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***Excerpts from the October 2001 edition of Trail  
Talk:***

**HANGIN' 'ROUND HANGTOWN  
WINTER SYMPOSIUM 2002**

Placerville, as Hangtown came to be called, will host the symposium January 19-20. This is barely a week before the 154th anniversary of the January 24, 1848 discovery of gold at Sutter's Mill, Coloma which will be visited on Sunday, January 20.

A full day of talks on Saturday is planned with topics including the Pony Express, mining camp justice, Indian life, pioneer cemeteries, and Fremont's crossing of the Sierra.

OCTA Board member, Frank Tortorich, will be the keynote speaker Saturday night speaking on the subject of John Augustus Sutler. Symposium goers can look forward to touring such historic spots as Gold Bug Mine, the Hanging Tree, and the home of the Hangtown Fry.

Although the Symposium will begin at 7:45 a.m. on Saturday, January 19, the Chapter Board will hold a general meeting at 8 p.m. on Friday night, January 18, at the Best Western Placerville Inn.

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**2002 CONVENTION REPORT**

by Chuck Dodd, Convention Chair

We took a well-deserved break from work on our 2002 convention and went to Casper to enjoy OCTA's 2001 convention.

Our convention table in Casper, organized and run by Tom Fee and staffed by a lot of our good volunteers as well as some innocent

passers-by who were drafted to "sit here for a couple of minutes," was a great success. I was overwhelmed by the positive response from everyone I talked to at Casper. It seemed like everyone wants to come to our 2002 convention in Reno.

By the time you read this, the pre-convention tour practice runs and our tour bus guide training will be finished, and we will be heading into a winter of selecting papers, putting the finishing touches on the program, and making the final arrangements at the Reno Flamingo Hilton. Then, when the snow melts, we'll be ready and rested for the last of the work next summer.

*In less than a year*, we'll be right in the middle of all the fun.

Of course, some people in and outside of this organization are not too thrilled by what we'll be doing in Reno. In the latest issue of his rag, Gregory Franzwa, after dumping on Trails West, wrote of "growing concern about OCTA's 2002 convention in Reno." He says that our bus tours following the trail routes "espoused by" Trails West could "reflect adversely on the national OCTA."

Baloney! We're going to do OCTA proud in Reno in 2002!

What would really harm the national organization would be a convention that would back away from showing convention-goers the results of good trails research because of uninformed, hysterical criticism based on such intellect-challenging offerings as "hallucinations of where the trail went" and "shabbily researched revisionist tour routing."

Our bus tours will show people the trails located by good research; our bus tour guide training has recognized and will continue to recognize that some people think the trail lies somewhere else.

OCTA needs open discussions of issues, but such discussions must focus on the issues and must be marked by courtesy and respect, not by insults and epithets. When it comes to the location of the trail, differences of opinion must be addressed rationally, by analysis of facts and of deductions drawn from the facts.

What OCTA needs - and what we're going to bring to the 2002 convention along with the always-entertaining papers on the human elements of life on the trail is a good, positive discussion of the trail research that has changed our understanding of trail routes along the Truckee River. My hope is that we can present the facts to the

people attending the convention, so they can make up their own minds where differences of opinion exist.

Wow! What about that! Facts! People making up their own minds! Boggles the mind, doesn't it? Sounds like some good, lively fun too.

We're working on it.

Check the convention web site, reached through the [www.wagons-1841.com](http://www.wagons-1841.com) site, and future issues of *Trail Talk* for the latest word on how it is all coming together.

And, if you haven't done so already, let me know if you'd like to help. Remember, we have less than a year before we'll be greeting folks from Oregon, Idaho, Kansas, Nebraska, Missouri, Wyoming, New York, Ohio, Illinois, etc. and even from England and perhaps Japan. "Welcome to Reno."

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

This is not the President's Message I have been thinking about the last few weeks. The events of this week have prompted me to change what I was going to write.

First I want to thank all of the OCTA members who have sent and shared messages of hope and patriotism, many containing the subject name "solidarity". Particularly impressive were the poetry and communications from Europe from people containing wonderfully worded sentiments of support and belief in the ideals and principles upon which this country was built. They will continue to sustain us in these difficult hours.

On a personal level I was born to the parents of two real New Yorkers, both of whom were born in the city and loved it. On more than one Sunday we would drive into downtown Manhattan and my parents would point out historical locations and homes of the rich and famous.

A favorite trip of mine was when we went to the financial district, and my dad would always walk through the graveyard of Trinity Church pointing out the resting places of famous Americans, many

of whom had fought and died in the Revolution. It is the same cemetery that I saw on television this week covered with debris from the horrific explosions that destroyed the World Trade Towers.

A few years ago we visited New York and took the ferry to Staten Island. On the return trip I took a photograph of the lower Manhattan skyline which I will treasure forever because it included the Towers now gone. Please continue the work of OCTA knowing that you are all contributing to preserving the heritage and history of the greatest and most wonderful nation in the world.

Bill Webster

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## THANK YOU

I would like to express my thanks for your support of my candidacy in the recent OCTA Board of Directors election. I look forward to working with the other board members in your behalf during the up-coming year.

This will be a "learning" year for me. I will do my best to make decisions that will continue to promote OCTA's most important goal of protection and preservation - for all historic trails.

Fran Taplin

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## AWARD RECIPIENTS

At the California-Nevada Chapter's meeting during the OCTA Convention in Casper, Wyoming the newly organized Awards Committee presented 6 awards to outstanding volunteers.

**George & Beverly Hesse:**

George Hesse was the fourth CA/NV president. During his presidency, the chapter's logo (found on the *Trail Talk* banner) was

adopted, the chapter history was written, and members voted to rename the chapter CA/NV. He helped select Chico as the 1999 convention site. Beverly, George's photographer wife, headed the bookroom at both the Sacramento and Chico conventions, and organized a photographic history of the Chapter.

**Rick Maddalena:**

A manager in the Truckee Ranger District, Rick has worked with the Chapter to protect and preserve portions of the Truckee Route of the California Trail.

**Joe & Jean Ellingson:**

Their know-how and untiring behind-the-scenes work helped make the Chico Convention a great success. As residents of Chico, they bridged the gap between the community and the chapter.

**Doyle & Fiona Reed:**

The Reeds were members of the first chapter organizational meeting in 1984. Doyle helped draw up the constitution for the chapter, served 9 years as chapter secretary, was president of the Southwest Chapter, and a member of the OCTA national board. The Reeds led the first trip over the Hastings Cutoff, and led several tours over Henness Pass Road.

**Richard & Orsola Silva:**

They are a vital force behind the marking and mapping of the Yreka Trail, and for the last several years they have been involved in mapping the Applegate Trail, as well as the Lockhard Wagon Road which carried emigrants from the Nobles Trail near Susanville to Yreka. Richard is involved in numerous other trail projects.

**Joanne Hinchliff:**

Single-handedly, Joanne put on the very successful 2001 Symposium in Temecula. In accepting her award she said she had attended many OCTA events, but nobody knew her. After the Temecula Symposium she noted, "Now everyone knows me!" and recommends that members volunteer if they want to get the most out of belonging to the organization.

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## Letters to the Editor

21 August 2001

Dear Editor:

I have just returned from the OCTA Convention in Casper. My wife and I took the preconvention tour of Rocky Ridge. To say that I am upset is putting it too mildly. I am actually furious. Furious that the Oregon-California Trail has been sold to the highest bidder.

I first traveled the Pony Express Trail from St. Louis to Sacramento in 1984. At that time there were few trail markers and fewer informational signs than there are now. In 2001, on the preconvention tour, we were overwhelmed with informational signs, which, in and of themselves, are not bad.

However, the majority of the signs proclaim the dominance of the Mormon pioneers. One sign, possibly worded by Wyoming State, stated that 400,000 emigrants came over the trail during the westward movement period, and out of that total, 60,000 were Mormons. I wondered what contribution the other 340,000 pioneers, who were not Mormon, made to the development of the trails and the West in general.

The sign at South Pass that commemorates the passage of Narcissa Whitman in 1836, does not mention that she was a Methodist missionary. The Mormon Handcart trek has been praised in sign after sign. The Sun Ranch has been purchased by the Mormon Church and turned into a Holy religious site. I think it compares with the Muslims traveling to Mecca, the Hindus washing in the Ganges River, and Christians going to the birthplace of Jesus.

There were numerous ferries over the many rivers that the emigrants had to cross, yet the "Mormon" ferries are the only ones that have been singled out for notice. Were the builders of bridges across the Platte River, near Casper, Catholic or Methodist, or does it really make any difference? The sign at Independence Rock says that some Mormons were hired to cut the names in the rock for those emigrants that were unable to do it for themselves. Yet one of the speakers at the convention "said that there are no records to substantiate that claim. Is the sign going to be changed?

When we attended the OCTA Convention in Salt Lake City, we expected to be indoctrinated by the Mormon Church, and we were not disappointed. We went into that convention with our eyes wide open and generally had a good time. I did not expect the same indoctrination in this year's pre-convention tour. The leader of the tour did an excellent job, so I have no complaints about his part of the tour.

If he has not done so as yet, I suggest that the President and other members of the Board of Directors travel the entire length of the trail and see for themselves how the history of the trail has been taken over by the Mormon Church. A person who does not know the history is going to be convinced that the Mormons were the main force in the westward movement of the mid 19th century. They will not know that the Donner party was the first one to carve a trail into the Salt Lake Valley.

OCTA should be more forceful in making certain that information disseminated to the general public is not one-sided. The contributions of the other 340,000 pioneers should be the main thrust of our organization. We are not all Mormons.

Sincerely,  
Keith Arnold

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## **Preserve the Past**

There's a great need for a complete restoration of the dilapidated, weatherbeaten Dr. John Marsh Historic Stone House in Brentwood, Contra Costa County.

Dr. Marsh was one of the very earliest leaders in working for statehood for California, having come here in 1836. His part in the "birth" of California deserves our attention.

When his home was given to the state of California, it was in very good condition, and the state signed a covenant promising to care for it, and to create from it and the land that accompanied it a park for the people of California. This was 20 years ago!

Those interested in supporting this restoration should write to President John Mackenzie of the Dr. John Marsh Historic Trust, P.O. Box 272, Concord, 94522, or fax (916) 487 -4467. Also to the Office of Historic Preservation, Attention Daniel Abeyta, P.O. Box 942896, Sacramento 94296-0001 or fax (916) 653-9824.

Douglas Crary

[From *Modesto Bee* ]

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## **CALL FOR PAPERS and PROGRAM PRESENTATIONS**

We invite papers and presentations for the August 2002 meeting of the Oregon.:California Trails Association which will be held in Reno:

- Lesser-known routes into California (Nobles Trail, Henness Pass, Carson Pass, Sonora Pass, Big Trees Wagon Road, Georgetown Cutoff, others?)
- Southern Trails into Southern California (Gila Route, Old Spanish Trail)
- Salt Lake City to Los Angeles Trail
- New ideas about the traditional Sierra crossings (Truckee Rout~ and Lassen Trail)
- Experiences of women and children on the Trail
- Cattle drives over the Sierras
- Pony Express and Chorpenning (mule mail) routes across Nevada
- We are also interested in vignettes on topics that don't warrant a full fifty minutes.



Please submit proposals by December 1, 2001 to Program Chair:

Charles L. Convis  
2185 Courtside Circle  
Carson City, NV 89703  
775-888-9867 FAX 775-888-0908

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## **Photos Wanted**

*for OCTA's 20th Convention Photo Album  
to be published for our 2002 Reno convention.*

Featured will be photos showing events from our 19 conventions.

We need your help! Dust off your old albums, select your favorite memories, and contribute to our album by sending photos showing people and activities from the first convention in Independence in 1983 through the Casper gathering in 2001.

Please include with photo(s): convention year, short activity description and location, name(s) of those in photo, and your telephone/email number. Pictures may not always be returned. Bring your contribution to the Placerville Symposium, or send pictures to:

**Norine Kimmy**  
**1437 Piedmont Rd.**  
**San Jose, CA 95132-2431**  
**(408) 926-6952 or email [nkimmy@batnet.com](mailto:nkimmy@batnet.com)**

Help produce a singular 20th year photo album of convention memories.

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## **PERCEPTIONS OF THE ELEPHANT**

By Shann Rupp

Legend has it that a farmer, wishing to see a circus in town, because he had never seen an elephant, packed his wagon with produce to sell at the market. His frightened horse bolted at the sight of the elephant, with the results of an overturned wagon and ruined produce. The farmer said he didn't care, because he had *seen the elephant!* "Seeing the Elephant" meant different things to different emigrants, but anyone starting out to cross the plains expected hardships and difficulties of some sort, and recognized the elephant in his own experience.

J.P.Hamelin's 1849 experience was similar to that of the farmer. "We had heard, read of and seen the elephant - the Scripture tells of a devil, but today we had a combination of both in the shape of bad road, dust, upsetting wagons, breaking tongues, axle-trees, hounds, and other extras necessary to the further propelling of a wagon. Six overturned, scattering gin, brandy and other groceries to pollute the water Heaven has furnished us. What a regular spree the fish will have down below."

Everything had gone so well for Daniel Burgert ( 1849), he seemed disappointed in not having seen the elephant. "I think we'll soon see the elephant now. We've been on the look out some time."

Some emigrants at least saw a hint of the animal. A. W. Harlan (1846) said "Today we have laid by on Carson River among hundreds of wagons and lots of elephant tracks." Edwin Primes thought they had seen his tracks on the banks of the Green River, but returning Mormons warned him he would see the elephant for sure in the form of snow on the mountains. Primes seemed to need closure at the end of his trip: "In the afternoon cleaned up and went to Nevada (City) to see the Elliphant." Perhaps, to him, the Elephant was his reward for reaching his destination. It's interesting that the elephant made its appearance to some from trunk to tail, as if facing him, whereas others saw him in the reverse order - as if catching up to the back of the elephant. When A. H. Thomasson (1850) wrote that he "came to the elephant's back," he must have anticipated seeing more of the form. Sure enough, 1-1/2 miles further he "came to the elephant's snout." Lucy Cook (1852) describes seeing the elephant not only in entirety, but in reverse order. "Oh, surely we are seeing the elephant, from the tip of his trunk to the end of his tail."

In 1849, when Amasa Morgan ascended the Sierra Nevada for a mile, with rocks often touching the wagon axles, and 8-10 mules required to draw an empty wagon, over a period of 1-3 hours, he stated: "I think we will see 'more of the elephant' tomorrow. " After they had ascended the first summit, they were extremely disappointed at having such a mountain yet to climb. "Unloading the wagons, some of the men drove the teams up and the rest of us packed the plunder -large trunks, kegs, boxes, etc. - all were soon packed up and at one o' clock we found ourselves really perched on the king of mountains, as tired as men ever were. Now we had no doubt of being on the back of the elephant... "

John F. Lewis (1849) had no doubts whatsoever about "Donner Mountain " being the elephant. " After labouring hard for several hours, we succeeded in reaching the summit and screamed to the top of our voices rejoicing at our victory."

The elephant wasn't limited to the Oregon-California Trail. Wm. P. Huff encountered the elephant on the Southern Trail. He read the following notice posted on a juniper tree: "The Elephant one league ahead. For particulars inquire of any Californian on his homeward bound route. " A teamster in the company retorted: "I've been climbing Elephants ever since I left Gonzales County in Texas, and if there is any worse Elephant ahead of us than the one we rolled over yesterday it will be some punkins, sure. " Huff sarcastically went on: "Within the distance of a mile ahead of us we had the pleasure of a fair view of the Elephant's head, body, snout, tusks and the rugged height in the shape of the largest and steepest hill, which as yet has been our lot to encounter. By doubling teams and teamsters and treading the wagon wheels we reached the top of the Elephant hill, from which the descent down the hill was gradual and easy into the valley of the Santa Cruz. " Many diarists referred to the elephant a time or two, but John Thomas Rule (1850) kept an eye on him throughout the journey. Before he reached the jumpoff, he remarked: "We have a small glimpse of the Elephant today, though perhaps it is but an introduction to what we are to see when we get beyond the border of civilization. Our camp last night was on a low bottom. Today it rained all day without any cessation. The water rose into our tent, we had uncomfortable night..."

By May 27, Rille is still anticipating seeing the Elephant. "The Black Hills are looming up their dark sides, across the road ahead of us - they look gloomy and forbidding, as though 'the elephant' was ahead. I have braced my nerves for the worst. "

"June 4- Our horses looked like they had been gutted and we began to fancy the elephant almost in sight." It's as though he wants to meet the Elephant and get it over with. When he reached the Green River, he was convinced he had finally caught up with the predicted phantom: "We are across the Desert and are now seeing the elephant on Green River..."

John Rule "unadvisedly and unexpectedly got into a dusty stretch of 18 miles without water." After 7 miles of a rough and rocky road, he had to swim across the Humboldt to find grass, and the horses had their hardest day of travel "without a mouthful of anything for them to eat. " Rule plainly stated "...the elephant was entirely too close by to afford time for writing."

By July 16, Rule wants to believe he no longer has to be intimidated by expecting to see the elephant. "We are on the bank of Carson River, sage, sound, and in good health, and though the steep, rough, range of the Sierra Nevada is still ahead of us, yet we don't dread it like we did that part of the Road we have passed over." Having convinced himself the Elephant was in back of him, he refrained from mentioning it again, even though they had yet to achieve the summit of the Sierra Nevada

Perhaps, today, if we convince ourselves that the Elephant is behind and go forward we too shall achieve a summit in life

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## **DEATHS AND GRAVES ON THE APPLEGATE-LASSEN TRAIL**

By Milt Otto

[Editor's note: *This is the second of three installments of Milt's article following his extensive research of diaries and graves along the trail marked by Trails West, Inc ., of which Milt is a member.*]

### **Part II**

#### ***A Comparison***

In an article published in 1991 in the Overland Journal, geographer Richard Rieck discussed the "geography of death on the Oregon-California Trail, 1840-1860." It is a detailed analysis of the death and graves for a 20-year time period on the California-Oregon Trail. In comparison, this supplemental addition to that ongoing study only covers one year on the Applegate- Lassen Trails.

In his study, Richard Rieck lists one accident in California for the year 1849. In this survey four accidents were found. The first accident occurred at Trails West marker A-28. A man ate a poisonous root and died very quickly after eating it. The second was an accidental gunshot at marker L-12. The man had been acting as guard and his gun slipped and struck on a rock. The third was another shooting when a man was mistaken for an Indian at marker L-32. The fourth occurred at Bruff's camp, at marker L-55. During a storm a falling tree killed four people. Another fatality by gunshot was a murder in Mud Meadows at marker A -16. During 1849, Reick lists five deaths caused by Indians. This study lists three deaths by Indians on the Lassen Trail in 1849. The other two deaths by Indians that he cites may have occurred on other trails.

### *Causes of Deaths*

There are 28 deaths reported on the Applegate-Lassen Trail in the emigrant diaries, but there are 54 graves seen along the trail. The causes of death on the Applegate-Lassen Trail were: camp fever, typhoid, epileptic fit, gunshots either by accident or murder, eating a poisonous root, killed by Indians, scurvy, and a falling oak tree.

Israel Lord mentioned one child as having died from dropsy of the brain. One non-emigrant in the list (Garrison) was killed and another man (Levi Scott) wounded by Indians. Levi Scott was the guide and Garrison, a hired hand for an eastbound military supply wagon train. In charge of the train was Lt. Hawkins who was returning to Fort Hall from Oregon with supplies for Col. Loring's regiment on its way to California. This incident took place near Mud Meadows, (Trails West markerA-16).

Near the same area, H. G. Bentley was murdered by his messmate for the abuse he received from him. Several witnesses said it was justifiable, therefore no penalties were meted out.

A very unusual death occurred on Fandango Pass. Jonathan Clark noted: " A gentleman from St. Louis ate a root and caused his death in two hours." Henry Austin wrote: "About 1/4 of a mile from the top or the east side of the pass [Fandango Pass] is the grave of John

A. Dawson of St. Louis who died Oct 1-49 from eating a poisonous root at a spring below - in a broken cup on the grave was a paper on which was written the following - ' He was in such pain that he tore this cup with his teeth. ' "

One Indian killing in particular was Clayton Reeve who left his wagon and returned alone to retrieve his fishing pole from the Pit River where he had been fishing. He was found with a reported 26 arrows stuck in him (Marker L-12).

My favorite obituary is this one written about Issac Lane by James Toiles. It has a forlornness and an apology for not finding a more deserving place on the hill for the burial.

*"This is the Lord's day and rather a solemn day with us as Isaac Lane died this forenoon after a night of considerable suffering. He was 47 years of age. We dug his grave on the bottom land, the hill being all rock. After digging his grave and making other necessary preparations we interred his body, leaving his mortal frame to decay in the wilderness."* James Toiles, September 23, 1849.

Throughout the diary, Toiles expounds the virtues of being a good Christian, condemning others for not observing the Sabbath day, using profanity, and not offering prayers or giving thanks to the Almighty. But strangely he did not mention any prayer at the grave site or any expressions of the usual " Rest in peace " or "Gone to meet his maker, " but just left him in the wilderness to decay.

### **Graves**

Simon Doyle was a fellow traveller with James Toiles in the Unionville, Ill. wagon train. From this account, it would appear they were thankful to be relieved of the handicap of caring for Mr. Lane. In Doyle's diary, on September 23, he wrote:

*"Mr. Isaac Lane departed this life this morning at 10 o'clock and was interred at 3 P. M. He had been sick most of the time since leaving the Mo. River and had suffered exceedingly for want of care and attention which it was imposible to give him on the route. He'd had Chronic Diareah or Scurvey."*

The grievance process was proably kept to a minimum. Five hours from death to internment did not leave much time for ceremony, notwithstanding the preparations mentioned with the locating and digging of the shallow grave and including a lunch hour. Because it was late in the season, the emigrants were possessed by the fear of

snow falling in the mountains and the dwindling food supply. Therefore the urgency of getting to their destination was uppermost in their thoughts.

There was no lingering afterward. They traveled four miles further along the road immediately after the funeral. There was no mention of marking the grave site but evidently there was some notice posted. Two weeks later on October 7, Henry Austin noted in his diary passing the grave of Isaac Lane. It is strange that Bruff, traveling in the same company as Austin, did not make note of this grave. He may have been preoccupied with the threat of Indians in the area.

Some of the graves were dug up by wolves or possibly bears. In one instance, Bruff noted that the San Francisco company reburied a body that was dug up by wolves. This site is near marker L-8 at Rattlesnake Butte, west of Alturas in Modoc county.

Some of the graves were merely noted in passing, but several diarists gave clues to the locations using phrases such as: on the left or right of the trail, on a hillside or ridge, close to a stream or brook and also gave the relationship to where they camped or so many yards below camp. The maps in the Trails West Driving Guide show the markers in relation to the trail. These aids will help anyone attempting to find the general area of the grave sites.

Richard Rieck states: "The number of fatalities recorded in two diaries cannot be combined or even easily compared, for there is no way of determining how many of the same graves were seen by both writers and counted twice and how many were noted by just one." With the use of the Trails West markers for locating the graves and using the clues mentioned above, part of this problem may be resolved. Locating many of the graves with these aids can pin them down to a reasonable area of search.

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## **A CHARTER/LIFE MEMBER FINALLY GETS TO VOTE**

By Frank Tortorich

After all these long years as a devoted hard working member of OCTA, I will finally get to have the wonderful feeling of a vote.

I am not alone. There were many other members of OCTA whose spouses claimed the ballot and selfishly voted leaving us, the other spouses, saddened, frustrated, broken-hearted and vote-less.

How many sleepless, tearful nights did I wonder if only I could have voted maybe the results would have been different? But now that will all be changing.

At the OCTA board meeting in Casper I mustered up my courage, with help from membership chair Don Popejoy, and made a motion that all categories of membership, except single, student and organization, which have two adults in the same household will get *TWO* votes.

With support from Reba Grandrud and to my delight and ultimate surprise, the motion passed with no opposition. As always there was a lot of discussion about whether we could get it in place, "yada, yada, yada," as boards have a tendency to do.

I finally asked Kathy Conway from OCTA Headquarters if it was possible and practical.

She did not see much problem as she felt that OCTA already had most of the information and assured us as soon as the database is current the two-vote motion will be enacted.

The board is hoping that this will happen by next spring for next year's elections.

No longer will I have to sit by and watch as Mary Ann places her marks on the ballot looking at me smugly as if to say "eat your heart out."

No longer will our marriage need to have "post-voter counseling" to hold it together. No longer will I have to spend countless hours in therapy unable to cope with the dreaded "Non-voters syndrome."

No longer will I have to explain to my children why in America I was denied my right to vote while Mom enjoyed the privilege, joy, and ecstasy of voting.

Finally, all us vote-less members of this great organization of OCTA are "*Free at Last, Free at Last.*" Free at last to be among



the voting members of the OREGON-CALIFORNIA TRAILS  
ASSOCIATION

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## **THE LOCKHARD WAGON ROAD**

### **or Fort Crook to Yreka Wagon Road**

by Bob Iverson

Day #1 -I spent a very interesting and exciting week from July 16th- 20th on the Lockhard Wagon Road in northern California. Richard and Orsola Silva were our leaders and several people from the Forest Service & BLM, including Julie Cassidy, the archeologist on the project, also participated. I drove to Weed, California from the Central Valley and camped for the night at a rest stop on Hwy 97 north of where the Lockhard Wagon Road crosses the highway.

The next morning, I drove back to the Lockhard Wagon Road marker and met up with the rest of our exploring party. We started our search east of Hwy 97, but didn't find anything there due to the Forest Service blading the road and possible logging operations.

We moved about a mile further into the Shasta National Forest. There we found square nails and a chain from that time period. I found a skeleton key, possibly from someone's trunk, a pin used as a wagon part, several metal nuts used on wagons, a shell casing and a modern day arrow lost by a bow hunter.

After lunch we moved on up the trail to another section to do a random search to locate an area to work on the next day.

The elevation I camped at is about 5,000 feet with a spectacular view of Mt. Shasta. The weather turned out perfect, sunny days and cool nights, and beautiful evening sunsets. With the wind whistling through the pine trees, you couldn't ask for a more peaceful setting.

Day #2 -We started our search again about 9:30 in the morning with our metal detectors. We found square nails, rosehead nails, an ox

shoe, a horseshoe, some nuts and washers, and a part we were unable to identify.

Richard said that hopefully somewhere we would find a military button or other evidence that the army had also used the trail.

About 4 pm my rechargeable battery in my detector was getting weak, so Richard said, "Here use mine." There was a dry branch just ahead of us so I passed the detector next to it and got a loud return. Richard started digging with his digging tool and there was the button we'd been hoping to find. That was exciting for both of us as well as for the others in our group.

Richard later researched it and found it was made by Scoville & Co. during the period from 1840- 1850 and used by a soldier from Ft. Vancouver.

We had a successful day and it was all legal. It is illegal to use detectors on government lands and remove artifacts without approval. For me this was much more exciting than a round of golf.

After dinner in the evening I spent time reading Richard Silva & Keith Arnold's book, *The Yreka Trail and other Routes to Siskiyou County*, " a publication of the Siskiyou County Historical Society. I recommend it to anyone interested in the history of that part of our state.

Day #3 -After breakfast I waited for Richard, Jerry, Pat and Eric, and a friend of Eric's that helped us out that day. Eric has a doctor's degree in archeology, teaches at Chico State, and has worked several major projects.

We worked two sections today; the first one had been logged sometime in the past so it has been bladed and pushed back so we found only a few artifacts. There were two or three horseshoes, some railroad irons from logging operations that we could not identify, nails, a section of railroad rail, and a steel part with wood attached, also possible from logging operations.

After lunch we moved farther along the trail to Mountain House, a stage station and tavern in the 1850s. We did a random search for an hour or two and located the right half of an ox shoe, two horseshoes, a Dutch oven, and square nails. We finished up about 4 pm, and Jerry dropped me off at the parking lot campsite.

Day #4 -I woke up at 6 am, and there was a jackrabbit in the campground, maybe that's what the coyotes I heard early this morning were after.

I rode with Jerry and he stopped so I could take photographs of Mt. Shasta in the morning sunlight. It was a nice cool day, and Richard decided we should search to find where the trail crossed the Forest Service road. Sure enough we hit pay dirt as they say: we found numerous square nails, an ox shoe, a horseshoe, so we knew we were on the trail.

We continued up the hill where we found more and more artifacts. Sometimes it was hard to find exactly where the trail was due to the manzanita, so we had to stand back away to see if swales were visible or if there were blazed trees or some other way to identify it. We also used compass headings. Day 4 was our most productive day as far as the number of items we found to catalog and the variety of artifacts: horseshoes, a muleshoe, shell casings, hammered square nails, an old pocket knife, harness rings and snaps, a fork and horseshoe nails.

Richard took GPS readings of all the items we located during the week and put the information into the computer which prints out a map so we could see exactly where the trail is located. Based on that information, eventually the exact trail location will be marked. Back to the campsite after another successful day.

Day #5 -After breakfast and cleanup, it was time to pack up and go home. It was a very interesting and exciting week for me.

I want to thank Richard and Orsola Silva for inviting me. Richard is a walking history book of that area and Orsola does her part to complete the team. I look forward to other outings with them. For any of our OCTA members who have the opportunity to go on a tour with the Silvas, it is well worth your time.

As a footnote, the items we've collected and catalogued will be placed in the Historical Society Museum in Yreka for anyone to see.

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**CA-NV CHAPTER OCTA MEETING**

THE PARKWAY PLAZA AND CONVENTION CENTRE,  
CASPER, WYOMING

August 15, 2001

President Bill Webster called the meeting to order at 3:00 P.M.

Board members present were Carol March, Charlie Little, and Bill Webster, an insufficient number for a quorum. Webster announced the results of the chapter board election: Carol March re-elected and Bob Iverson and Jim Allison elected to replace Dick Hallford and Charlie Little.

President Webster told the group of Bill Rupp's recent injury, which prevented him and Shann from attending the convention. Two cards were sent around the group for signatures and messages to the Rupps.

*Treasure's Report*

Carol March reported that the chapter was in excellent financial condition. She attributed the condition to a successful symposium last spring and the number of renewal memberships where people sent in extra money. The current treasury balance is \$12,329 and two CD's are valued at \$10,153.

*Report of MOU between OCTA and State Library*

Tom Hunt reported that the national board of OCTA voted to accept the decision that OCTA documents will be put in the California State Library. The library will keep a separate OCTA library in Sacramento in a special room. The library will also accept the OCTA maps. The chapter will have a standing committee to accept manuscripts. It will accept all materials including duplicates from other sources so it will be the largest collection in the country.

*Black Rock Desert*

Chuck Dodd reported on the dedication of Black Rock Desert/High Rock Canyon National Conservation Area on June 30, 2001, The Bureau of Land Management printed three posters of the area to be raffled.

*Wade-Fernley Land Swap Program*

Chuck Dodd told of progress in this land swap program. He said it should take place in the next few months and discussions between BLM and OCTA will spell out what OCTA's role will be.

#### *Report on 2002 Convention*

Chuck Dodd also reported on the progress of the 2002 convention and said how training of guides for the bus tours is proceeding. He said that in the coming year the committee will be focusing on the convention itself and could use more volunteers.

#### *Report on Winter 2002 Symposium*

Bill Webster reported that Ford Osborn is handling the symposium, which will be in Placerville, and plans are progressing.

#### *Applegate/Southern Trail Marking Survey*

Bob Iverson has been working on the Lockhard Wagon Road with Richard Silva.

#### *Film Progress*

Larry Fritz said the project is about a year old and the film would give information to people about what OCTA does. He told how John Krizek had received funding and with matching funds from OCTA he and John have been filming trails and historic sites. They now have about five hours of video and are about half through. The final video will be about ten minutes. He noted how much help they have been getting from the BLM and Park Service. They hope to have it finished by convention time next year.

#### *Don Buck Report*

Don Buck said Dick Davis, who is spearheading the emigrant trails collection at the State Library, told him about a new project called High Sierra Crossings Museum and Nature Preserve at Donner State Park. This is 100 acres just east of the state park memorial. The centerpiece will be the emigrant trail and later transportation. It is being funded by several state agencies and private business. Bill Webster said he would prepare a letter about this.

#### *Awards Committee*

Tom Fee has headed the Awards Committee to honor volunteers in the chapter. Fee, Mary Mueller, and Carol March made the presentations.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:25 PM.

Respectfully submitted, Beverly Webster, Recording Secretary.

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## **JULY 14TH TRIP WITH JIM ROSE**

by Pricilla Van der Pas

Over a dozen cars met at 9 AM at the Donner Monument where Jim gave a background of the area. The monument was built on the site of the cabin built by Joseph Foster, Allen Montgomery, and Moses Shallenberger, of the Stephens-Townsend-Murphy party of 1844-45. Moses spent the winter in this cabin until his rescue, and the next year it became the shelter for the Breen family of the Donner party.

The group first drove up old Highway 40 to McGlashan Point overlooking Donner Lake at Rainbow Bridge. They made a brief stop at Norden Lake area, then traveled to Big Bend where there is a small museum and ranger station.

After lunch, the group went with the ranger on a hike to see the rust marks on the granite boulders made by the pioneer wagons as they went straight down the rocks to the Yuba River. We then turned off Interstate 80 onto 20, stopping at Bear Valley to look up at Emigrant Gap.

Further on we stopped at the overlook at Alpha Omega rest stop and the Sierra Buttes overlook. After a stop at the Lone Grave on Highway 20, we came into Nevada City near where the pioneer trail was located, where N. Bloomfield Rd. meets Coyote Street. All agreed it was an interesting day with lots of history and scenery.

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## DIARY QUOTES:

At Ash Hollow, Daniel Gardner optimistically noted they were... *"Eighteen miles nearer California."* Gardner refers to Devil's Gate as... *"a great piece of workmanship and well it might be for great was the Architect."*

George Washington King, 1853... *"The desert is 40 miles wide and without water or food. This terrible place is just one great bone yard for worn out cattle, where creatures just lie down and die almost within sight of their journeys end... There are enough abandoned log chains on this desert to reach from Columbus to Cleveland via the railroad... There is enough gear and irons about to build a turnpike to parallel the railroad."*

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## CALL FOR AWARD NOMINATIONS

Your Chapter Awards Committee is calling on members of the California/Nevada Chapter to nominate deserving people for two categories of awards.

One is the Lifetime Achievement Award (plaque) for outstanding service regarding trails preservation and/or outstanding service to the CA-NV Chapter. This award is presented once a year to one person. Only chapter members are eligible. The second category is Certificates of Appreciation, awarded to several people twice a year. One presentation is at the chapter meeting at the OCTA Convention. The other is at the chapter meeting at the Winter/Spring Symposium. Chapter members and non-members are eligible.

## AWARD NOMINATION GUIDELINES

Please send your nomination(s) to Tom Fee, CA-NV Awards Committee Chair, P.O. Box 5819, Reno, Nevada 89513 or e-mail Tom at [TomFee3@aol.com](mailto:TomFee3@aol.com). In order for the Awards Committee to complete the selection process and to have time to prepare the

plaque and certificates for the Placerville Symposium, we need your nominations by December 1, 2001.

***Each nomination must include a thorough description of why the nominee deserves to be honored.***

There are four very important reasons why we must receive documentation of why the person deserves recognition; i.e., what he or she has done for trails preservation and service to the CA/NV Chapter. Thorough documentation 1) greatly assists the Awards Committee in sorting out the many possible nominations and helps in the selection of the most appropriate candidates; 2) helps with the writing of the recipient's Award Letter of Presentation; 3) provides material for a possible TRAIL TALK article; and 4) greatly increases your nominee's chances he or she may be selected (as opposed to sending in a name and only a line or two of supportive data).

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## ***ACTIVITIES***

### **WANTED**

A volunteer is needed to help Mary Mueller develop the *Trail Talk* calendar for outings, tours, and activities in 2002. We need fresh ideas and suggestions from the members or requests for a favorite activity you have missed. Contact Mary at (408) 268- 7389  
e-mail: [wrmem74@aol.com](mailto:wrmem74@aol.com)  
or mail to: 1112 Silver Oak Ct.  
San Jose, CA 95120

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## ***VOLUNTEERS NEEDED***

**FOR TRAIL TALK  
IN THE SAN JOSE AREA**



Requirements: 2-4 hrs, one-day each quarter in February, April, July and October, usually between the 10th and the 15th of the month needed.

You will work with a leader who will supply the newsletters already folded and sealed. The materials for bulk rate processing will be ready for the crew to start working at a location near New Almaden post office. Contact Mary Mueller email [wrmem74@aol.com](mailto:wrmem74@aol.com) or phone (408)268-7389.

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**Trail Talk   Activities   Trail Photos**

**Chapter Info**

**Links**

**Home**

**Send questions regarding the CA-NV  
Chapter to:**

**Jerry Dwyer**  
**[webmaster@canvocta.org](mailto:webmaster@canvocta.org)**