



Northwest Trails

Newsletter of the Northwest Chapter of the Oregon-California Trails Association

Volume 21, No. 3

Summer 2006

NW Chapter Mapping and Marking Had a Great 10 Days

By Stafford Hazelett

First, Rich Herman and Stafford Hazelett joined Jim and Patti McGill and Bill Wilson of the Idaho Chapter to explore the Goodale Road segment in Road Canyon leading out of Hells Canyon on the Oregon side up to the plateau where it turns west toward Pine, Richland, and Baker City. Mary Oman of the BLM had hoped to join us but was unable to, although she had earlier helped us map the work areas and provided much valuable information.

Using Mary's information, we located what appears to be traces of an old wagon road along the opposite side of the creek from the present bulldozed roadbed. Stafford annotated a topographic quad with MET coding for the Idaho Chapter. Jim has put together a report with beautiful pictures, which is available online from Jim. The McGills and Wilson continued to explore the Goodale Road to Richland.

Rich and Stafford also met with Mary Oman of the BLM to plan some exploration of alternative routes of the Oregon Trail in the Durkee to Virtue Flat area. Rich and Stafford traveled over unmarked 2-tracks through the magnificent high country between Durkee and Virtue Flat. We located evidence of a short segment of the "Uniontown Road" shown on the 1874 GLO survey.

Then Gail Carbiener's long-delayed Blue Mountain Passport In Time (PIT) project with the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest brought together about 25 people with Forest Service

archaeologist Skip Keith Miller. Skip and Gail guided the group through an archaeological survey of suspected routes of the Oregon Trail through the Blue Mountains between Hilgard Junction State Park and the Oregon Trail Visitors Park (formerly known as the Blue Mountain Oregon Trail Interpretive Park).

A small group, including NW OCTA board member Jenny Miller, investigated suspected traces of the ascent of the hill rising away from Hilgard Junction State Park. This group's efforts produced some definitive evidence that the route of the ascent was the same as marked by OCTA under Vic Bolon's leadership based on information from Jack Evans (author of *Powerful Rocky*), which Evans learned from touring the area with Bob Rennels in the 1970s. Rennels (one of OCTA's founders and former national board member) was a highway engineer who was part of the three-man group that searched for evidence of the Oregon Trail in Oregon in the late 1950s, in preparation for the Oregon Statehood Centennial in 1959.

The PIT project also confirmed some of the trail marking that was done in the past under Vic Bolon's leadership, based on the appearance of the surface. This will become the first MET mapped section of the Oregon Trail in Oregon.

At the end of the Passport in Time project, Skip Miller and Stafford Hazelett led a small group on an exploration of the descent of the Oregon Trail in Hilgard Junction State Park, authorized by the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office and the Park Manager. We confirmed that the corridor of the route marked by OCTA appears to have been used by wagons.

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President's Report

First, let me apologize more publicly to Lethene Parks. Those of you who attended the annual meeting in March when we announced Lethene had been awarded the 2006 Ackerman Meritorious Achievement Award know that I forgot the plaque. (Impeach me.) The formal dedication and recognition was at the June 10 meeting at the Oregon Trail Interpretive Center in Baker City. And I forgot the plaque—again! (Impeach me.) If I didn't know better, I would think I had an unconscious desire to sabotage my own good intentions and maybe get tossed out of office. (Impeach me.) You can read elsewhere in this newsletter about the outing at Baker City but let me assure the readers that Lethene did receive her plaque the next day, and the nameplate was added to the recognition board at the Center within the week. (Impeach me.) Anyway, Lethene truly deserves the award and I sincerely apologize! (You can still impeach me!)

I would like to take this opportunity to announce Lynne Alvord from Selah, Washington, has agreed to take over as a replacement secretary for Peggy Baldwin. Due to the time constraints of a full time job and starting a new genealogical research business, Peggy did not feel she could fulfill her commitment as secretary. We appreciate Lynne's agreeing to step in.

This situation leads me to mention a fear I have concerning not just the Northwest Chapter but the national organization as well. That is burnout. As the long-time members begin to feel like they have served OCTA enough and want to ease up, there must be others willing to step up to fill the void. So far, the chapter has been fortunate to have others take over. Other chapters have been less successful. The Southwest Chapter is a good example. Although part of its problem lies in the fact that it is such a small chapter, it currently is languishing because the same people have served in leadership roles for years. Now those individuals wish to become less active but they have been unsuccessful in attracting anyone to fill the vacancies. When Vic Bolon and Gail Carbiener decided to reduce their active roles in our chapter, we were fortunate that Stafford Hazelett stepped up. But what will happen if Stafford or others in key positions have had enough?

I am not sure I have any definitive solutions. One thing that would help is to increase our membership as well as to develop new programs. More members would help to spread the workload. New members reinvigorate existing members with energy and also introduce new, exciting ideas. So I challenge each of you to help recruit additional members for OCTA and to think about other ideas to insure the viability of OCTA's future as an organization as well as attaining its goals. Let the board or officers know of any ideas, projects, or programs you would like the chapter or even the national organization undertake. Keep in mind that in the absence of new workers, when a key worker quits, I might come to YOU to twist your arm. And if you do not like that, you can always impeach me (please).

—Roger Blair

2006 Ackerman Award and Kennedy Train Reunion

On Saturday, June 10, about twenty members of the Northwest Chapter of OCTA gathered at the National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center near Baker City and honored Lethene Parks, by adding her name to the Dick and Trudy Ackerman Meritorious Achievement Award. The award had been announced in March at our annual meeting.

The date coincided with a reunion of the descendants of the 1862 John Knox Kennedy wagon train, many of whom are OCTA members. Because of subsequent marriages, most of the train members are now related. Including the NW OCTA members, there were 150 for an outdoor buffalo stew lunch beside the Center's covered wagons.

After the lunch Roger Blair presented a certificate on behalf of OCTA to Jane McCarley, the gggranddaughter of Captain Kennedy, in recognition of his courage and bravery in bringing so many pioneers to the Northwest. The Kennedy Reunion also included an exhibit of memorabilia and artifacts that were brought over the trail. The display featured pictures of the grave of train member Elizabeth Paul, which OCTA has marked on the Lander Road.



Lethene Parks by the Ackerman Award Plaque



Roger Blair presenting certificate to Jane McCarley, with descendant Donna Heikkila looking on.



NW Chapter members gathered at the wagon at the Oregon Trail Interpretive Center.



Online Hotel Reservations on OCTA's Website

This summer OCTA launched an online hotel reservation system. This could potentially become a good money-maker for OCTA, because OCTA gets 6% of each booking plus a \$6 booking fee. Most of the hotels offer discounted rates by booking through OCTA's site. As an example, if we'd had this system in place for the board meeting in Phoenix, OCTA would have made about \$900 if everyone had used this system to book their rooms.

There are three ways to access the system. The first is right on OCTA's homepage at www.octa-trails.org. If you scroll down to the brown box right under the convention announcement you'll see the words, "Looking for a hotel along the trail? Click here to book online." Click, and you will see a list of states from Missouri westward. Click on a state and you will see an alphabetical list of cities, and for a city, you will get a list of hotels in that town. If you click on a hotel, you'll be able to see their amenities, costs, location, contact information, and you will be able to book your room.

The other two methods of getting to the online reservation system are to go to the left-hand toolbar which appears on every webpage on OCTA's site. The last two items listed are "Online Hotels" and "Links." The "Online Hotels" link works just like the brown-bordered box on the homepage. The "Links" link gets you to the right place in two clicks. First, click on "Links" and then the very first link listed on that page takes you right to the reservation section.

Please share this information with your chapter members, your friends, your family, your associates, anyone you know! Anyone can use it for any purpose (personal or business travel), but the result is always the same—6% of the fee to OCTA plus a \$6 booking fee. You'll see all of the major chains in the system. This has the potential to become a nice revenue stream if we all use it when we have need for a hotel room.

Online Donations Can Benefit OCTA

By Travis Boley

Camille Bradford, president of the Colorado-Cherokee Trail Chapter, emailed me a link for an online donation page. I had already set up with the Greater Kansas City Community Foundation a method for members to make direct donations to our three OCTA endowments, and those links are now on our homepage. But we still didn't have a way to accept donations for items outside of our endowment, such as a special project, an annual appeal, or any other general type of donation.

The link Camille sent now allows us to accept such donations. I have set up our account with the below link and will have the link on our homepage. This will allow us to make announcements to the general membership anytime we have a special project which needs funding, so that they can go to our homepage and make a donation in a secure environment. A tax receipt letter is generated and emailed simultaneously. OCTA is notified so that a thank you letter can be sent. It's pretty straightforward, so explore the link below to see for yourself.

www.networkforgood.org

Another fundraising source Camille told me about was Benevolink. It's an online shopping site where you can sign up for free and indicate your favorite charity. On a quarterly basis, the online stores where you make purchases will donate up to 7% of the total purchase to the charity of your choice. There are over 200 vendors, and shopping with them will help OCTA's bottom line. I hope you'll all go to www.benevolink.com and register.

For a full list of affiliated vendors, visit <http://www.benevolink.com/main.aspx?page=SearchPartner>.

Emigrant Names 2

By Sharon Manhart

Emigrant Names 2 is OCTA's newest research tool for trail enthusiasts, general historians, and genealogists. This program covers the content of more than 3,500 trail related diaries, letters, and reminiscences. When you purchase the EN2 CD set, you are getting all the information from the original documents: people, trail sites, dates and places of departure and arrival, wagon train names, deaths, notes on travel, trail conditions, and other valuable historical information. The EN2 set can be purchased for \$39.95 by calling the OCTA store, 888-811-6282, or at the online store at www.octa-trails.org/store.

You will find over 70,000 names of people who took the Oregon and California trails between the 1830s and 1860s. EN2 also tells you where the originals and copies of these documents are located. The Census of Overland Documents (COED) committee is composed of OCTA members who have located and surveyed these thousands of trail documents in libraries and collections for all over the country. Each survey takes all the details from the original text and enters it into the EN2 database. The database is easy to operate and is PC-based; it is not available for MACs at this time.

It has been said that when the last trail rut has disappeared, the overland trails will still exist with all their glory and hardships in these documents so carefully located, surveyed, and organized in the EN2 two-CD set by COED for OCTA.

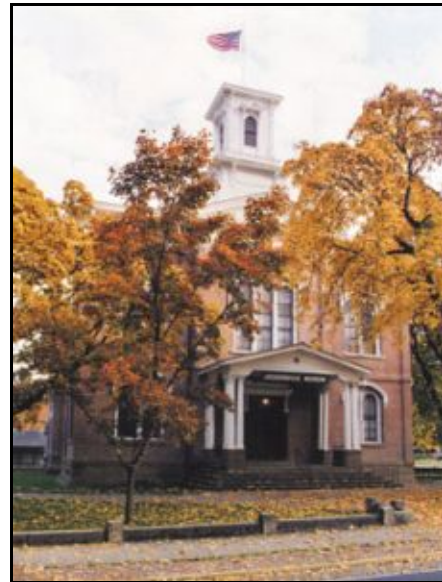
Hidden History and Forgotten Things 2006 Speaker Series at the Vancouver National Historic Reserve

Last Lecture in the Series
Thursday, July 27, 2006, 7:00 pm
at the Auditorium at Pearson Air Museum
Alfredo Gonzalez-Ruibal, "A Time to Destroy:
An Archaeology of the Failures of Modernity"

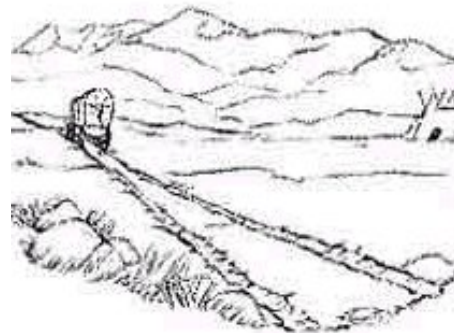
New Exhibit is Open at the Jacksonville Museum

Toward the Setting Sun: Traveling the Oregon Trail

Through photographs, artifacts, and interactive displays, the Southern Oregon Historical Society's newest, multi-media exhibit in the Jacksonville, Oregon, Museum tells the stories of several families who endured the hardships of the Oregon Trail on their way to settling in Southern Oregon. It is filled with artifacts such as pioneer diaries, clothing, tools, furniture, photos, and interactive components, plus a documentary produced by Southern Oregon Public Television, *A South Road to Oregon: The History of the Applegate Trail*.



Jacksonville Museum



Climbers on the Twin Sisters

By Christopher Smith

The Salt Lake Tribune, *Sunday*, June 25, 2006

CITY OF ROCKS NATIONAL RESERVE, Idaho – As one of the few climbers to scale the 600-foot-tall pair of granite spires known as the Twin Sisters, park ranger Brad Shilling describes the three-state panorama from the top as "by far the best view of the California Trail landscape you could ask for." From the ground, however, some visitors to the City of Rocks National Reserve in southern Idaho see things differently. One visitor wrote that climbers roping their way up the sides of the two stone towers that served as beacons to 19th century wagon trains look like "Lycra-clad filth."

Six years after a federal judge ruled the Park Service could legally ban sport climbing on the Twin Sisters because of its historical significance, the debate has been renewed. With the support of Idaho's congressional delegation, a national climbing organization is asking the federal agency to reconsider its 1998 ban on scaling the Sisters. "This is not dead by a long shot," said Jason Keith, policy director for the Access Fund, a Colorado-based group that claims to represent 500,000 rock and mountain climbers in the United States. "We're not saying you shouldn't preserve the significance there, but there are ways you could allow limited climbing opportunities without impairing the historic values."

The fund sued the Park Service in an attempt to overturn the climbing ban, but in 2000, U.S. Magistrate Judge Mikel Williams dismissed the case after deciding the agency properly gave greater weight to preserving the cultural value of the Twin Sisters. "Admittedly, the closure was based on the somewhat intangible values of feelings and association, but there is almost no other way to judge or weigh the merit of historical or cultural resources," Williams wrote.

In 2004, the four members of Idaho's all-Republican congressional delegation asked Park Service Director Fran Mainella to ease the ban

as part of a review of the 1998 climbing management plan. The Pacific Northwest regional director, Jonathan Jarvis, defended the climbing ban but told the Idaho lawmakers "the need to address other pressing planning issues at the City of Rocks has caused us to reconsider this position." Idaho's state historic preservation officer wrote to Sen. Larry Craig, R-Idaho, and Mainella in December last year, arguing the City of Rocks Reserve was created by Congress to protect nationally recognized overland trail landmarks, not to promote climbing them.

In January, a Park Service review team recommended a dozen revisions to the 1998 climbing management plan, but chose to keep the Twin Sisters climbing ban in place. Since the recommendation to keep the climbing ban in place was released, the Park Service has received dozens of critical comments from people who argue the decision is unfair to climbers. Climbing does not damage the granite, they say, and argue the view of the dual stone pinnacles is already cluttered with modern intrusions.

Climbing is allowed under some restrictions at culturally or religiously significant rock formations in other Park Service sites such as Devil's Tower National Monument, Wyoming, Half Dome in Yosemite National Park, California, and Denali National Park, Alaska. Last month, the Park Service rewrote rules at Arches National Park in Utah to outlaw climbing on any named arch or natural bridge after a climber announced with photographs and video he had made an unassisted ascent of Delicate Arch, a signature span that adorns Utah license plates.

The first recorded technical climb—using ropes and anchors fixed into the rock—of Twin Sisters was made in 1962 by a small climbing club from northern Utah and members of the Lowe family. Climbing the Sisters grew in popularity for the next 25 years, with the Park Service documenting at least 22 established routes up the Twin Sisters, coined with names such as "Safer Than Sex," "Crack-A-Jawea," and "Static Cling." Since the closure, sport climbers are restricted to the more than 600 routes on other granite formations inside the City of Rocks Reserve.

Elderhostel and OCTA Tour

OCTA and Elderhostel are partnering to bring you a tour of the Oregon Trail, in complete luxury, over the course of 15 fun-filled days. Two tours jump off from Independence, Missouri, on August 23 and on September 13.

More than a trail, the rutted, rocky route west was a dream in the minds of travelers searching for the way to a better life. It was a path to the promised-land, the "land of milk and honey," the fertile Willamette Valley of the Oregon Territory. Follow in the footsteps of these hardy pioneers to recapture the essence of one of America's most remarkable migrations. Examine the joys and sorrows of the trail, and see the unrivaled beauty of the landscapes of nearly one-third of our country through six states—each unique in history, topography, and character.

Come prepared to enjoy walking at trail sites (sometimes in the actual trail ruts), replica settlements, forts, and museums, to hike (up to two miles) at scenic locations such as Register Cliff, Wyoming, where we will view hundreds of emigrant "signatures" carved into the rocks, and to delight in the diversity of landscapes unfolding each day. The content of each program may vary slightly due to weather or other local considerations.

Trace the Oregon Trail west from "Wagons Ho!" in Independence, Missouri, to the "End of the Trail" in Oregon City, Oregon. Cross the Great Plains, climb the majestic Rockies, and view the mighty Columbia River Gorge. Visit trail sites inaccessible to the general public. At each step of the journey, Oregon-California Trail Association experts will join us to share their in-depth knowledge of life along the trail. Experience pioneer life from the seat of a covered wagon and the glow of a campfire. Gain an appreciation for the hardy emigrants at museums, sod houses, replica settlements, historical sites, and pioneer rock inscriptions, and through hands-on examination of artifacts, living history presentations, and daily readings from diaries, lectures, and stories.

Itinerary

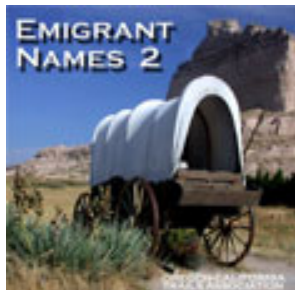
Arrival by 4:30 PM Independence, MO, 2 nights; 1 night each in: Beatrice, NE; Kearney, NE; Ogallala, NE; Gearing, NE; Casper, WY; Lander, WY; Rock Springs, WY; Montpelier, ID; Twin Falls, ID; Boise, ID; Baker City, OR; The Dalles, OR; Portland, OR; Departure: Portland, OR. A free shuttle to Portland International Airport or taxi to train and bus terminals are available.

Inclusive low price starting at \$2,544.00 per person. Free OCTA membership for one year is included as part of the package.

For more information visit
www.elderhostel.org/programs/programdetail.asp?RowId=1-25NI49 or call 800-454-5768.

EMIGRANT NAMES 2

Census of Overland Emigrant Documents



ORDER YOUR EN2 SET NOW!

Over 70,000 trail-related names from mid-19th-century overland trail journeys are in this two-CD set of document surveys. Find full information from over 3,200 documents found in libraries around the U.S. OCTA, with the financial sponsorship of the National Park Service, has created this incomparable research tool.

Easy to use with Window 98 or higher systems.
Not available at this time for MacIntosh.

\$39.95 plus postage and handling.

Order from the OCTA Store at 888-811-6282,
or online at www.octa-trails.org/store.

Northwest Trails

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Material may be submitted via email or on disk or as email attachment in Word or Text format.

Pictures can be sent via email, on disk (JPG format), or originals for scanning. Please send pictures separately from text document.

MASTHEAD: Replica of *The Old Oregon Trail* bronze relief sculpture created in 1924 by Avarð Fairbanks for Oregon Trail monuments.

2006 ANNUAL PICNIC

The NW OCTA Annual Picnic will be held September 9, at the Borst Park, Kitchen 2, in Centralia, Washington, starting at 9:30 am.

10:00 am Music Program
11:00 am Slide Presentation, Susan Doyle
12:00 pm Lunch
1:30 pm Cowlitz Trail Video Work,
Roger Easton

There will be a RAFFLE, so please bring items.
Please bundle magazines of same title.
There will be an entertainment fee of \$2.50
per person.

Flyers will be sent out in late August



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