

TRAIL DUST

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



Vol. XXXV Issue 3 *Nancy Briggs, Editor, Fall 2023*



Contents

Upcoming Activities	1
Message from the President	2
California Trail Paintings	3
Oregon Trail Back-Country Byway update	4
Summer Outings	7
Newspaper Nuggets	9

2023/4 Upcoming Activities

Community Education Classes, Boise	February 28, March 6, March 13
OCTA Spring Symposium, El Paso	March 13-16
Annual Byway Tour	April 27
Annual City of Rocks Activities	May 16 & 17
Spring Chapter Meeting, Burley	May 18
OCTA Convention, Pendleton	July 21-25

Message from the President

By Jerry Eichhorst

It is hard to believe that it is already November, and the year is almost over. 2023 seems to have gone by extremely fast. I was free to do a lot of traveling, fishing, and yard projects along with some Oregon Trail activities since I retired at the end of last year. It seems I was busier than when I was working. I have heard that happens to a lot of people.

I took OCTA video master Richard Hunt on a tour of the Main Oregon Trail Back Country Byway to create a video of the byway for the OCTA YouTube channel. The resulting 3-part video series should be released soon. The [OCTA YouTube channel](#) is filled with interesting historical and trail-related videos. I encourage you to visit the channel and click the “Subscribe” button.

I have been working with the BLM to revise and reprint the byway booklet. Several years ago the Idaho Transportation Department moved the signs that were located at Rattlesnake Creek so the byway route needed minor changes. The booklet has been reprinted and should now be available at Three Island Crossing State Park and the BLM offices in Boise. This booklet has proven to be extremely popular with many fourth-grade teachers using it for their Oregon Trail programs. Hopefully, the upcoming byway videos will assist those teachers as well.

Cory Donnelly and three members of her team from the NPS Trails Office visited Boise in September. I took them on two days of tours of the Oregon Trail to the east and west of Boise. It was good to see Cory again and meet the new members of her team. Our partnership with the NPS Trails Office is

extremely important because we work with them on our sign projects throughout the state.



NPS staff Nick, Chad, Faith, and Cory at Three Island Crossing Overlook

A few days later I did an interview for BSU Public Radio about the Oregon Trail in Idaho and then conducted a class for the BSU Osher program. About 150 people attended the class in person with many more on a Zoom call of the class.

IOCTA member and fur trapper expert Jim Hardee and I have been working with the Utah Westerners organization to develop and lead a 4-day bus tour for their members next September. The organization is dedicated to learning the history of the West and conducts an annual bus tour. Jim and I will lead them on a tour of the Oregon Trail from Pocatello to Walla Walla, then back across Idaho following the route of Lewis and Clark. Jim and I combined on a tour of the Oregon Trail near Fort Hall last year for the Idaho Heritage Conference and it was an amazing collaboration. I am sure this tour will be as well.

In mid-October, John Briggs and I traveled to the tiny hamlet of Westfall, Oregon, to meet with a local woman and explore the Meek’s Cutoff in the area. Linda Mae turned out to

be a charming and vigorous woman who loved sharing her knowledge of the area with us. We found a short section of what appeared to be trail ruts. It is an area that we may do more exploring in the future.



The Old General Store at Westfall



Meek Cutoff Ruts near Westfall

Finally, I was recently accepted to be a speaker for the Idaho Humanities Council Inquiring Idaho program. Inquiring Idaho is a program that serves as a bridge between organizations interested in hosting presentations on a variety of humanities-related topics and speakers who are passionate and knowledgeable about a specific topic. This acceptance should provide opportunities for talking to groups across the state about the Oregon and California Trails in Idaho.

Check the calendar in this issue to see some of the events for next year. Let me know what trail places you would like to visit on outings. Please watch your email and the chapter website to get more information about upcoming activities.

I hope you have a good fall and winter. See you on the trails in the spring.

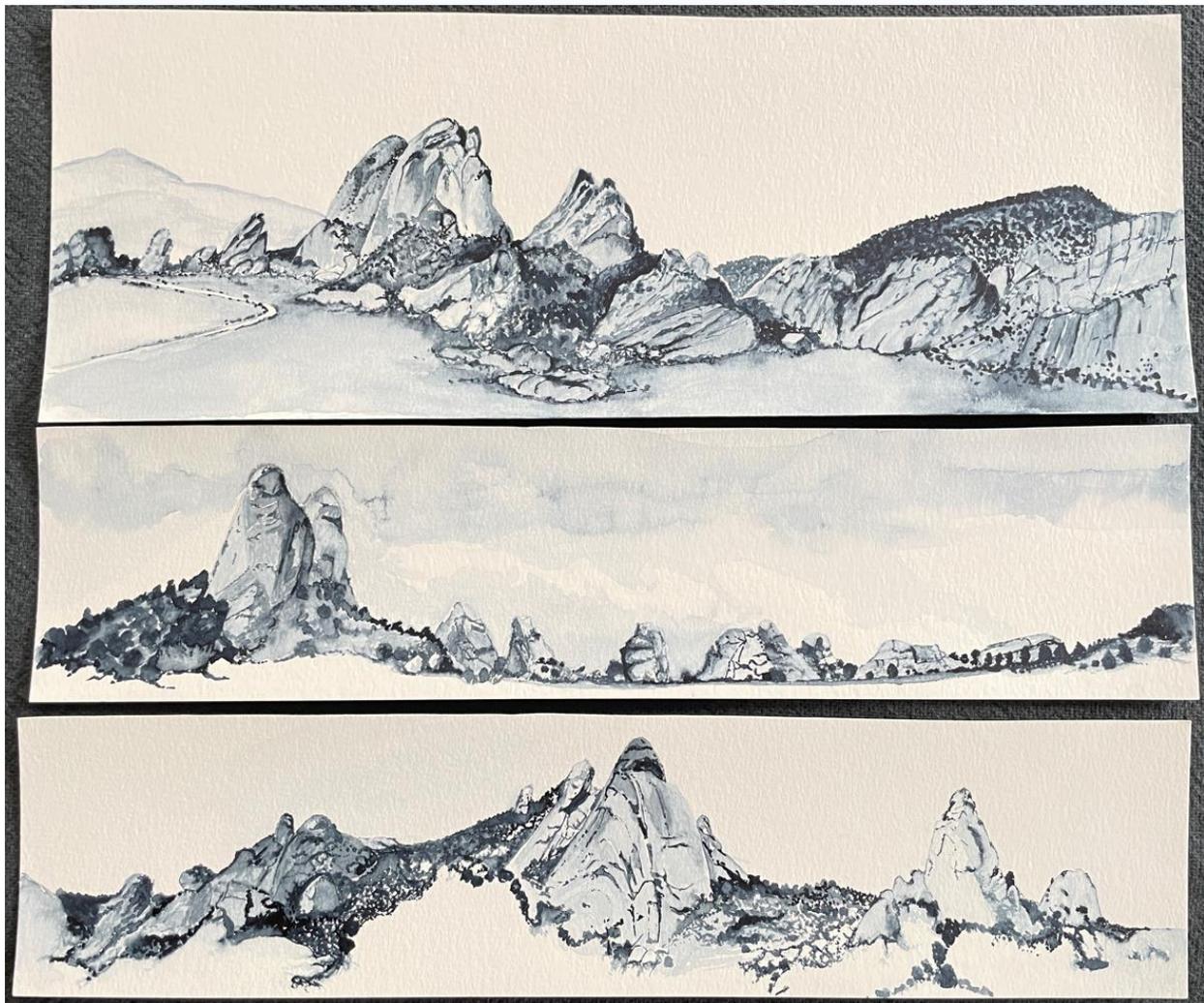
California Trail Paintings

By Jerry Eichhorst

Artist Nicholas Lowe has followed the California Trail for several years duplicating the paintings of James F. Wilkins of 1849. Although the known paintings of Wilkins stopped at Soda Springs, Lowe made three paintings of the City of Rocks (COR) area in the manner that Wilkins would have done. Lowe then offered these paintings to the COR Reserve if they would pay for professional framing of the paintings. With a limited budget, COR sought help from OCTA. I worked with the Utah Crossroads and CA/NV chapters and arranged for each chapter to pay 1/3 of the cost which I believe is a great solution.

The partnership that we have with the City of Rocks Reserve is very important to the Idaho chapter. We have had annual outings with their staff for many years and look forward to the unveiling of the paintings at the Visitor Center on Thursday, May 16. The following day we

will have an activity at COR, possibly metal detecting on the newly discovered California Trail segment in Circle Creek Canyon.



Main Oregon Trail Back Country Byway Update

By Jerry Eichhorst

The Main Oregon Trail Back Country Byway was developed 12 years ago to follow the Oregon Trail from Three Island Crossing of the Snake River at Glens Ferry to Bonneville Point near Boise. The

byway is a little over 100 miles long on paved and good gravel roads and takes about eight hours to drive with stops along the way to enjoy the various sites. There are ten interpretive panels and several

map board signs along the route. Directional signs with arrows guide the traveler along the route. In addition, a byway booklet provides maps, driving directions, and interesting diary stories of the route.

Unfortunately, the byway has had little, if any, sign maintenance since it was developed. Many of the interpretive signs are badly faded and sun damaged. Many of the directional signs are missing or damaged which could cause confusion for those driving the byway without the booklet.

We would like to get the byway signs repaired and replaced before next year's OCTA convention in Pendleton so people driving to the convention from the east could travel the byway and follow the Oregon Trail across southwest Idaho. For example, someone driving to the convention could spend the night in Twin Falls, drive the byway the next day, and spend that night in Boise before continuing to Pendleton the following day.



Directional sign

To take an inventory of the signs along the route, IOCTA Vice-President Paul Dinwiddie and I drove the Main Oregon Trail Back Country Byway in late October. As Paul drove the route, I noted the condition of the signs and interpretive panels. Unfortunately, there is a lot of work to be done.

Most of the ten interpretive panels will need to be replaced as 12 years of intense Idaho sun has badly faded and damaged the panels. One panel even had 13 bullet holes in it, I suppose because it could not outrun the "great Idaho hunter." I will be working with the National Park Service Trails Office to get the interpretive panels replaced. Hopefully, we will get on their project list for next fiscal year. I have already submitted my request to Travis Boley to be put on the project list. Unfortunately, these will not be replaced by next summer.

I have been working with the Idaho BLM on the directional signs. One of our BLM partners has already had a number of signs made and replaced several of the missing directional signs. We will continue to work with the BLM and the local and state highway departments which have jurisdiction over the roads along the route to get the signs fixed.

I have also been working with the BLM to reprint the byway booklet. I made several changes to the booklet to accommodate changes in the route caused by the Idaho

Transportation Department moving a map board and interpretive panel.

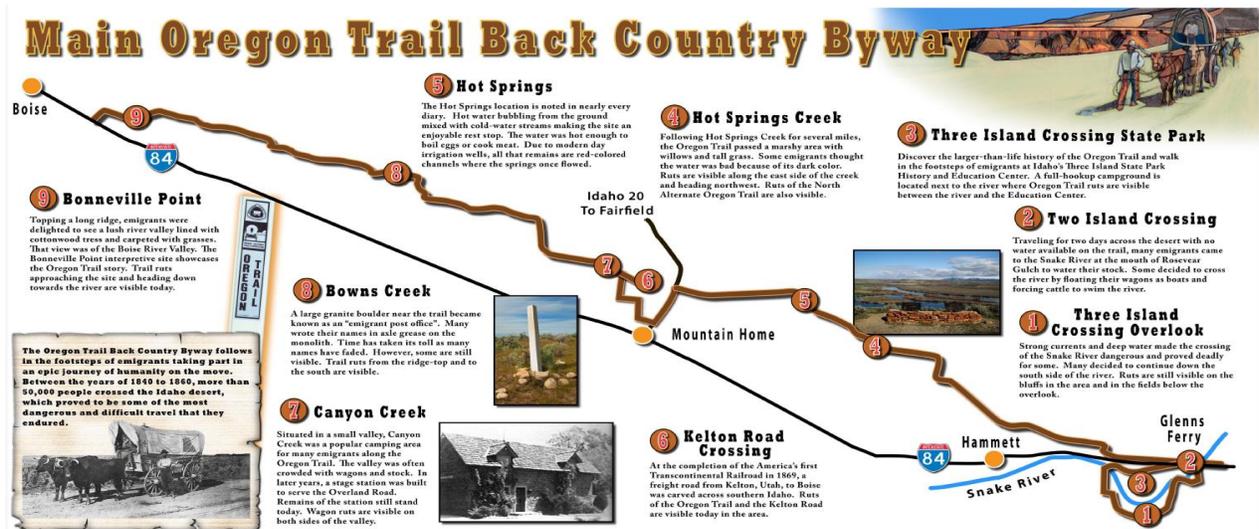


Concrete Oregon Trail marker has been badly damaged by gunshots. Note it is still standing on the rebar running up the center of the post. Photo by Paul Dinwiddie

The BLM then printed 25,000 copies of the updated booklet. Paul and I delivered four boxes of the new booklets to Three Island Crossing State Park on our trip.

The byway booklet is available at Boise BLM offices and Three Island Crossing State Park. It is also available on the BLM website or via a link on the Idaho chapter website. [Byway Booklet Link](#)

In addition, some of the concrete Oregon Trail posts marking the route of the trail at road crossings have been stolen or damaged by gunshots. Additional carsonite trail markers will need to be placed in these areas and several others to mark the Oregon Trail. Please let me know if you are interested in helping with chapter opportunities in sign maintenance and marking activities in the spring.



Byway map board

Summer Outings

By Jerry Eichhorst

The Idaho chapter had several interesting activities throughout the summer.

A large number of people from Idaho attended the OCTA convention in Gering, Nebraska, in July. We had about 25 people go to dinner for the Idaho chapter "meeting."

We continued the search for the mass grave site on the Jeffreys Route near the main Oregon Trail in August. We brought a cadaver dog back and re-confirmed several sites on top of a small knoll, then used ground penetrating radar to scan the top of the knoll.



Ditto Creek cadaver dogs and GPR outing

Although there were several anomalies noted in the scan, none turned out to be indicative of the mass grave I am searching for. Richard Hunt produced an OCTA video of the day which is available at [GRAVE DOGS! In Search of a Massacre on the Oregon Trail](#).

To help the Northwest Chapter for the Pendleton convention next July I volunteered the Idaho chapter to lead a pre-convention tour. In late August, I led a small group of IOCTA members and two members of the Utah Westerners organization on a tour of Oregon Trail sites to the west of Boise. This day became a practice run of the pre-convention tour. We visited the Ward Massacre park, Boise River crossing, Fort Boise replica, Fort Boise site, Utter Massacre Starvation Camp interpretive site, Kenney Pass interpretive site, and Henderson grave before lunch in Vale.



Oregon Trail to the West tour participants at Henderson grave near Vale, Oregon

The pre-convention tour will then travel back to I-84 and visit the Van Orman burial site near Farewell Bend before heading northwest to reach Pendleton for the convention the following day. IOCTA Vice President Paul Dinwiddie will be leading the tour next July and will be leading another practice run of the tour in

the spring. Watch the chapter website calendar for more details.



Lander Road in eastern Idaho

Gary Makey led a tour of a few people on the Lander Road in eastern Idaho on September 30. I was unable to join the tour but heard good things about the outing and saw pictures of the beautiful scenery. That section of trail is one of the prettiest roads that emigrants traveled in Idaho. I hope we can do the outing again with more participants.

About 25 people attended our fall chapter meeting on Saturday, October 14, in Boise. It was nice to see old friends again and meet some newer members. Preservation continues to be a major focus for the chapter with more power projects being proposed across the state. The new

[Idaho chapter's Facebook page](#) is up and looking great. The membership voted to increase the annual chapter membership dues beginning January 1 to \$15 for an individual and \$20 for a family or couple. This is the first dues increase that I am aware of. Directors Jim and Dawn Fazio, and Betty and Pedro Celeya, were re-elected to three-year terms. I appreciate their continued service to the chapter. Mountain Home historian John Hiler then spoke to the group about early explorers in Idaho.

After lunch, John Briggs led a group of people on a walk around the Ada County Oregon Trail Recreation Area.



On the Trail!

Activities are already being planned for next year. Please watch the chapter website calendar page for details.



Newspaper Nuggets

By Jerry Eichhorst

I am continuing with the theme of sharing interesting newspaper clippings and presenting these for your enjoyment. Indian Creek was one of the earliest settlements in Idaho. Located on the Oregon Trail about 20 miles southeast of Boise, it was settled in the mid-1860s and grew into the small community of Mayfield. A community hall/school was built in 1915 which served many purposes through the years. Unfortunately, the hall is now in shambles and will likely need to be razed. There are so many interesting clippings about the hall that this will take several pages.

LIBERTY DAY AT MAYFIELD

**Loyal Citizens of That Community to
Country's Cause.**

Judge Charles P. McCarthy reports a fine patriotic meeting at Mayfield Friday night. It was presided over by Hugh Sproat and Community hall, where the meeting was held, was well filled. In the course of the evening the names of the 20 young men who have gone into the service from that community were read and they were royally cheered. Addresses were delivered by D. A. Dunning and Judge McCarthy after which there was a dance for the benefit of the Red Cross. This was a thoroughly enjoyable affair and kept the younger members of the community till a late hour.

April 28, 1918



DANCE

AT

MAYFIELD

JULY 4TH

Good Music, Tickets \$1

BASKET LUNCH

July 2, 1919

Sportsmen Attention!

Come prepared to shoot rabbits at Regena, May 2, 10 a. m. Prizes \$25, \$15 and \$10. Lunch Free at Mayfield Hall

April 25, 1920

DANCE AT MAYFIELD.

Mrs. Lenora Corder, who is leaving Mayfield in the near future, was the honor guest at a dance and supper party arranged by the people of Mayfield and vicinity one evening last week. Mrs. Corder was presented with a beautiful silver service by C. R. Slater, who acted as toastmaster.

April 24, 1921

Box Social and Dance

At Mayfield, Idaho, Friday October 19th. Music by Novelty Orchestra of Boise.

October 14, 1923



**FREE-FOR-ALL RIOT
AT MAYFIELD DANCE
BRINGS ONE ARREST**

(Special to The Statesman)

MOUNTAIN HOME—Accused of starting a general free-for-all riot at a public dance in Mayfield last Saturday night, C. Storey of Boise, wearing tell-tale scratches and bruises of the battle, pleaded guilty to a charge of drunkenness and disturbing the peace before Justice of the Peace D. A. Utter here Monday and was fined \$100.

Storey was still in the Elmore county jail Monday evening, attempting to raise his fine. He will be incarcerated at the rate of \$2 a day, Justice Utter said, until the fine is paid.

According to Sheriff Arthur Stevens, women and men alike were fighting when he reached the Mayfield dance last Saturday night.

November 27, 1930



Photos show the current condition of the 'Community Hall'

Girl
Shoot, Sweetheart!
 Avoid This by—
DANCING
 New Year in at
Mayfield Hall
 December 31
 On Mountain Home Highway
 East of Regina
 To the Music of Boise's Only
 Amplified Hawaiian Band
 Moonlight Effects
 All Nite • Come Early or Late
 We'll Be There!

December 31, 1931

FREE METHODIST CHURCH
Five Mile

10:30 a. m.—Sunday school. 11 a. m.—Worship hour and preaching at Mayfield Community hall. The Rev. C. Sherrill will speak at 2 p. m. Sunday. A basket lunch will be served at noon.

October 31, 1942



Mayfield Field Day
Plans for Dinner
Served From Chute

MAYFIELD (Special)—A hot turkey dinner will be parachuted in by the U. S. Forest service to those attending the annual Field day to be held here Sunday beginning at 10 a. m. in the community hall, Soil Conservation district supervisors said Thursday.

Main topics for discussion will be alfalfa and grass evaluation. Organizations cooperating in the field day will be the Soil Conservation service, U. S. Forest service and the Extension service of the University of Idaho.

June 25, 1954

MAYFIELD
MAYFIELD
COMMUNITY SUNDAY
SCHOOL, Community hall. 10 a. m.
 Superintendent is Gilbert Nettleton.

December 25, 1954

NEW YEAR'S EVE
DANCE
 AT MAYFIELD
 Music By The Ryth-A-Mics

December 31, 1962 This was about the end of the dances held regularly.

Idaho Chapter OCTA
2908 Whitehaven Place
Eagle, ID 83616



IOCTA Officers and Directors

<i>Jerry Eichhorst</i>	<i>President</i>
<i>Don Wind</i>	<i>VP - East</i>
<i>Paul Dinwiddie</i>	<i>VP - West</i>
<i>Dan Dunne</i>	<i>Treasurer</i>
<i>Dave Price</i>	<i>Secretary</i>
<i>Don Wind</i>	<i>Preservation - East</i>
<i>Dave Price</i>	<i>Preservation - West</i>
<i>Nancy Briggs</i>	<i>TD Editor</i>
<i>Jerry Eichhorst</i>	<i>Webmaster</i>
<i>Betty & Pedro Celaya</i>	<i>Director</i>
<i>Jerry Lambert</i>	<i>Director</i>
<i>Shannon Gorringe</i>	<i>Director</i>
<i>Jim & Dawn Fazio</i>	<i>Director</i>
<i>Gary Kaufman</i>	<i>Director</i>

Visit IOCTA online at
www.IdahoOCTA.org