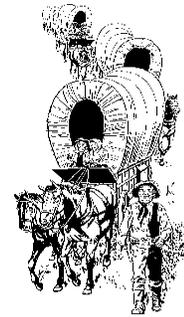


Trail Dust

Newsletter of the Oregon-California Trails Association, Idaho Chapter
Vol. XXVI Issue 1 *Suzi Pengilly, Editor* February 2014



Calendar of Upcoming Activities

March

Boise Community Education Classes, Boise

March 11, Tuesday, Main Oregon Trail Back Country Byway

March 18, Tuesday, North Alternate Oregon Trail

More information at <http://www.boiselearns.org/pub/>

May 3, Saturday, Spring Meetings, Perkins Restaurant, 1600 Pocatello Creek Road, Pocatello

- Convention Planning Meeting, 9:30
- Followed by Chapter Meeting, 10:45
- Tour of OT sites west of Pocatello after lunch

Other activities being considered--no dates yet

- Tour of Oregon Trail from Vale to Farewell Bend in conjunction with the Northwest Chapter of OCTA
- Tours of trail segments in the Fort Hall area
- Marking outing in burned areas north of Mountain Home

Hudspeth Cutoff Outing

By Jerry Eichhorst

Eleven members of the Idaho Chapter joined about 15 from the Utah Crossroads chapter for a joint outing on the middle section of the Hudspeth Cutoff led by Gar Elison on September 21, 2013. Starting at Malta, the group traveled over several of the mountains and valleys along the cutoff to Twin Springs where last year's tour started. It was an interesting tour through a portion of trail not visited by the Chapter for many years. Gar did a fine job, as always, thoroughly discussing the history and events along the trail and

Contents

Hudspeth Cutoff Outing	1
Message from the President	2
Another OCTA Loss	3
Fall Meeting in Boise	
Eagle Scouts	4
Fur Trade Tour	5
City of Rocks Turns 25	
Diaries Across Idaho	7

following the cutoff as closely as possible. The dust of 15 vehicles surely must have looked similar to that of a wagon train crossing the cutoff 160 years ago.



Trail ruts on the Cutoff

Traveling this route made me wonder why anyone would have taken this route compared to the main Oregon Trail through Fort Hall. The Hudspeth Cutoff required crossing four mountain ranges with some very steep hills to climb and descend, yet the travel time was almost the same as the route via Fort Hall. I guess the lust for gold inspired the travelers to take the most direct route.

Welcome to IOCTA's newest members

Terry Wells, Boise
Diane & Peter Hecht, Boise
David Pearson, Meridian



View from Hudspeth's Cutoff

Message from the President

By Jerry Eichhorst

The year 2013 seems to have come and gone in a flash. We had a number of really good outings last year. I want to thank all of the people who arranged and led them. It really helps to have others provide that expertise. The convention in Oregon City was fun. It is always good to renew friendships and learn about new areas. An added bonus for me was the opportunity to spend a day researching trail diaries at the Oregon State Historical Society. It was great to hold several of the original leather diaries.

We lost some friends last year with the passing of Jim Payne and Gil Wiley. Another friend and chapter director, Ron Tugby of Mountain Home, had to resign his position. I'll miss all of them. 2014 promises to be an interesting year. Work will need to begin in earnest towards hosting the OCTA convention in 2016. The potential is there to have an incredible convention, but it will require a lot of work and cooperation by a lot of people. The new year is off to a good start as long-time trail expert and author Don Clark of Caldwell recently donated his Oregon Trail collection to the Idaho

State Archives. It will take me months to catalog the collection as an Archives volunteer, but it is a task I am looking forward to.

Community Education classes are coming up in March as I share the trail with new people. The spring chapter meeting will be the first Saturday in May. We need to elect another director to fill Ron's position. Please consider helping the chapter by filling that position. I promise that the work load is minimal.

I have been working with the Northwest chapter to arrange a tour of the Oregon Trail from Vale north to Farewell Bend. Several members of the Northwest chapter scouted and marked the area last fall. This is an area I have never been. We have been very successful with shared outings in southeast Idaho with the Utah Crossroads chapter. Hopefully the Idaho chapter will attend the outing in good numbers.

Please let me know of other ideas for outings. I am always looking to see and learn about new places.

So let's get lots of snow up in the mountains, then get started with a great spring and summer. I hope to see you on the trail this year.

Another Loss in the OCTA Community

Long-time OCTA member Gilbert Alexander Wyllie passed away in Boise on December 25, 2013, at the age of 85. Gil and his wife, Jane, toured much of the Trail during their involvement with OCTA. With a Ph.D. from Purdue University, Gil taught biology at Boise

State University for 28 years. He was also one of the founders of the Idaho Herpetological Society. He retired in 1993. Gil is survived by three children and his wife, Jane.



Gil Wyllie

Fall Meetings in Boise

By Jerry Eichhorst

The Idaho Chapter closed out 2013 with a convention planning meeting and the fall chapter meeting in Boise on Saturday, October 5. Over 20 people attended the meetings. After lunch the group toured a number of Oregon Trail monuments within Boise.



The first convention planning meeting was held to start the wheels in motion for the possible 2016 OCTA convention to be hosted by the Idaho chapter at Fort Hall. I presented a draft plan and a lively discussion ensued. It is imperative that

lots of people are involved in the process so that we don't burn out or overburden anybody.

After a short business meeting, elections were held with the following people elected to serve:

- President Jerry Eichhorst
- Vice-Pres. E. Doug Jenson
- Vice-Pres. W. Suzi Pengilly
- Treasurer Bill Wilson
- Secretary John Briggs
- Director Dan Dunne
- Director John Briggs (to complete Jim Payne's term)

My thanks to all who have volunteered to help run the chapter.



Group touring Oregon Trail monuments

The group traveled along Boise Avenue to view a number of monuments which have been erected depicting the history of the Oregon Trail and other subjects in Boise. Dave Taylor, a Director of the Idaho chapter, is working with the City of Boise to develop a pamphlet of these monuments to assist people in viewing them.

Eagle Scouts Reset Posts

By Jerry Eichhorst

A dozen young and enthusiastic scouts assisted Eagle Scout Ben Harp of Nampa reset concrete marker posts and other signs along the Main Oregon Trail Back Country Byway on September 14. The scouts worked hard for several hours digging and resetting a number of concrete marker posts which had fallen or were leaning badly. In addition, they dug a deep hole to reset a byway directional sign. I enjoyed sharing trail stories with the boys and their leaders. I also enjoyed having the young men do all of the hard work! My thanks to Ben and his troop for their assistance.



Fur Trapper History Tour

By Jerry Eichhorst

Nestled on the west side of the Grand Tetons is the small town of Driggs, Idaho, where IOCTA members gathered to participate in a fur trade history tour on Saturday, August 10. The tour was led by Jim Hardee, an IOCTA member and expert on fur trappers in eastern Idaho. Some 17 people joined Jim, as he led us to an overlook of the Teton River Valley and the sites of the Battle of Pierre's Hole, Fort Henry, and Camp Henry. One of the highlights was the large rocks with "Camp Henry 1810" carved on them.



Although an unusual venue for an IOCTA outing since it is not on an emigrant trail, this outing was an opportunity to learn about the early fur trade history of eastern Idaho. And the scenery was beautiful! Jim was an incredible source of information and led a tour enjoyed by all.



His book, *Pierre's Hole!*, provides an excellent history of the fur trappers in the Teton Valley. Thanks, Jim, for leading a great outing!

City of Rocks Turns 25!

By Kristen Bastis

The City of Rocks National Reserve celebrated their 25th anniversary in the fall of 2013. The Reserve was set aside by Congress on November 17, 1988, to protect and preserve the California Trail and manage recreation within the Reserve boundaries. November is usually a bit chilly for a large outdoor event so the celebration took place on September 14, 2013.



The festivities began at 9am with interpretive demonstrations and exhibit booths. The opening ceremony followed, and the crowd heard from Wallace Keck, Reserve Superintendent, Chip Jenkins, Deputy Regional Director of the Pacific

West Region of the National Park Service, Nancy Merrill, Director of Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation, and Kent Durfee, a local resident. The local boy scouts presented the colors along with members of the VFW.



The activities included tours of the visitor center, a dutch oven lunch, the opening and re-internment of a time capsule, a California Trail Tour, a Geologic Interpretive Trail hike, a climbing demonstration, the Idaho Falconers exhibition, children's pioneer games, and wagon and horse rides.

The festivities continued into the night with music by Strings Attached, birthday cake, a slide presentation by Wallace Keck, and a star party.

If you missed the celebration, that is OK. The staff at City of Rocks invites you to come and enjoy the Reserve by taking a tour of the California Trail. Entice the younger members of your family to visit and try their hand at rock climbing. California Trail tours and climbing experience programs can be arranged by calling the visitor center at 208-824-5910.



Diaries Across Idaho

Abundance of Boise River Valley

By Jerry Eichhorst

As Oregon Trail emigrants descended to the Boise River, they were treated to a wide valley with tall trees, lush grasses, and a fine river. Fish were in abundance with Indians offering many for trade. Berries, rabbits and sage grouse were also available. After several weeks crossing the alkali deserts of southern Idaho, the Boise River valley was a welcome place to rest and recuperate.

Made a long drive and camped on a slough not far from a large and beautiful creek [Boise River]. Indians supplied us with fish on good terms, and behaved themselves civilly.

Monday, Sept. 30. – Left camp and drove down on the bluff of the creek to the camp of the foremost company. This place has more timber than we have seen for two hundred miles. There is a grove of balm trees. Camped on the creek.

Rev. Edward Evans Parrish, 1844

Tues. Aug. 19 Went about 17 miles camping upon Boise River. A stream of considerable size with its banks more heavily timbered than any stream we have found this side of the branches of Kansas River.

Wed. Aug. 20 ...Went about 14 miles today, keeping down Boise River and camping upon it again. The waters of this stream are very clear abounding with fine fish which the Indians take in large numbers. A party of Snake and Shoshonies visited camp this evening with a number of fine Salmon to sell which were much fatter and better than those taken at Salmon Falls.

James Field, 1845

September 17. Road good, came to Boise river, good feed. Indians came to us with fish.

September 18. Moved down the river about nine miles and camped; good feed. The Balm and Gilead tree grows on this stream in considerable quantities; this is the first we can call timber since we left Bear river.

Loren B. Hastings, 1847

August 1, Monday Here is grass in plenty and we unharness to refresh man and beast. We try to catch some fish but fail, but gather a fine quantity of red, yellow and black currants which grow here in great plenty. After dinner we harness up, go a few miles till we came to the river and camp. This is a beautiful river, perhaps 60 yards wide, clear as crystal and lined by a grove along its margins of bitter cottonwood, water willow, alder, currant bushes and other shrubbery that I cannot name. It was a great relief to the monotony of the almost entire absence of timber for 1,600 miles. Two Indians came to our camp about sunset and brought a good mess of fish—gave them a supper and they gave us the fish. They wanted to stay all night and sleep by our fire and said they would guard our mules. Came 20 miles. Today the boys killed three sage hens, or grouse. They are something larger than our common prairie hen and far superior in whiteness, tenderness and flavor.

Henry Allyn, 1853

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

IOCTA Officers and Directors

Jerry Eichhorst	– President	jeichhotrails@gmail.com
Doug Jenson	– VP East	jensondd@ida.net
Suzi Pengilly	– VP West	suzi1005@gmail.com
Bill Wilson	– Treasurer	runofthemillbill@gmail.com
John Briggs	– Secretary	johnxbriggs@msn.com
Peg Cristobal	– Historian	crispp2@gmail.com
Lyle Lambert	– Preservation	Lyle.lambert@yahoo.com
Wally Meyer	– Preservation	wallyweanch@q.com
Suzi Pengilly	– TD Editor	suzi1005@gmail.com
Jerry Eichhorst	– Webmaster	www.IdahoOCTA.org

Board of Directors

Lyle Lambert	Lyle.lambert@yahoo.com
Dave Taylor	DTAYLOR466@aol.com
Dan Dunne	ltdunne@gmail.com
John Briggs	johnxbriggs@msn.com
Open	

*Visit IOCTA online at
www.IdahoOCTA.org*

