

Throughout the summer there will be opportunities to assist with the restoration of the Canyon Creek stage station. I am glad that we can be part of the restoration. Please let me know if you would like to be part of this exciting endeavor.



Canyon Creek Stage Station

I am looking forward to all of these activities and hope that you will join me for them. It should be an interesting year. Please see the calendar page on the website for more information.

www.IdahoOCTA.org

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

James Ball--Boise
Karen Williams--Boise
Marvin Burke --Colorado

Mother's Day at Rock Creek Station and Stricker Ranch

Lucy Stricker would be proud of all of the mothers who visit her 1900 home every year on Mother's Day. Lucy was married to Herman Stricker who ran Rock Creek Station, a stop on the Oregon Trail and Kelton freight road.

Every year, the Friends of Stricker hold a Mother's Day event honoring Lucy--and all mothers. The day features a great picnic lunch with homemade food, music, and good company.

Stricker Ranch and Rock Creek Station are located south of Hansen and east of Twin Falls. In addition to several historic buildings, one can also tour a new state-of-the-art interpretive center opened last year. The historic site is owned by the Idaho State Historical Society and managed by the Friends of Stricker. Plan to attend next year—bring a mother!



Diaries Across Idaho

By Jerry Eichhorst

Soda Springs

A few days after entering what would later become Idaho, the emigrants came upon an unusual site of several natural hot springs and geysers. Known as Soda Springs because of the carbonated water, most diarists commented on the area. Many used the term “curiosity,” so I suspect that is how a guidebook must have described the springs. A small trading post was built in the area in later years. Today, a timer-controlled geyser is the curiosity of the area. Lorenzo Sawyer writes the most detailed description of Soda Springs that I have seen. The portion of his day reaching Soda Springs is related here.

June 17th.

Last night was the most disagreeable one we have experienced on our journey. The weather was cold. About 7 o'clock p. m., it commenced raining. During the first watch, the rain continued to fall; about the second watch it changed to snow and sleet, and towards morning it snowed quite hard. The watch found it exceedingly disagreeable traveling about among the thick bushes loaded with water and sleet. The sun shone clear in the morning, however, and soon dispelled the snow in the valleys. We were on our march at six o'clock. Mr Lake being still sick, we took him in our wagon again. Five miles from camp we came to the Soda Springs; they are situated at some distance to the right of the road. Their position may be distinguished from the road by two large mounds a short distance apart, of a yellowish sandy color, bare of vegetation. The mounds upon approaching them, have a stony appearance; they were formed, however, entirely by deposits from the water of the springs; they are some 30 feet high, and cover an area of many rods each. The springs bubble up at different points on the surface of the mounds. The water generally rises from the highest points of the mounds; this owing to the fact that the mounds are formed of deposits from the water. As the water rises and spreads itself over the surface, the deposits are most abundant near the point where the water issues, thus the elevation of the mound is most rapid at that point. The process continues till quite a hillock of a conical shape is formed. Near the summit of one mound there is a cone with a base of about three feet; it rises to the

height perhaps, of four feet; the apex is hollowed out in the shape of the mouth-piece to a horn, the diameter at the top being about three inches. The water gushes up to this little basin through an orifice one inch in diameter, and is discharged over the sides of the cone. There are a number of these cones formed by the same process, and similar in form to the one just described; the water has ceased to flow from some of them. I think the water must contain some other mineral besides soda, but we had no means of testing it. The substance deposited has become hardened like stone. These springs are certainly a great curiosity. *Lorenzo Sawyer, 1850*



Photo by Doug Jensen

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

IOCTA Officers and Directors

Jerry Eichhorst	– President	jeichho@mail.com
Doug Jenson	– VP East	jensondd@ida.net
Suzi Pengilly	– VP West	suzi.pengilly@ishs.idaho.gov
Bill Wilson	– Treasurer	runofthemillbill@gmail.com
Kay Coffman	– Secretary	ioctakayc@aol.com
Peg Cristobal	– Historian	crispp2@gmail.com
Wally Meyer	-- Preservation	wallywanch@q.com
Suzi Pengilly	– TD Editor	suzi.pengilly@ishs.idaho.gov
Jerry Eichhorst	– Webmaster	www.IdahoOCTA.org

Board of Directors

Lyle Lambert	Lyle.lambert@yahoo.com
Dave Taylor	DTAYLOR466@aol.com
Ron Tugby	plumr12@msn.com
Jim Payne	jimpayne@frontiernet.net
Wally Meyer	wallywanch@q.com

Visit IOCTA online at
www.IdahoOCTA.org

