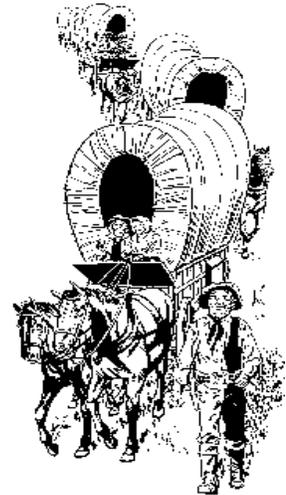


Trail Dust

Newsletter of the Oregon-California Trails
Association, Idaho Chapter



Vol. XXXIII Issue 1 Nancy Briggs, Editor, Spring 2021

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Tentative Calendar of Events

June 5 th	Stricker Cabin Grand Re-opening
July/Aug (tba)	City of Rocks
July/Aug (tba)	Granite Pass
September 9 th - 11 th	Mapping Workshop in Elko, NV
September 12 th	OCTA Board Meeting in Elko
September 13 th - 16 th	OCTA Annual Convention in Elko, NV
October 23 th	IOCTA Fall Chapter Meeting, tba

Message from the President

By Jerry Eichhorst

The Idaho chapter has been essentially dormant through the winter. The annual Boise Schools Community Education classes on the Oregon Trail and the annual byway tour were not held this spring due to COVID concerns.

We had an excellent Zoom spring chapter meeting on Saturday, May 9 in which about 25 people participated. It was great to see everyone but I look forward to being able to gather on the trails again.

Tentative plans are to resume chapter activities in July or August. We need to have an outing to go over Granite Pass to teach Don Wind and Paul Dinwiddie the route so they can lead the OCTA convention pre-tour in September. I would also like to have search dogs verify the possible graves we found at City of Rocks two years ago.

The idea of an interpretive sign project at Fort Boise has moved up through the ranks at Idaho Fish and Game and been delayed until next year to get support from the NPS Trails Office. Dave Price will be leading that effort going forward. Don Wind has been working with the NPS Trails Office on a sign project for Lane's Grave on the Lander Road in eastern Idaho. Dave and Don have also been involved in reviewing a huge wind turbine project in central Idaho to determine the impact on emigrant trails in the area.

The Idaho Historical Society (IHS) will be having a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the work involved in improving the Rock Creek Station and Stricker Ranch southeast of Twin Falls on Saturday, June 5, from 2:00–4:00 pm. In a related note, all National History Day (NHD) in Idaho contests conducted through the Idaho Historical Society were held virtually this year. IOCTA member Virgil Clark is active in the IHS and serves as an NHD judge. IOCTA offers a \$250 cash prize for trail related projects although we have not had anyone submit an entry which is Trail-related recently.

The Idaho's Heritage Conference will be held at Pocatello in late September. Long-time IOCTA member and early trapper historian Jim Hardee is one of the presenters. I have been asked to lead a bus tour of the Oregon Trail west of Pocatello one afternoon. This conference may be of interest to many of you so I encourage you to visit their website (<http://www.idahosheritageconference.org/>) to learn more about the conference.

Watch the chapter website (www.IdahoOCTA.org) calendar page for upcoming activities. Hope to see you on the trails soon.

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Molly and Daphne Hit the Trail

John Briggs

The Idaho Chapter had recently designed a Guide to the Oregon Trail and Kelton Ramp in S.E. Boise. Fourth Grade student Molly, with help from her parents and her sister, Daphne, picked up on this and decided to do a live broadcast to her school from the Oregon Trail Recreation Area just off Highway 55. The two girls, bravely, given how cold it was, dressed as pioneers and delivered their message directly from the Oregon Trail. Their first broadcast was from the Interpretive signs.



At the Interpretive Signs

While the students back at Boise Online School worked on a Trail problem that Molly had given them, the girls walked to the place in the Recreation Area where the Oregon Trail dropped down the basalt cliffs to the bench below. In the eastern sequence of terraces in the Boise Valley that means from Bench 3 (Sunrise) to Bench 2 (Whitney) bench.

Ingeniously, Molly's father was videoing and broadcasting with one laptop while her mother was directing to ensure good sound and visibility with another!

After completing their presentation, which included showing where the Trail runs, the girls took questions – and there were a great many such questions. Molly and Daphne had kindly invited me along in case there were questions they could not answer but there was only one for me - asking what happened to the pioneers if a wheel broke.



This is where the Oregon Trail drops from the Sunrise to the Whitney bench with the Boise bench below that and Lucky Peak in the distance. Father is broadcasting while Mother Directs!

Molly even had a question I would not have been able to answer. 'What were the tasks of the children on the Trail'. Many such tasks, of course, but one I did not know, 'clean the dust boogers from the noses of the oxen'! Students from multiple elementary schools were learning and were entertained by this on-location presentation "20 minutes by wagon from school", as Molly described it.

Then as one wise young man asked to see the wagons - Molly's father said, 'A Subaru Station **Wagon** counts doesn't it? The oxen are out of cell range'.

The Ada County Oregon Trail Recreation Area

John Briggs



New sign at the Recreation Area gateway

Sharon on a visit to look over the improvements that have been made. The Interpretive signs have been refreshed and vault toilets installed close by. A guide to the hiking trails has also been constructed.



Guide to the Trails

Ada County has made good progress installing new interpretive signs in the Oregon Trail Recreation Area. A number of hiking trails have been identified though Marking of them is not quite complete. I joined IOCTA Western Region Preservation Officer Dave Price and his wife



The Historic Oregon Trail does track the original Oregon Trail. The Kelton Freight Trail corresponds with the Kelton Road.



Sharon and Dave at the Rim Opening on Bench 3

We walked along the northern section of the Ezra Meeker Loop to the Rim Opening where the wagons would have descended from Bench 3 (Sunrise) to Bench 2 (Whitney).

We then climbed up the Kelton Freight Trail to the upper bench (Bench 4) and walked along the Oregon Trail to the newly discovered, protected section of Trail, returning then to the remnants of a Stage Station on the Kelton Road. Wally Meyer suggests this could be the Big Hill Stage Station. It is not one of the known Kelton Road Stations.



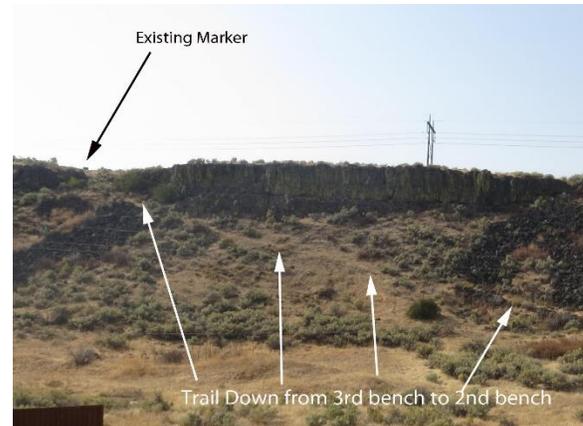
Big Hill Stage Station Foundation?

From there we took the Historic Oregon Trail down to the Ezra Meeker Loop and back to the parking lot.

Driving out of the lot we turned right (east) on ID 21 a short distance to Surprise Way, parking near the junction.

From there it is possible to see the Rim opening above Bench 2 and the remains of a trail running down the basalt cliff.

It seems likely that the Boise Shoshone would have used this trail for it would have been the first access to the Boise River when coming from Camas Prairie.



There do not appear to be many Diary entries providing a description of the descent at this point. Most 'simply' go from Bonneville Point to the Boise River. Winfield Scott Ebey though does mention the 'bluffs' on August 20th, 1854. He starts out that morning at Soles Rest Creek and would camp, after a long day, which he recorded as 23 miles but which may have been more, on the Boise River.

"I rapidly descended the Hill (Bonneville Point) to find a camp for the tired train; But never can the Grandeur of that Scene (of the river) be blotted from Memory – The Sunset from the Big Hill of the Boisse will always be a greene Spot"

"Turning abruptly to the right, on reaching the foot of the Hill, I expected to get to the river immediately; - in this I was disappointed; on arriving at where I thought the river was – I found it, indeed but many hundred feet below where I stood and no possible chance to descend the bluff."

Ebey then rides along the Bluff some 4 – 5 miles and finds a little track down the face of the rock. He uses this to get to the river and then returns up it to meet up with and lead the wagons to his Camp on the river. Unfortunately, he does not tell us how the Wagons completed their descent!

May IOCTA Virtual Meeting

As mentioned in the President's Message the spring Meeting on May 9th was held virtually on Zoom.



Don Wind and David Price talked about the Preservation Work being done.

In Eastern Idaho, the Forest Service is conducting work to improve the condition of the Caribou – Targhee National Forest through the Lane's Creek Forest Management Project. This may temporarily impact the Lander Road. Don Wind is managing the OCTA response.

In South Central Idaho Magic Valley Energy has proposed a huge windfarm – the Lava Ridge Wind Project. Although the project is well north of the Oregon Trail and well south of Jeffrey's/Goodale's Cutoff the windmills are so tall (over 700 ft) that there may be an impact on the Trails. David Price is managing our response.

Kirk Halford, Idaho State Archaeologist at the Bureau of Land Management provided an update on the Canyon Creek Stage Station restoration and shared some pictures of the progress that has been made with the installation of the roof.

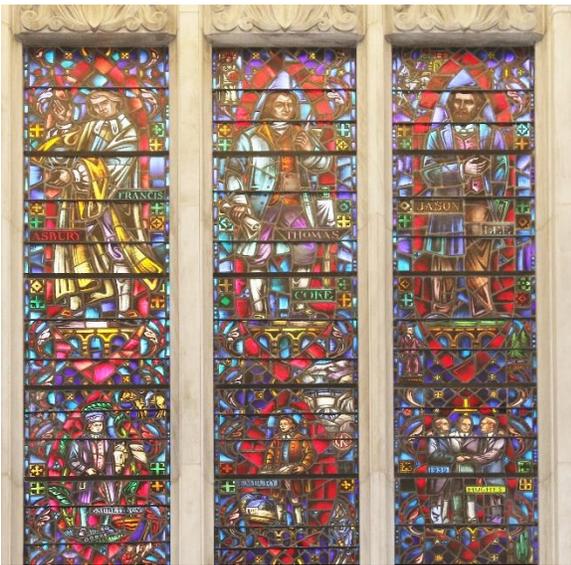
The next phase will be to frame the doors and windows.



The Canyon Creek Stage Station from the front (left) and rear (right).

Jason Lee

Further to the article on Jason Lee in the Summer 2020 Trail Dust, page 3, the Rev Jason Lee has left his mark in Idaho. In Blackfoot there is the Jason Lee Memorial United Methodist Church.

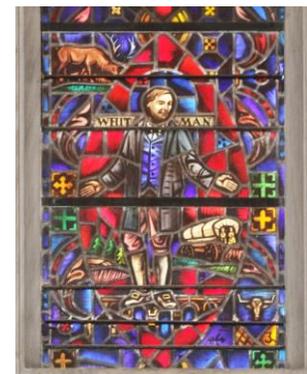
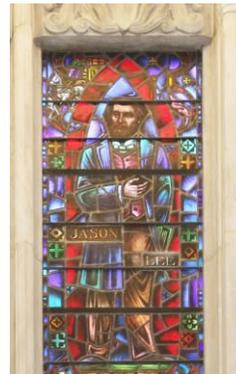


In the Sanctuary of the Cathedral of the Rockies in Boise is a stained-glass window celebrating the lives of people important for

the development of the Methodist Church in the USA and in the Northwest. Prominent among them is Jason Lee. He can be seen in the illustration (left) in the top right panel.

Jason Lee detail

Marcus Whitman detail



Marcus Whitman can also be found lower on the same window along with a stylized Oregon bound Wagon.



38th Annual Oregon-California Trails Convention
 Elko, NV * September 12 – 16, 2021.

“Through the Lens of History – Preserving the Past – Focusing on the Future”

KEY DATES

Saturday, September 11	<u>Pre-Convention Tours</u> “California Trail Highlights” (Burley ID to Elko NV – 2 days) “Lamoille Canyon Photography, Geology and Natural History Tour” Greenhorn Cutoff Hike with Dick Waugh
Sunday, September 12	<u>OCTA National Board Meeting</u> – California Trail Interpretive Center Welcome Reception – California Trail Interpretive Center
Monday, September 13	Welcome and Opening Session Speakers
Tuesday – September 14	<u>Bus Tours</u> - Fort Ruby and Ruby Valley - Guns and Ruts - Long Canyon Mine Project - Gravelly Ford <u>Private Vehicle Tour</u> “The Humboldt is North of Us...So Let’s Go South” “Ancient Pronghorn Antelope Van Tour” (ONLY on Tuesday)
Wednesday, September 15	Speakers Activity Stations at Convention Center
Thursday, September 16	Repeat of Tuesday tours

Private vehicle tours

- “The Humboldt River is north of us...so let’s go south” – led by Roger Gash
- “California Trail – City of Rocks to Goose Creek” – led by Paul Dinwiddie and Don Wind (2 day tour)
- “Ancient Pronghorn Antelope Tour”

Diaries Across Idaho

By Jerry Eichhorst

Fort Hall

NOTE: This Diaries Across Idaho story was first published in the Trail Dust in December 2012.

Nathaniel J. Wyeth lost the opportunity to provide goods for the annual trapper rendezvous held at Ham's Fork on the Green River in 1834 because he arrived too late. Proceeding west to the upper Snake River valley, Wyeth selected a site on the southeast side of the river to build a trading post in mid-July, 1834. The trading post was named Fort Hall after Henry Hall, a financial backer of the expedition, and originally built of cottonwood logs. Fort Hall became a major trading post on the Oregon Trail and was mentioned in most diary accounts that followed this route. Traffic dwindled as travelers began to take different and often shorter routes west until Fort Hall was abandoned by 1855.

Jason Lee, an American missionary (see as well page 7), arrived at the site as construction was starting and stayed with Wyeth for 15 days. On July 27, 1834, Jason Lee held the first public worship service conducted by an American on the overland trail on waters flowing into the Pacific. The next day, Lee conducted a funeral service. Lee's account of his visit follows.

July 15.—Arrived at the place Captain W. had chosen to build his fort.

July 16.—Twelve men went out to procure and dry meat for the journey to Wallahwallah, there being no prospect of finding buffalo below [down the Snake].

July 26.—The men returned laden with meat.

Sunday, July 27.—By request of Mr. M'Kay, whose party had now arrived, we repaired to the grove for public worship, which was the first we had on the journey. Mr. M'Kay's company, consisting of Indians, half breeds, and Canadians, attended, and many of Capt. W's. company. All behaved with the utmost decorum. Being unwell I did not preach, but gave a short exhortation. After service two of Mr. M'Kay's Canadians went out for a horse race, and while they were at full speed another, attempting to run in with them, came in contact with one of the former, who was thrown from his horse and so injured that he knew nothing after and expired before morning.

July 28.—Read the funeral service to all of both companies, who appeared very solemn. O that they would remember this, that they would think on their latter end. Two Indians from Capt. M'Kay's company came to our tent, and told us they wished to give us two horses. Suspecting

that they intended to pursue the same course that the traders say they generally do, viz., give a horse and then require more than its value in goods, I told them if they gave us horses we had little to give them in return. They replied that they wanted nothing in return. Fearing they would be displeased, if we refused, and being in want of horses, I told them that I would gladly accept their favor, and accordingly they brought us two fine white horses. Captain M'Kay had told them that we were missionaries, and it was on this account that they presented the horses. In return I gave them a small present with which they seemed well pleased. Thus we were provided for just in time of need, for two of our horses were nearly worn out, and were able to do nothing after, and we were obliged to leave them in the prairie. The name of Capt. W's. fort is Fort Hall, its latitude 43° 14' north. The place is not pleasant, the sand being frequently driven about by the wind in as large quantities as snow in the east.

July 30.—Left Fort Hall with [Capt. Stewart and] Captain M'K., Captain W., not being yet ready, and we being under the necessity of pushing on with such rapidity that we should not be able to take our cows, we judged it best to leave his company.

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IOCTA Officers and Directors

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<i>Paul Dinwiddie</i>	<i>VP - West</i>
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