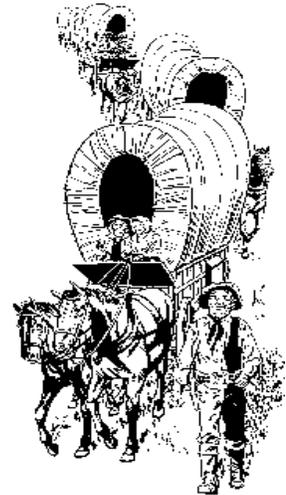


Trail Dust

Newsletter of the Oregon-California Trails
Association, Idaho Chapter



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Tentative Calendar of Events

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, 11:15 am, Idaho Pizza Company, Overland and Orchard Boise

Message from the President

By Jerry Eichhorst

We're back! After a year and a half of being dormant, the Idaho chapter resumed activities with a smashing success – a 3-day outing at City of Rocks (COR) and the California Trail. We have been working regularly with the COR for several years and were happy to be able to resume our activities with a Thursday afternoon search for graves with three cadaver dogs. We started with the intent to verify two graves found two years ago and ended up finding four more graves. On Friday we had a great trip up to Granite Pass and an extremely rough trip down to Birch Creek. On Saturday we drove nearly 100 miles of gravel roads following Goose Creek to Record Bluff and on towards Wells, Nevada. The outing was an opportunity to train Don Wind and Paul Dinwiddie on the areas and confirm the route for the upcoming pre-convention tour which they will be leading. We had lots of people who had never seen those areas and picked up two new members in the process. The new members were guests of other members and enjoyed themselves so much that they are joining OCTA and the Idaho chapter.

The Idaho chapter came out in force to help clean up the Canyon Creek stage station in June. We pulled out a chain link fence, cut down old trumpet vines, and cleaned up bricks, blocks, and other rubble. A number of members also attended the reopening of the Rock Creek and Stricker Homesite park south of Twin Falls. The buildings have been cleaned up and restored with additional interpretive signage added.

I am looking forward to the OCTA convention next month in Elko, Nevada. It will be good to see many friends again. The Idaho's Heritage Conference to be held at Pocatello in late September has been postponed until next year due to COVID concerns. I am in the process of rebuilding the chapter website which will have a fresh, new look soon, if I ever get the time to finish it.

I am extremely proud that our own John Briggs will be the next OCTA President. John joined OCTA and the Idaho chapter 9 years ago at a City of Rocks outing and has been actively involved since. He did a wonderful job in leading the Fort Hall convention and has a brilliant business and organizational mind which I believe will be great for OCTA. I wish him much success in his new role.

Hope to see you on the trails soon.

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Idaho State Historical Society Presents its Esto Perpetua Award to Jerry Eichhorst



Each year the Idaho State Historical Society (ISHS) grants its 'Esto Perpetua' Award to people

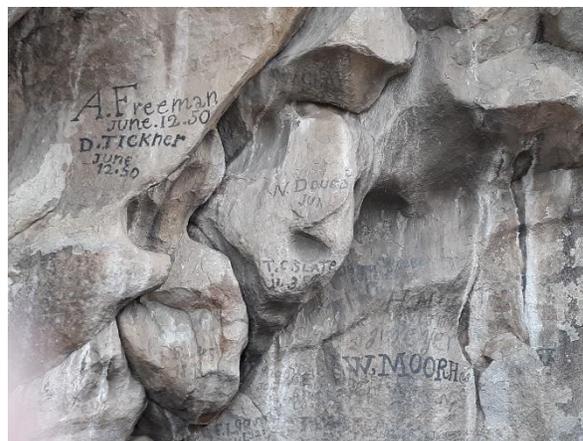
and organizations who have promoted Idaho's History through professional accomplishments, public service, volunteerism or philanthropy.' Esto Perpetua' (Let it be perpetual) is the State motto for Idaho. Jerry Eichhorst, President of the Idaho Chapter of OCTA, was recognized for all the work he has done to preserve, research and educate people on the Oregon and California Trails in Idaho. The award was presented on August 23rd at a banquet held in the newly expanded Idaho State Museum. He is shown here with Idaho Governor Brad Little (extreme right), Teresa Little and ISHS Board Trustee Ernest Hoidal (extreme left).

City of Rocks/California Trail Outings – August 19-21

By Dave Price

On Day 1, we met at the City of Rocks (COR) Headquarters just south of Almo, Idaho. The Visitor's Center featured a small library, and a theater showing a short film about the history of the City of Rocks. Here we collected our fellow 'Trailers' (23 strong) and met our hosts, Wallace Keck, Park Superintendent, Tara McClure-Cannon, Assistant Park Manager (lead archaeologist), and Shalene Dickard, Resources Program Manager (archaeologist). These three joined us for most of Day 1 (Wallace, Tara and Shalene) and Day 2 (Tara and Shalene) and would prove to be invaluable in telling us about the areas we were viewing, as well as answering our many questions about the COR and the California Trail. Many thanks go out to them for being such gracious hosts!

We then proceeded west into the COR to a location known as Camp Rock. Here there are many inscriptions of travelers' names and the dates that they passed through this location on their way to the California gold fields.



Camp Rock Signatures (photo Dave Price)

The names and dates were written on the rock using axle grease, and many are still clearly legible after more than 178 years! It was fantastic to read the inscriptions and try to imagine the various travelers and what they must have been thinking at this point of their journey so far from their homes. Truly remarkable! The earliest date that I saw was from 1843, but it seemed that many of the

entries were from 1849 and 1850 during the height of the California gold rush.

Camp Rock is where human historic remains dogs were used to verify a couple of suspected graves. Three dogs, Ashley, Bannock, and Cagney were used in the search, and not only did they indicate the suspected graves, but they detected up to 3 other possible graves in the same vicinity. The dog handlers spent their time working the dogs and explaining to the observers the many interesting aspects of the dog's backgrounds, training and experience. It was exciting to see them work the site, as I have never been exposed to this type of activity before. Many thanks to the dog handlers, Debra and Joe Hurlburt, and Lori Blackburn, for their patience with us and the wealth of information that they shared. It was a truly memorable experience!



Historic Human Remains Search Dog Bannock (photo John Briggs)

On our final stop of the first day, we proceeded to Register Rock and Devils Bedstead. Here we found many more names and dates of travelers on the trail, and we climbed up to look at a cave which was suspected to be the site of Sarcophagus Rock, where J. Goldsborough-Bruff camped in 1849. He was an artist traveling with a wagon train headed to California when he drew the sketch opposite. Here is an excerpt from Tara's notes from the Register Rock investigation:

"Following the cadaver dog search near Camp Rock, the group moved to Register Rock. After a quick tour of the rock and the new wayside, rangers led the group to the

top of the Devil's Bedstead formation. Here is a cave that reserve staff thought could be Sarcophagus Rock, which is where J. Goldsborough-Bruff camped in 1849.

It hasn't been definitively determined whether this is the cave that Bruff stayed in, but it is very similar and is the closest we have found to date. Jerry, the president of IOCTA, believes that there is a 90 percent chance that this is the right location based on current evidence. There are also possible axle grease signatures outside of this cave. Further work with polarized photography and photogrammetry may determine the provenience of the markings outside the cave."



Possible Sarcophagus Rock location, note square opening and granite bench inside cave. These characteristics were noted by Bruff in 1849 (photo Tara McClure-Cannon)



Interior of Sarcophagus Rock, drawn by Bruff in 1849. Note- this would be looking from the interior of the cave outwards, opposite the previous picture (photo Tara McClure-Cannon)

I want to thank Tara for allowing me to use her notes from the Register Rock investigation! This is where the outing ended for Day 1, and we made our way back to Burley for a team dinner.

On Day 2, we started at Twin Sisters campground, which is located inside the City of Rocks. Here we took a short walk to Pinnacle Pass, a narrow opening in the rocks where the wagons were able to squeeze through and descend into the valley below.



Pinnacle Pass (photo Paul Dinwiddie)

We then proceeded down into Prairie Valley and crossed onto private land heading towards Granite Pass. Here we met the rancher who showed us the location of two more suspected gravesites alongside the California Trail.



Trails West marker C12 at Granite Pass (photo Dave Price)

We used Ashley again to try to indicate the gravesites. Unfortunately, Ashley was unable to

give us any conclusive results, so the mystery of the unusual rock piles continues.

We then followed the road up to Granite Pass, sometimes following right beside the trail, and sometimes actually on top of the trail itself. Here we found a T-rail marker indicating the top of the pass.

This is also something new that I learned on this excursion. We had been following several T-rail markers on Day 1 and now Day 2. The T-rail markers were placed by Trails West. They are sturdy markers made out of actual railroad rails that were cut down and welded into a T shape. Each marker has an inscribed plate with a quote from an actual traveler's journal describing the current location on the trail. My hat is off to Trails West for doing such a great job of marking the trail for visitors like us! We continued to follow the T-rail markers for the rest of the tour, taking many pictures and enjoying the quotes that were inscribed on the plates. It helps to make the trail more real when you can refer to a quote from an actual traveler on the trail at that specific location. I found these quotes very interesting and thought provoking!



View of the descent into Utah from the top of Granite Pass (photo Dave Price)

At the top of Granite Pass the trail continued down toward Goose Creek. The trail was very prominent in this location. It could be seen winding down the ridge below us as it descended to the bottom.

The caravan continued down the south side of Granite Pass on a very narrow and rocky road which has seen little maintenance in recent years.



Caravan heading down to Devil's Grave (photo John Briggs)

The descent to Birch Creek was slow going, and there were a few areas where we needed to clear the road of branches and rocks.

We passed by the old Vipont mine and stamp mill and through a narrow rock 'pass' before levelling out in Birch Creek Valley. The Pioneers found the descent from Granite Pass very troublesome and used various routes to descend. One route, still clearly visible, was our next stop.



*One of the routes used to descend from Granite Pass
(Photo Tara McClure Cannon)*

We spent a little more time at another of those routes - Devils Grave.

This is where the trail came down the last part of the ridge and reached the valley floor. After noting the Trails West marker, we took some pictures of what we believe were some very deep swales, maybe two feet deep!



Swale at the bottom of Devil's Grave (photo Dave Price)

It was at this point that some members of the tour returned to Burley, while some of the party attempted to climb up a nearby road in their vehicles to try to find some deeper and more pristine ruts. We searched for about an hour and a half, but to no avail. It was at this point that the rest of the caravan returned to Burley to meet again for dinner. Later, after further review of our route and the location of the trail, we believe that we were very near the trail, but we just couldn't definitively locate it in the rough terrain. Alas, so close and yet so far away. This marked the end of Day 2.

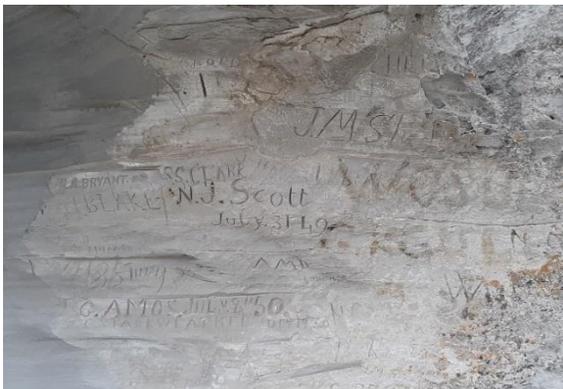
On Day 3, we made our way to the location near Devils Grave where we had intercepted Goose Creek Road at the end of Day 2. We then continued to follow Goose Creek Road and stopped at Trout Creek Ranch. We had permission from the rancher to enter private

land and observe another T-rail marker indicating the trail as it followed its way up Goose Creek. We then proceeded to the point where Goose Creek Road crossed over Goose Creek, where we encountered another T-rail marker. After a short stop to take pictures, we continued on towards Little Goose Creek and the highlight of Day 3, Record Bluff.



OCTA Members at Record Bluff (photo Jerry Eichhorst)

It took a bit to get to Record Bluff because it is also on private land, and we had to travel off road across several large pastures of 2'-3' grass to get to the location. It was quite an experience just to follow the caravan through the pastures without any hint of a road. The reward was Record Bluff, which definitely made the trip worthwhile!



Names carved into Record Bluff (photo Dave Price)

This is where many pioneers carved their names into the rock walls, which were pock marked by shallow, circular shaped caves. Most of the names were carved on the inside of these

shallow caves, which helped to protect and preserve these carvings from the weather and effects of erosion.

However, there is a newly identified species of bee, *Anthophora Pueblo*, which has landed here and threatens the carvings.



Bee nests encroaching on carved names at Record Bluff (photo Nancy Briggs)

These bees carve their nests in the sandstone. Within our group the question was asked – ‘which end do they use?’ but we know, of course, it is their mandibles.

Many of the names and dates were particularly clear and legible. There was also a face carved near the top of the bluff which seemed to be much older than the trail itself, and much deeper and more detailed than the other carvings in the rock.



Face Carved in the Bluff (photo Don Wind)

We are still pondering who could have carved this face on the bluff, and when. Yet another mystery that has many conceivable explanations.



*Ground level view of the California Trail at Record Bluff
(Photo by Dave Price)*

The trail in this location could be seen clearly winding its way toward and around this bluff as it headed south and west. It was an extraordinary experience, literally in the middle of nowhere.

The rest of the trip on Day 3 was over miles and miles of dirt road as we headed west to meet Highway 93 south of Jackpot, Nevada. There were several more T-rail markers and California Trail markers along the way, including those at Rock Springs and Emigrant Springs.



Rock Springs NV (photo by Dave Price)

Rock Springs was a beautiful little spring bubbling out from under a large rock formation and surrounded by a good growth of grass and trees. You could see why it would be a popular camping spot along the trail.

Many segments of the trail on this part of the outing were clearly marked and easy to see, which was really exciting for a dedicated 'Rut Nut' like me. The final T-rail marker on the trail before we intersected Highway 93 was Hot and Cold Springs. It was there that we said farewell and ended Day 3 of our outing.

Overall, I found the three days spent on the California Trail to be a really rewarding experience. Being with friends on the trail, learning many new things, and having fun at the same time. How could it get any better than that! I am really looking forward to my next adventure on the Oregon-California trail!



Record Bluff (DJI Mini Drone photo)



California Trail to the East at Record Bluff (DJI Mini Drone photo by John Briggs)



California Trail to the West at Record Bluff (DJI Mini Drone Photo by John Briggs)

Grand Reopening of Rock Creek Station and Stricker Homesite

June 5th was the Grand Reopening of the Rock Creek Stage Station and Stricker Cabin (Homesite). IOCTA Member Afton Patrick spoke at the Ribbon Cutting in her role as a 'Friend of Stricker'.



The Stricker 'Cabin' and grounds – setting for the Grand Reopening.



Afton Patrick speaking on the history of the location. Other speakers included Governor Brad Little and Devon Boyer of the Shoshone Bannock Tribes

The Rock Creek Station was the largest between Fort Hall and Fort Boise and served Western emigrants in many ways. The restoration and stabilization work included the Rock Creek Store,

the wet and dry cellars and the Stricker family homesite.



IOCTA Members - Connie and Jerry Eichhorst, Nancy Briggs, Afton Patrick (seated), Donna and Dave Newberry, Paul Dinwiddie, Pedro and Betty Celaya



The Rock Creek Store with wet and dry cellars immediately behind.



The wet cellar at Rock Creek

Diaries Across Idaho

By Jerry Eichhorst

Townsend at Fort Hall

NOTE: This Diaries Across Idaho story was first published in the Trail Dust in March 2013.

John Kirk Townsend was trained as a physician and pharmacist. With an interest in natural history and bird collecting, he was included as a member of Nathaniel Wyeth's expedition across the Rocky Mountains in 1834. Townsend's journal is much different from the typical emigrant journal as he provides extensive descriptions of the journey, along with wildlife and birds. Last issue I shared Jason Lee's journal at Fort Hall. Townsend's description of Jason Lee's preaching at Fort Hall follows.

The next day [July 27], being the Sabbath, our good missionary, Mr. Jason Lee, was requested to hold a meeting, with which he obligingly complied. A convenient, shady spot was selected in the forest adjacent, and the greater part of our men, as well as the whole of Mr. McKay's company, including the Indians, attended. The usual forms of the Methodist service (to which Mr. L. is attached,) were gone through, and were followed by a brief, but excellent and appropriate exhortation by that gentleman. The people were remarkably quiet and attentive, and the Indians sat upon the ground like statues. Although not one of them could understand a word that was said, they nevertheless maintained the most strict and decorous silence, kneeling when the preacher kneeled, and rising when he rose, evidently with a view of paying him and us a suitable respect, however much their own notions as to the proper and most acceptable forms of worship, might have been opposed to ours.

A meeting for worship in the Rocky Mountains is almost as unusual as the appearance of a herd of buffalo in the settlements. A sermon was perhaps never preached here before; but for myself, I really enjoyed the whole scene; it possessed the charm of novelty, to say nothing of the salutary effect which I sincerely hope it may produce...

In the evening, a fatal accident happened to a Canadian belonging to Mr. McKay's party. He was running his horse, in company with another, when the animals were met in full career by a third rider, and horses and men were thrown with great force to the ground. The Canadian was taken up completely senseless, and brought to Mr. McKay's lodge, where we were all taking supper. I perceived at once that there was little chance of his life being saved. He had received an injury of the head which had evidently caused concussion of the brain. He was bled copiously, and various local remedies were applied, but without success; the poor man died early next morning...

At noon the body was interred. It was wrapped in a piece of coarse linen, over which was sewed a buffalo robe. The spot selected, was about a hundred yards south of the fort, and the funeral was attended by the greater part of the men of both camps. Mr. Lee officiated in performing the ordinary church ceremony, after which a hymn for the repose of the soul of the departed, was sung by the Canadians present. The grave is surrounded by a neat palisade of willows, with a black cross erected at the head, on which is carved the name "Casseau."

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IOCTA Officers and Directors

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