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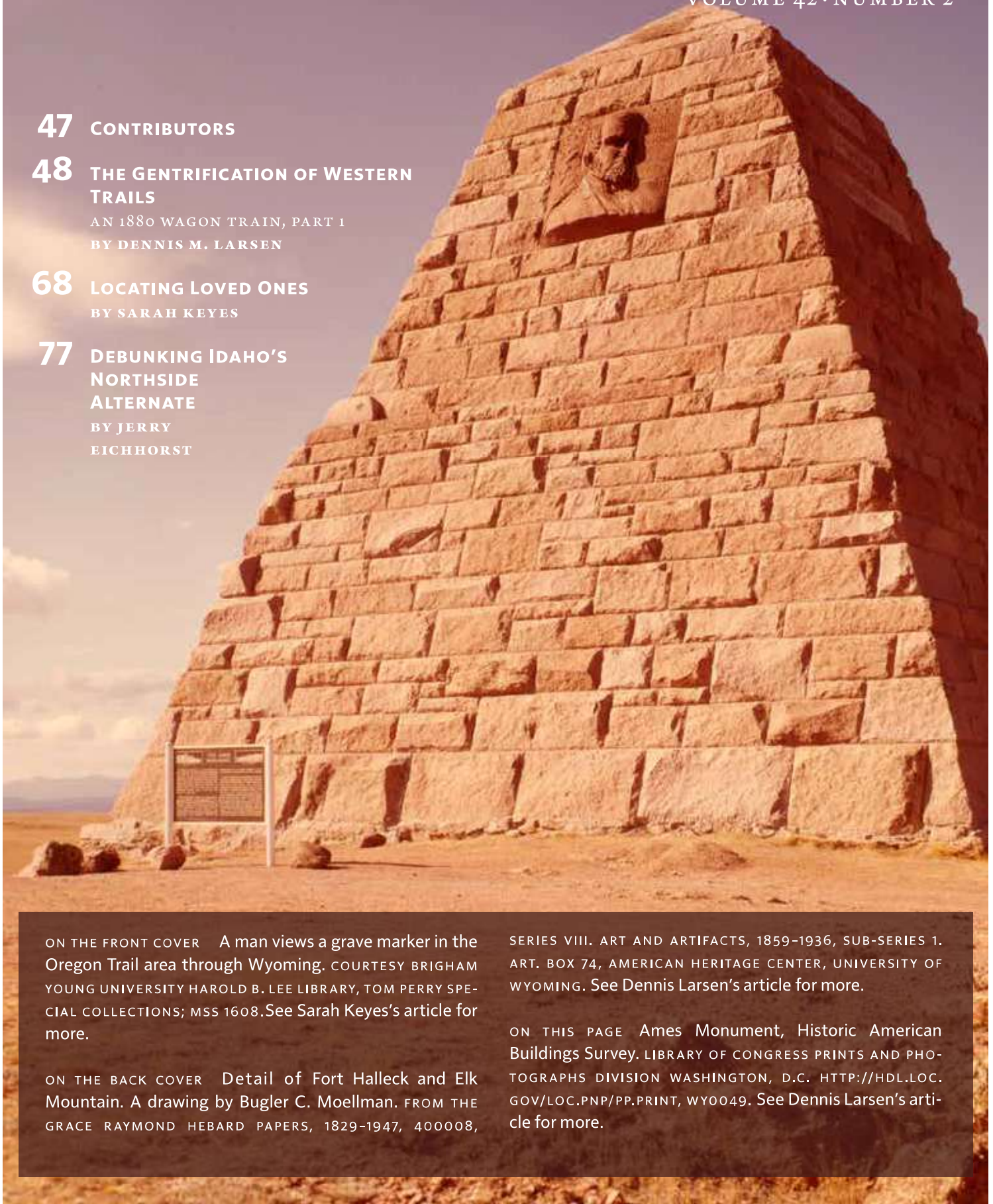
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ON THE FRONT COVER A man views a grave marker in the Oregon Trail area through Wyoming. COURTESY BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY HAROLD B. LEE LIBRARY, TOM PERRY SPECIAL COLLECTIONS; MSS 1608. See Sarah Keyes's article for more.

ON THE BACK COVER Detail of Fort Halleck and Elk Mountain. A drawing by Bugler C. Moellman. FROM THE GRACE RAYMOND HEBARD PAPERS, 1829-1947, 400008,

SERIES VIII. ART AND ARTIFACTS, 1859-1936, SUB-SERIES 1. ART. BOX 74, AMERICAN HERITAGE CENTER, UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING. See Dennis Larsen's article for more.

ON THIS PAGE Ames Monument, Historic American Buildings Survey. LIBRARY OF CONGRESS PRINTS AND PHOTOGRAPHS DIVISION WASHINGTON, D.C. [HTTP://HDL.LOC.GOV/LOC.PNP/PP.PRINT](http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/pp.print), WY0049. See Dennis Larsen's article for more.



Debunking Idaho's Northside Alternate

BY JERRY EICHHORST

IN THE EARLY 1990S A NEW ROUTE OF THE OREGON TRAIL IN IDAHO, termed the “Northside Alternate,” was proposed. Based upon the 1844 journal of Rev. Edward Evans Parrish, this proposed route has caused controversy within Idaho for over three decades.

Parrish’s journal of his trip across the western plains to Oregon has long been available for study.¹ He arrived at Fort Hall on Friday, September 13. The next day, Saturday, September 14, he wrote, “We crossed Lewis River to-day eight or nine miles below Fort Hall.”² At that time the Snake River was often referred to as the Lewis River. Parrish’s statement on September 14 has caused confusion for Oregon Trail researchers and enthusiasts in Idaho for many years. This article will attempt to resolve that confusion.

In 1993 some early members of the Idaho chapter of the Oregon-California Trails Association (OCTA), Clair and Virginia Ricketts, came upon the Parrish journal during the Baker City OCTA convention. Convinced they had found a reference

to a new and early Oregon Trail route in Idaho, they prepared an analysis showing why they believed Parrish traveled on the north side of the Snake River.³ Ricketts branded their proposed new route the “Northside Alternate,” explored the area, and placed carsonite trail markers near ruts on the north side of the Snake River canyon in the Twin Falls and Malad River areas. The legend of this Northside Alternate persists to this day, as some trail markers remain north of Twin Falls and the route is supported by the Twin Falls and Jerome tourism groups that accept the Northside Alternate and consider it part of their heritage. It is not widely accepted in other areas of the state and was not accepted in the study to add additional routes to the western National Historic Trails.⁴

This “Northside Alternate” is not to be confused with the North Alternate Oregon Trail, a route used primarily in 1852–54 and confirmed by over forty-five diary accounts and sixty reminiscences of emigrants traveling the route.⁵ The North

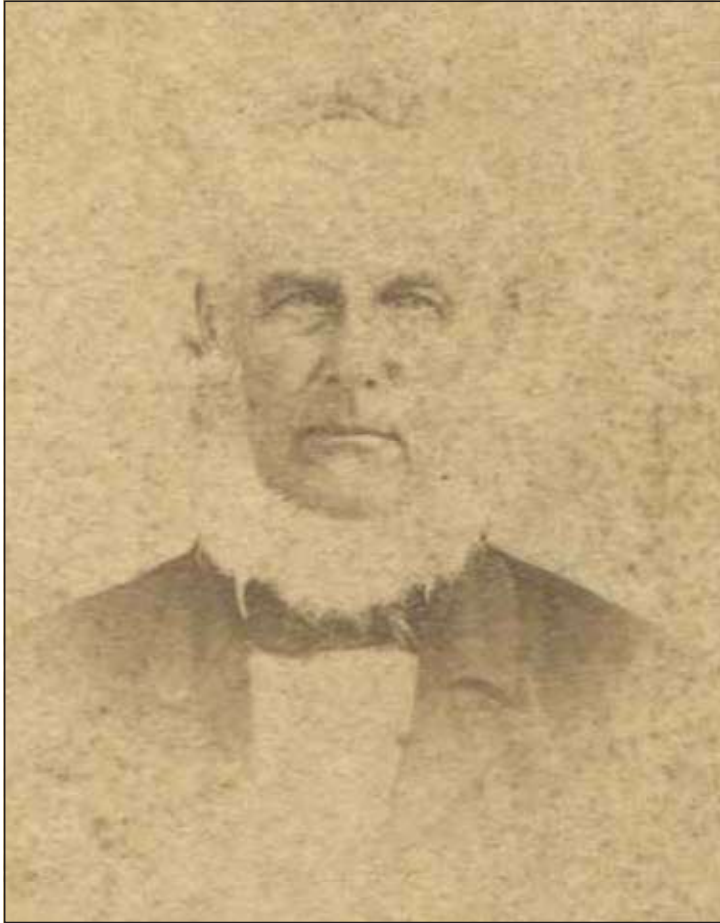
1 Edward Evans Parrish, *Diary of Rev. Edward Evans Parrish: Crossing the Plains in 1844* (Fairfield, Wash.: Ye Galleon Press, 1988). The account also appeared in *Transactions of the Sixteenth Annual Reunion of the Oregon Pioneer Association* (Portland, Oregon, 1889), 82–122. Parrish was born November 20, 1791, in Monongalia County, West Virginia, to Edward and Rachel (Evans) Parrish. He first married Elizabeth Bussey in West Virginia in 1814. They had six children. In 1827 he was remarried to Rebecca Mapel in Pennsylvania. They had six children of their own: Elizabeth Ellen, Thomas Mapel Andrew Jackson, Mary Ann Springer, Rebecca Shinn, Edward Evans, Jr., and Rachel Marinda. They crossed the plains, starting in 1843 in Ohio, and arrived in Oregon City in 1844. They settled on a donation land claim in Marion County, before Salem was a town. He died October 24, 1874, in Linn County, Oregon, and is buried at Knox’s Butte Cemetery. <https://digitalcollections.ohs.org/parrish-edward-evans-1791-1874?onlyDirect=1>. Accessed August 1, 2023.

2 Parrish, *Crossing the Plains in 1844*, September 14.

3 Clair Ricketts, “First Wagon Train to Cross the Oregon Trail on the North Side of the Snake River,” October 2002. Private analysis received by the author.

4 National Park Service, *Revised Feasibility and Suitability Study for Additional Routes of the Oregon, Mormon Pioneer, California, and Pony Express National Historic Trails* (U.S. Department of the Interior, December 2019), 47.

5 See Jerry Eichhorst, “Pieces to the Puzzle: Rediscovering Idaho’s North Alternate Oregon Trail,” *Overland Journal* 29, no. 2 (2011): 48–67. The quantity of diary and reminiscent accounts is based on the author’s personal collection.



Rev. Edward Evans Parrish (1791-1874), circa 1862. His journal of an 1844 overland journey was the basis for the supposed Northside Alternate route along the Snake River. COURTESY OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY LIBRARY.

Alternate trail crossed the Snake River above Salmon Falls, climbed out of the Snake River Canyon above Billingsley Creek, crossed the Malad River above the deep canyon, then continued northwest to Clover Creek and west until it rejoined the main Oregon Trail on Hot Springs Creek east of the Teapot Dome hot springs.

The proposed Northside Alternate, on the other hand, was supposed to cross the Snake River a few miles downstream of Fort Hall and follow the north side of that river to the Malad River, where it continued on what would later become the

North Alternate route in 1852, rejoining the main Oregon Trail on Hot Springs Creek.

The section of the Northside Alternate from the Malad River to Hot Springs Creek should match and pre-date that same section of the North Alternate Oregon Trail. If Parrish had opened a new route on the north side of the Snake River eight years earlier, in 1852 there would have been a road to follow. Travelers opening the North Alternate in that later year, however, described creating a new road, not following a previously created trail.⁶

This article will provide a detailed review of Parrish's journal from Fort Hall to Fort Boise, showing that Parrish confused crossing the Portneuf River with crossing the Snake River. Parrish was not alone in that confusion—it was shared by Benjamin Hoffman, Charlotte Emily Stearns Pengra, Theophilus Watkins, and four other diarists who made the same mistake.⁷

ANALYSIS OF PARRISH DIARY

Each daily entry of the Parrish journal for the portion of his journey from Fort Hall to Fort Boise follows.⁸ The Ricketts argument for the Northside Alternate and this author's analysis of the journal entry for each day follows the journal entry.

FRIDAY, SEPT. 13.—A mild, clear morning. We are now nearly through the Rocky Mountains and expect to reach Fort Hall in a few hours to-day. We had a sand plain to cross, which made heavy dragging for the oxen for about six miles. We reached Fort Hall about three o'clock and made a short stop. We then rolled down a beautiful valley six or seven miles and camped on Lewis River. We are now looking toward Oregon City, although we are a great distance from it. Some say the distance is five hundred miles, but Lieutenant Fremont has returned it six hundred miles. Mr. Hoover and company are here with Mr. Holly and us. The two Gilliams and Captain Ford are behind us.

6 Ellen J. Wallis's 1852 account in Robert Allen Bennett, *A Small World of Our Own: Authentic Pioneer Stories of the Pacific Northwest from the Old Settlers Contest of 1892* (Walla Walla, Wash.: Pioneer Press Books, 1895), 138–45.

7 Nearly nine hundred accounts in the author's diary collection of emigrants who traveled along the Snake River were surveyed. Charles Henry Ambler, Benjamin Hoffman in "West Virginia Forty-Niners," in *West Virginia History* 3, no. 1 (Oct. 1941): 59–75; Charlotte Emily Stearns Pengra, *The Diary of Charlotte Emily Stearns Pengra, 1853* (Eugene, Ore.: Lane County Historical Society, 1941); "Theophilus Watkins 1852 Diary: California Trail," Merrill J. Mattes Research Library, Independence, Missouri.

8 Parrish, *Crossing the Plains in 1844*, 82–122.

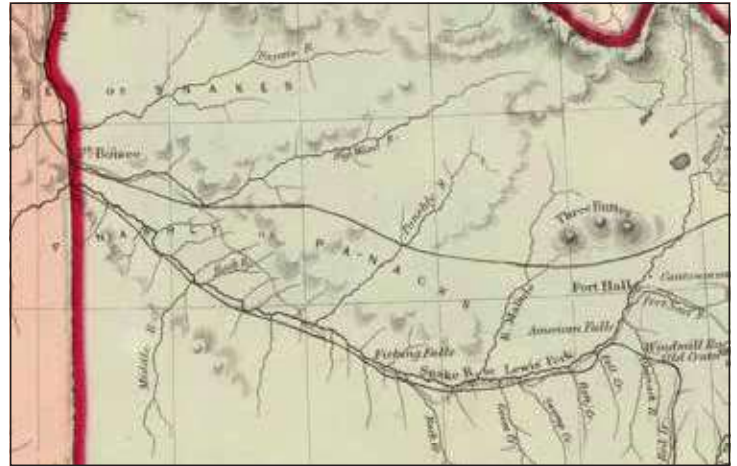
RICKETTS: On Sept 13th quoting from Parrish's diary: "We reached Fort Hall about three o'clock and made a short stop. We then rolled down a beautiful valley and camped on the Lewis River."

JE: The description of the sandy plain leading to Fort Hall is accurate. The fort was a well-known entity, and the location precisely known on the east side of the Snake River in a rolling, grass-covered, broad valley. This entry indicates Parrish had a trail guide since he knew he should reach Fort Hall that day and provides a starting point for my analysis.

The Oregon Trail moved away from Snake River after Fort Hall, and the river would not be seen again by emigrants until shortly before American Falls, typically two days' travel from Fort Hall. Parrish states that he went six or seven miles from Fort Hall and camped on the Lewis [Snake] River. In reality, the Portneuf River is eight miles from Fort Hall. The Snake River was a short distance to the west of the trail for much of this section. Parrish camped on the north side of the Portneuf River this day, already confused as to his location.

SATURDAY, SEPT. 14.—The night was cold enough to freeze a little. Fine, clear morning. Started by seven o'clock and traveled fifteen miles and camped on the same beautiful Lewis River. We could have gone four or five miles further, but there is no grass for twenty-five miles. A hard day's drive for to-morrow. We have overtaken six wagons that left us some weeks past. We crossed Lewis River to-day eight or nine miles below Fort Hall. It is a small stream here, but soon gets to be twice as large. This valley is decidedly the best range for cattle that I have seen in the country. There is plenty of grass for great quantities of cattle, winter and summer. We passed the American Falls. We camped early on the same river on account of the distance to grass.

RICKETTS: And again on Sept. 14th quote: "We crossed Lewis River today eight or nine miles below Fort Hall. It is a small stream here, but soon gets to be twice as large." If Parrish was confused and meant the Portneuf River, tell me how any river can get twice as big than it is at its mouth? Also how could Parrish follow the Lewis River for eight or nine miles and not know where he was at?



A portion of Johnson's Washington and Oregon map published in 1860, highlighting the Oregon Trail between Forts Hall and Boise. Map compiled, drawn and engraved under the supervision of J. H. Colton and A. J. Johnson, and published by Johnson and Browning, 1860. DOWNLOADED FROM, AND COURTESY OF, THE DAVID RUMSEY MAP COLLECTION. [HTTPS://WWW.DAVIDRUMSEY.COM](https://www.davidrumsey.com).

JE: Parrish has confused crossing the Portneuf River with the Snake. The Portneuf River is eight miles from Fort Hall and that river was crossed in the morning, a short distance from its mouth. Because the trail moves away from the Snake River after Fort Hall, Parrish has lost track of it. His comment that it is a small stream when he crosses it and soon doubles in size when he sees it again indicates that he crossed a smaller stream—the Portneuf River—and afterwards sees the larger Snake River again. He notes passing American Falls and camps on the same river the falls are on, the Snake River, likely at one of several small streams below American Falls which were common camping areas.

The Portneuf River was larger in 1844 than today, but it would have always been much smaller than the Snake. There are no other significant streams that flow into the Snake River between the Portneuf River and where Parrish camps that night, which would add sufficient water to double the size of the river. Descriptions of the Portneuf River from other emigrants of the era indicate that the

river was thirty to eighty yards wide and deep enough to require raising the wagon beds.⁹

Ricketts asks how Parrish could “follow the Lewis River eight or nine miles and not know where he was.” This can be done because the trail moved away from the river and did not return to the Snake River until just above American Falls.

In addition, if Parrish had crossed the Snake River at this location, he would have been the first emigrant with wagons on that side of the river and would not have a guidebook to tell him how many miles it would be to the next location with grass for his animals. Throughout his journal, Parrish writes that he knows the mileage to the next camping area, indicating that he had a guidebook and was thus on the established route on the south side of Snake River.

SUNDAY, SEPT. 15.—Started before six o’clock on account of the distance to grass. Had some of the roughest road and crossed several very bold running branches to-day. Camped on the river three miles below where Hoover and others camped.

RICKETTS: Again quoting from Parrish’s diary Sunday Sept 15th: “started before six o’clock on account of the distance to grass. Had some of the roughest road and crossed several very bold running branches today.” If he had been traveling on the south side, he would not have crossed any streams till after he had passed Massacre Rocks.

JE: Parrish had camped the night before below American Falls. During the next day, he notes crossing several “bold running branches.” There are many small streams feeding the south side of the Snake River that are crossed on the main Oregon Trail, including Spring Creek, Ross Fork, Portneuf River, Bannock Creek, and Cold Creek before reaching Massacre Rocks. Rock Creek (#1), Fall Creek, Cold Water Creek, Raft River, Goose River, Marsh Creek, Rock Creek (#2), Mud Creek, Deep Creek, and Salmon Falls Creek are crossed before reaching Salmon Falls. The desert on the north

side of the Snake River has no streams entering the Snake River from American Falls to Thousand Springs, a distance of 120 miles.

The Ricketts statement that “he would not have crossed any streams till after he had passed Massacre Rocks” is in error—Parrish would have crossed five streams on the south side of Snake River before reaching Rock Creek, the area of Massacre Rocks State Park.

MONDAY, SEPT. 16.—A fine morning. All in middling health. Mr. Holly and I camped alone for the first time last night. We started first and kept ahead during the day, which proved to be a hard one. We crossed the Rocky Plains and climbed the bluff at eleven o’clock. Traveled till eight o’clock and camped near bad water and high grass and bushes.

RICKETTS: On Sept 16th he mentions crossing “ROCKY PLAINS.” There are no rocky plains on the south side of the river until after he would have crossed Raft River.

JE: The Oregon Trail route along the south side of the Snake River stays within sight of the river from American Falls to Rock Creek. A few miles further west at Fall Creek, the route leaves the Snake River as it climbs again onto the desert plains before reaching the Raft River, which is where I believe Parrish camped this night, about forty-five miles from Fort Hall. The trail in this area is rocky and dusty, as it is across all of southern Idaho.

TUESDAY, SEPT. 17.—Passed the night in peace. A fine morning. Started at a quarter past eight o’clock in the lead again. Nooned on a small branch. Mr. Hoover, Nelson and Welch in company. Mr. Welch, Mr. Holly and I drove on. Mr. Hoover and company remaining at the nooning place. Mr. Welch found a camping place on the bank of the river, fuel in abundance, and grass enough for a vast number of cattle. The bachelors stayed at the camp of bad water to-day to rest their cattle. This is a very pleasant afternoon when not in the dust of the road.

RICKETTS: Then on Sept. 17th he mentions Mr. Hoover, Mr. Nelson and Mr. Welch and Mr. Holly, part of the group that the Gilliams and Neal tried to lose on Sept 11th. There was an obvious split in that train.

JE: Whether the train split or not is irrelevant to the route being taken. The last line of the entry for this day, however, indicates that

9 Jesse Harritt, *Diary of Jesse Harritt 1845* (Portland, Ore.: Oregon Pioneer Association, 1914), 517; Joel Palmer, *Journal of Travels Over the Rocky Mountains to the Mouth of the Columbia River: Made during the Years 1845 and 1846*, ed. by Reuben Gold Thwaites (Cleveland, Ohio: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1906), 89; Benjamin Cory, *Diary of Dr. Benjamin Cory: Crossing the Plains* (N.p.: n.p., 1989), 19.

Parrish was traveling on a “road,” which would not have existed had he been the first wagon train on the north side of the Snake River. Parrish is likely at Marsh Creek, a place known for poor water. This is typically the first camping location along the Snake River west of Raft River.

WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 18.—Started at a quarter past six and nooned on the river. Had a hard afternoon’s drive, camping after dark. Found water in holes in the bed of the branch, which had become nearly dry.

JE: Parrish is still within the stretch of trail where there are no streams entering the Snake River on the north side. For Parrish to camp on a branch, he must be on the south side of the Snake River.

THURSDAY, SEPT. 19.—A fine morning. We think we are now a hundred miles below Fort Hall. A good drive for five days. Camped in good season on a branch, Mr. Hoover a little below.

RICKETTS: On Thursday Sept. 19th quote: “a fine morning. We think we are now a hundred miles below Fort Hall[“]. This would have put them somewhere near the Minidoka Dam or Rupert.

JE: Rock Creek, near present-day Hansen, Idaho, is 102 miles from Fort Hall. It later would become Rock Creek Station and Stricker Homestead. Parrish passed Fort Hall on September 13, meaning he needed to average only sixteen miles a day to reach this location in six days. Ricketts is incorrect in his placement of Parrish near Minidoka Dam or Rupert, about seven miles east, on this day.

FRIDAY, SEPT. 20.—A cool morning. Mr. Saunders came up last night and let us hear from the camps behind us. Our camp to-night is in a deep cove, rocks on both sides and a branch in the middle.

RICKETTS: Sept. 20th quote: “A cool morning. Mr. Saunders came up last night and let us hear from the camps behind us. [Giving proof that there were a considerable number of wagons in Parrish’s group.] Our camp tonight is in a deep cove, rocks on both side and a branch in the middle.” This would have been in the vicinity of the Milner Dam. No way could it have been Rock Creek Canyon as they could not have reached that point in one days travel.



TOP It was said the area around Marsh Creek had no trail remnants, but in May 2024 the author photographed these ruts near the creek.

BOTTOM Marsh Creek. AUTHOR PHOTO.

JE: Parrish appears to have camped on the second location of Rock Creek, a small stream nestled in a steep basalt canyon, west of Twin Falls. This camp site is only eleven miles northwest of the camp site for the previous day. Again, he is still within the stretch of trail where there are no streams entering the Snake River on the north side. Ricketts is incorrect in his placement of Parrish because he was incorrect on the location of the day before. Parrish is now far beyond the Milner Dam area.

SATURDAY, SEPT. 21.—A cold morning. Having a long drive before us we started at six o’clock and drove until seven,

at night, the longest day's drive we have had. We camped on a spring branch near the river. We had considerable good road through the day, but in the evening we had a heavy bed of sand to drag through. We made out to reach camp and suppose we have traveled thirty miles to-day.

RICKETTS: On Sept. 21st quoting from Parrish's diary: "A cold morning. Having a long drive before us we started at six o'clock and drove until seven, at night the longest day's drive we have had. We camped on a spring branch near the river. We had considerable good road through the day, but in the evening we had a heavy bed of sand to drag through." There is no sand on the south side of the river till you reach Salmon Falls. The spring he mentions could have been at the base of Trail Spring Butte. Old survey maps shows a loop up to Butte. Considering the early name of this butte and the fact that the old survey maps show a water course there makes sense. If so, this spring has long ago dried up which is the case of another spring I will mention further on.

JE: Parrish again knows the distance he must travel that day, indicating he has a guidebook. No guidebooks were available describing the north side of the Snake River. He is now near Mud Creek, the first point where the Snake River is accessible again. Many areas close to the river would have heavy sand on the road.

SUNDAY, SEPT. 22.—Cool and clear. We expect to reach Salmon Falls to-day. Drove eight or ten miles and camped on the same Snake or Lewis River. Our drive to-day has been down the river. To-day as little Rebecca was trying to get on or off the wagon, she slipped and fell, the wagon wheel rolling over and breaking her thigh. A sad accident for her and us all. Glad, however, that it is no worse. Jackson is well, but weak yet. We did not reach the Falls as expected. The Indians are camped along the river fishing.

Sunday Sept. 22nd Quote: "Cool and clear. We expect to reach Salmon Falls today. Drove eight or ten miles and camped on the same Snake or Lewis River. Our drive today has been down the river. To-day as little Rebecca was trying to get off the wagon, she slipped and fell, the wagon wheel rolling over and breaking her thigh. A sad accident for her and us all. Glad, however, that it is no worse. Jackson is well, but weak yet. We did not reach the falls as expected. The Indians are camped

along the river fishing." There is a lot to be gleaned from this diary entry. Parrish mentions that they did not reach Salmon Falls today as expected. How did he know Salmon Falls was ahead of them? He says the Indians are fishing along the river, but he makes no mention of trading for salmon. Thomas A. Rumer, in his book *The Wagon Trains of '44* makes the assumption that Parrish also traded for fish.¹⁰ I think the reason Parrish makes no mention of trading for fish is because he was on the rim above river and not down on the river which reinforces my claim that Parrish was on the north side of the Snake River. Since Parrish did not reach Salmon Falls on 22nd which means he was thirty eight miles from the Three Island Crossing plus the distance from his camp on the 22nd to Salmon Falls. Which means it would have been almost impossible to reach Three Island Crossing in a day and a half.

JE: Parrish expects to reach Salmon Falls this day, which again indicates he was using a guidebook and on the established road. He is traveling along the Snake River, which would have been impossible on the north side of the river due to the steep canyon walls. He appears to have camped near Salmon Falls. He is aware of Indians camped along the Snake River fishing for salmon. This was a common experience near Salmon Falls on the main Oregon Trail. The North Alternate Oregon Trail crossed the Snake River just above Salmon Falls. If Parrish were on the north side of the Snake River, the distance from the edge of the canyon to the river at Salmon Falls is two miles, which would make viewing the Indians camped along the river fishing very difficult, even if he were on the edge of the canyon. If he were away from the canyon edge, he likely could not see the river, Salmon Falls, or the Indians.

MONDAY, SEPT. 23.—Started at seven o'clock and traveled till twelve o'clock at night, without water or grass for the cattle, camping on the river. The road to-day was hilly above any other day, though we had some good road.

RICKETTS: Monday the 23rd he makes no reference to ever reaching Salmon Falls. WHY? I think it was because he was on the rim above Salmon Falls when he passed it.

¹⁰ Ricketts refers to Thomas A. Rumer, *The Wagon Trains of '44: A Comparative View of the Individual Caravans in the Emigration of 1844 to Oregon* (Spokane, Wash.: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1990), 177.

JE: *The description this day is of crossing the desert from Salmon Falls to the Snake River by Glenns Ferry. The trek was about thirty-eight miles with no direct access to water. Some emigrants and their cattle would attempt to get down to the river at Pilgrim Gulch, at about two-thirds of the distance. The steep climb back up the canyon was more than many cattle could endure. Most emigrants covered the distance in one very long day as Parrish did. He reached the Snake River at the mouth of Rosevear Gulch, two miles above Three Island Crossing. Many emigrants stopped here to water their stock before climbing over the ridge and down to the river to the ford at Three Island Crossing. Others caulked their wagons and floated across the river at this location.*

Ricketts questions why Parrish did not mention Salmon Falls. The trail left the river shortly before Salmon Falls and climbed a long hill to reach the plateau heading away from the Snake. He would have had to go out of his way to visit the falls.

TUESDAY SEPT. 24.—We crossed the river safely after noon to-day and camped on a fine bed of grass within sight of the ford. The river is rapid and the water middling low. The bottom is gravel of the prettiest kind and the water is clear. In consequence of two islands, side by side, we had to cross three streams. Our cattle are now doing well. To-morrow, it is said, we have to drive twelve miles. Last night the bachelors lay out on the prairie without water or grass. This is the second time they have done so. Better reach camp late, as we did, than do so.

RICKETTS: On Sept. 24, quoting from Parrish's diary: "We crossed the river safely after noon and camped on a fine bed of grass within sight of the ford. The river is rapid and the water middling low. The bottom is gravel of prettiest kind and the water is clear. In consequences of two islands side by side, we had to cross three streams." Stop and think about his description of that as being the Three Island Crossing. In the first place Parrish makes no mention that he was crossing the Snake River. To me this a very glaring omission on Parrish's part if he was talking about the Three Island Crossing. Second he makes the crossing sound as if it were no big deal. All diaries I have read tell a different story. This was the most dreaded river crossing on the whole trail. Others tell of caulking their wagon boxes to keep the water out. Catherine Sager tells in her book "The Stout Hearted Seven" how the water came in their wagon even though they caulked the cracks. She tells also of what a job it was to keep the oxen moving, especially, during the crossing

the last channel. She tells how her brothers had to whip the oxen and yell at them to get them to move again when they stopped in the swift current. Remember, Catherine Sagers was part of the '44 wagon train; in fact, she was in the same train as Parrish before the split Sept. 11th. She also tells how their wagon was chained along side another wagon to keep the swift current from turning it over. Others tell of adding extra teams to the wagon so that some of the animals would have their feet on solid bottom at all times. Some even put oxen yokes under the wagon boxes to raise them high enough to keep the water out. They all tell about men on horse back scouting the river ahead of them looking for the shallowest place to cross. At least five people lost their lives between 1843 and 1849 at this crossing. Let's take a look at Parrish's statement that the bottom is gravel of the prettiest kind and the water is clear. I doubt if anybody has seen a gravel bottom at the Three Island Crossing since the Bonneville Flood. The three islands are remnants of that flood. That is one the reasons why the channels keep changing and the danger of wagons and animals plunging in a hold [hole] over their heads. Remember that in 1844 the Snake River was a free flowing river. All the water that drained from mountains from Hill City to east of Carey drained into Little Wood River. Now all that water is impounded by Morman [Mormon] Reservoir, Magic Dam, Little Wood Reservoir and Fish Creek Reservoir. In fact, when they built the stage station at Malad Gorge, they had to cross a ford to get to the bridge they built across the Malad Gorge. It's my theory that Parrish was describing the crossing of Little Wood River above Malad Gorge. There would have been sufficient water at that time to fit Parrish's description of that crossing Sept 24th. Plus fact there are numerous gravel pits in this area that produced a special kind of colored gravel that is sought after for concrete work.

JE: *Parrish describes fording the Snake River at Three Island Crossing. The river bottom at the ford is cobblestones and washed gravel. Although there are three islands in the Snake River at this location, only two of the islands were used in fording the river. The water level was "middling low," so the ford would not have been particularly difficult. The north side of the river is flat and likely covered with grasses where Parrish camped.*

Contrary to what Ricketts claims, this was not "the most dreaded river crossing on the whole trail." There were only a few deaths that occurred during the fording process at Three Island

Three Island Crossing as seen from space. The route of the trail has been added. Note that only two islands are utilized in the crossing. COURTESY EURO TECHNOLOGIES.



Crossing. Many diarists, such as Catherine Sager, go into detail about how fording was accomplished, while others simply report that they crossed the river, just as Parrish did. Assumptions cannot be made about the meaning of the text in the journal.

Ricketts then claims that the river being forded was the Little Wood River (Malad River) above Malad Gorge, a deep gorge carved out of the basalt rock as the river drops down to the Snake River. There are two problems with this idea, however. The Malad River runs in a black basalt channel and splits above the gorge into two channels creating a single island. There is little if any gravel in the area. Parrish noted there were two islands in the crossing and the river bottom is gravel. Neither are descriptive of the Malad River.

The Malad River was crossed on the North Alternate Oregon Trail route after 1852 by either dismantling the wagons and carrying their contents across a natural bridge created by boulders wedged in the canyon walls over the south channel and across suspended wagon beds over the north channel, or by fording the river near the upper end of the island. The ford was described as several feet deep and required men to dive under water to clear large boulders out of the way.¹¹ The path across this channel and the boulders which were moved out of the way can still be seen. These crossings do not match the description of the river crossing provided by Parrish.

¹¹ Sarah Stewart Sutton, "Travel Diary in 1854," in Kenneth L. Holmes, ed., *Covered Wagon Women: Diaries and Letters from the Western Trails*, Vol. 7, 1854–1860 (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), 63.

Parrish knows he has to travel twelve miles tomorrow, again indicating he has a guide book and is on the established route.

WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 25.—A fine, clear morning, but cold for the season. Last night the folks apprehended trouble with the Indians, but I believe they had no evil intentions. We had an early start and camped at the branch where the old wagon was.

RICKETTS: On Sept 25, 1844, Naomi Sagers passed away at what is now called Pilgrim Springs. If Parrish had been on the south of the river, he would have been a day or so ahead of them, but he makes no mention of her death, which is strange because Parrish kept close track of all the deaths, births and even weddings in the three wagon trains that started out 1844. Even Thomas A. Rumer in his book comments on the fact that Parrish did not mention Naomi Sagers's death.¹² Easy enough to explain: they were on different side of the river when she died.

Getting back to Parrish's diary, on Sept. 25th quote: "We had an early start and camped at a branch where an old wagon was." This sounds to me like some one tried to take a wagon across the north side before 1844, real interesting supposition.

¹² Ricketts is referencing Rumer, *Wagon Trains of '44*, 114.



North Alternate natural bridge over the south channel of the Malad River. Note the extensive basalt rocks. AUTHOR PHOTO.

JE: Ricketts is incorrect in his claim that Parrish should have noted the grave of Naomi Sager because Parrish was ahead of the Sager wagon train, therefore making it impossible for him to know that Sager had died two days behind him. Many wagons were abandoned along the trail, and there is no way to identify the owner of the abandoned wagon or where it was located since Parrish provides no details of the day's travel. The fact that Parrish came upon an abandoned wagon indicates that he was not the first wagon train on his route. Based upon the next day's journal, he likely was on Hot Springs Creek or Bennett Creek on the main Oregon Trail.

THURSDAY, SEPT. 26.—Started at seven o'clock and nooned on the branch of the Hot or Boiling Spring. This spring is one of the curiosities of nature. The water boils out of the ground in five or more places boiling hot and makes a branch

large enough to run an overshot mill. Camped on a small branch four miles west of the Hot Spring.

Sept 26th, two days after he crossed the unnamed river, quote: "Started seven o'clock and nooned on the branch of Hot or Boiling Spring. This spring is one of the curiosities of nature. The water boils out of the ground in five or more places boiling hot and makes a branch large enough to run an overshot mill." The argument we hear is if Parrish crossed at Little Wood River, there is no way he could have made it to the hot springs in two days. But the hot springs he was referring to



North Alternate ford of the south channel of the Malad River. Sarah Sutton, 1854, wrote, “the men waded nearly to their arms to roll the large rocks out of the road, and had to put their heads under to do it.” AUTHOR PHOTO.

was not the hot springs at Teapot Dome Hot Springs. He was referring to the hot springs north of Bliss. The description that Parrish gives of hot springs in no way could describe the hot spring at Teapot Dome Hot Springs, which has long dried up, while one that Parrish describes is still running.

JE: The Hot or Boiling Spring referred to by Parrish is the Teapot Dome hot springs. These hot springs had water at that time and are mentioned by most diarists. They are eighteen miles from Three Island Crossing, an easy distance for the second day after crossing the Snake River at Three Island Crossing on September 24. The hot springs dried up long ago as area ranchers drilled water wells and lowered the water table. The branch four miles west of the hot springs where Parrish camped is Rattlesnake Creek, a popular camping area. The North Alternate would rejoin the main Oregon Trail on Hot Springs Creek, a few miles east of the hot springs. This is where the proposed Northside Alternate would have joined as well, since it would have matched the route of the North Alternate opened eight years later.

The White Arrow hot spring on Clover Creek north of Bliss, which Ricketts claims is the hot springs Parrish visited, is nearly five miles in the wrong direction away from the route of the North Alternate with no visible trail remnants in the area. In addition, they are 109

miles as the crow flies from the Boise River, which Parrish reaches four days later. This would be an impossible distance for Parrish and his wagon to travel in that time while making a new road.

The remainder of the Parrish diary from Friday, September 27, to Thursday, October 3, describes traveling on the main Oregon Trail along the base of the foothills to the Boise River, then down the Boise River to Fort Boise, where the Snake River was crossed again.

FRIDAY, SEPT. 27.—Had a very stony road. Camped again on a small branch of pretty running water.

JE: The section of trail between Rattlesnake Creek and Canyon Creek was extremely rocky. Many diarists noted the rough stretch and the beautiful valley with a fine stream at Canyon Creek. The Kelton Road skirted this rocky section of road to the north. Parrish appears to have camped on Canyon Creek.

SATURDAY, SEPT. 28.—A fine, clear morning. Started early and nooned on a dry branch. Plenty of grass but no water. Our travel for the last two days has been along and around a mountain. The road, exceedingly rough and rocky at first, became gravelly and smoother, but very hilly. We traveled about twelve hours and camped on a branch, water in holes only and not

much grass for cattle. We expected to reach the river to-day, but did not.

JE: *Parrish likely camped on Ditto Creek, which was often dry but had water available by digging into the creek bed.*

SUNDAY, SEPT. 29.—A little cloudy this morning. A fine daughter was born last night into Mr. Hawley's family. On account of the long drive and scarcity of grass we started late. Made a long drive and camped on a slough not far from a large and beautiful creek. Indians supplied us with fish on good terms, and behaved themselves civilly.

JE: *The large, beautiful creek Parrish refers to is the Boise River, where local Indians often provided salmon to emigrants in the early years of the emigration. His description indicates he was on a slough of the Boise River.*

MONDAY, SEPT. 30.—Left camp and drove down on the bluff of the creek to the camp of the foremost company. This place has more timber than we have seen for two hundred miles. There is a grove of balm trees. Camped on the creek.

JE: *The river was lined with cottonwood trees, often called "balm" trees by emigrant diarists. These were the first trees emigrants had seen since Fort Hall.*

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 1.—Started at seven o'clock. Camped again on the bank of the big creek called Boisy [Boise] River. The Fort is of the same name. The Roman priest, with several French Indians, camped in sight of us, below.

JE: *The Oregon Trail continues west along the south side of the Boise River, crossing to the north side near today's Caldwell, Idaho.*

WEDNESDAY, OCT. 2.—We are buying fish of the Indians. The price is a load of ammunition for a fish. Started at a quarter past six o'clock, nooned about twelve and camped again on the river about five o'clock. This is a fine afternoon, though very smoky. The grass is somewhat dry, though fine for the season. To-morrow we expect to cross Lewis River. We have laid in a supply of fish.



Canyon Creek was a year-round stream. The valley, as seen in this pasture area, was a popular camping area for Oregon Trail emigrants. AUTHOR PHOTOS.



The road was extremely rocky between Rattlesnake Creek and Canyon Creek. BLM PHOTOGRAPH.

RICKETTS: On Wed. Oct. 2nd to quote Parrish's diary: "We are buying fish of the Indians. The price is a load of ammunition for a fish. Started at a quarter past six o'clock, nooned about twelve and camped again on the river about 5 o'clock. This is a fine afternoon, though very smoky. The grass is somewhat dry, though fine for the season. To-morrow we expect to cross the Lewis River. We have laid in a supply of fish." Two things stand out in this diary entry: This is the first time Parrish mentions trading for fish. He was on the Boise River then. To me, this means it was the first opportunity they had to trade for fish because they were on the north side of river and they laid in a good supply because he the Indians are offering more fish than we want, as all are supplied. He also says they expect to cross the Lewis River tomorrow. I think Parrish was informed about which river he crossed and when.

JE: Parrish noted the Indians fishing along the Snake River above Salmon Falls on September 22, but he did not comment on trading for fish. Ricketts's claim that this is the first or only time Parrish has traded for fish from the Indians does not indicate that Parrish traveled on the north side of the Snake River. It only indicates that this is the first time Parrish has noted in his diary that he bought fish from the Indians. As we have seen, Parrish was inconsistent in his observations and did not note everything in his diary. Once again, knowing that he would cross the Snake or Lewis River the

next day indicates that he had a guidebook and thus was on the established trail—a comment similar to the others made by Parrish in traveling from Fort Hall.

THURSDAY, OCT. 3.—Cool this morning. The Indians are offering more fish than we want, as all are supplied. Started at seven o'clock and arrived at Fort Boisey about one o'clock. This fort is situated on the Lewis or Snake River about three hundred miles from Fort Hall. We are three weeks on the road from Fort Hall to Fort Boisey. The fort was named for the small, but very beautiful, river which we came down, having traveled about four days along its banks. We crossed to the south side of Snake River and camped about three o'clock. In crossing we tied the oxen to the stern of each wagon in front, at the same time a chain from the hind part of each wagon made fast to the yoke of oxen in the rear. I thank God for the mercies that have attended us through all our difficulties.

RICKETTS: Let's move to Parrish's description of crossing the Snake River at Fort Boise: "We crossed to the south side of the Snake River and camped about 3 o'clock. In Crossing we tied the oxen to the stern of each wagon in front, at the same time a chain from the hind part of each wagon was made fast to the yoke of oxen in the rear. I thank God for the mercies that have attended us through all our difficulties." I have read no other diary that makes a big deal about the crossing at Fort Boise. When you compare the three river crossings by Parrish, you have to conclude he was not talking about the same river. In his first description below Fort Hall, he says he crossed the Snake River or the Lewis as it was called then. The second crossing he makes no mention of crossing the Snake River and makes no preparation for crossing the river, just drives up and across, no big deal. Yet on the third and last crossing he says they crossed the Snake River and how they prepared their wagons for that crossing and thanks God for seeing them safely across.

JE: Parrish writes that he crossed to the south side of the Snake River at Fort Boise. This is the normal crossing when on the main Oregon Trail and is admittedly the only time Parrish properly noted crossing the Snake River.

Ricketts assumes a great deal about the description of the crossing at this location which is not based upon the journal. Going into greater detail describing this crossing than the first crossing at Three Island does not imply anything except that Parrish went into

Ricketts analysis

Ricketts's analysis of Rev. Edward Evans Parrish Diary supporting the Northside Alternate is shown below, except for the portions included above in the analyses of the Parish diary.

FIRST WAGON TRAIN TO CROSS THE OREGON TRAIL ON THE NORTH SIDE OF THE SNAKE RIVER by Clair Ricketts
DIARY OF REV. EDWARD E. PARRISH 1844

FIRST WAGON TRAIN ON THE NORTH SIDE OREGON TRAIL

An Analysis by Clair Ricketts

INTRODUCTION

To the best of my knowledge, this is the only written material on the first wagon train to cross the north side route of the Oregon Trail. Virginia has put together a very comprehensive research of this trail, complete with pictures, some old, maps and first U.S.G.S. surveys. We have walked sections of this trail, observing the ruts ground in solid rocks by iron wheeled wagons where they crossed rock piles, led tours, appeared on television talk shows to gain recognition for this trail. We have been successful in getting a sign which shows where the trail crossed Highway-93 north of the Perrine Bridge. There are now Oregon Trail Tour guide markers on I-84 between Burley and Bliss. The book "Emigrant Trails of Southern Idaho" published by the Bureau of Land Management and the Idaho State Historical Society contains a section called "North Side Alternate—American Falls to Bliss" with one diary entry by Dr. Thomas White in 1852 which definitely shows the trail was well known by then. Plus admitting the lack of good diary descriptions makes it hard to determine how heavily the trail was used, but excellent surface evidence and early township survey clearly indicate the use of many wagons over this route. Also hoping that the inclusion of this section will encourage further research. This has been my goal, I have thoroughly researched the diary of Rev. Edward E. Parrish, Wagon Trains of '44 by Thomas A. Rumer and Catherine Sager's book The Stouthearted Seven. It's my conclusion that Rev. Parrish was part of a wagon train that crossed this north side route in 1844. I have since come across more information concerning old wagon that Parrish mentions in diary entry of Sept. 25th. Sidney W. Moss recalled from his information for

H. H. Bancroft about attempts to take wagons from Ft. Hall through to Oregon in 1841 and 1842, admitting that none succeeded plus the fact that some people involved were Hudson Bay Fur Traders makes me believe that this wagon was abandoned by this group. It stands to reason they would have been following the north side route.

I should mention that Cornelius Gilliams company, of which Parrish was a member, contained 48 families, 108 men, 60 of whom are young men, 167 children, in all 323 persons. 73 wagons, 713 cattle 54 horses and 11 mules. They encountered such bad and rainy weather crossing the plains that they arrived in what is now Idaho, a month later than most wagon trains.

Virginia and I became interested in the Oregon Trail when she came across an old survey map showing the Old Emigrant Road on the north side of Snake River, while she was County Clerk. Until then, we had no idea that the Oregon Trail was also on the north side of the river. It then became our goal to check this out. We were able to locate a number of old trails in area shown on the old survey but which one was the actual trail? Remember this survey was done in 1879, ask yourself how many people were traveling in this area prior to 1879, only fur traders and Oregon Trail Emigrants. So it became our goal to locate the actual trail. We were able to go to the Bureau Land Management in Boise and research all of the old surveys and diary notes that went with the old surveys. We were able to find the diary notes that went with this first survey. It said so many chains south of corner of sections 23, 24, 25, and 26 township 9 range 17 east crossed the old Emigrant Road. We were able to locate that corner section marker and measuring given number of chains south we hit the middle of trail. We knew then we were on the right track. We have followed the trail across Jerome County and have discovered the easiest way to tell if we are on a old wagon road is to find a rock pile. They generally piled all the loose rocks to side of the trail and the iron wheels of wagons ground grooves in solid rock out croppings. It was by showing these grooves worn in solid rocks that we were able to convince Merle Wells

the Idaho State Historian that the Oregon Trail did indeed go on the north side of the Snake River. In fact during a television interview he was asked how many wagons it took to cut grooves in solid rocks like we were looking at, his answer was "THOUSANDS." It was through his efforts that we were able to get a sign put north of Perrine Bridge marking the spot where that trail crossed Hi-way 93. It took a lot of work and researching to get that route established and recognized and if the proposed legislation passes Congress, it will provide for an official study for inclusion in part of the National Historic Trails. Virginia has spent many hours researching and has put together a very complete documentation with maps and pictures of north side route which is now in the hands of the right people who we hope will be doing this study. My hope is that this research I am doing of Rev. Edward Parrish's diary will help substantiate that documentation she has put together.

Our next goal was to find out who took the first wagon train across that trail. We knew that the HUDSON'S BAY company established, and other fur traders used this road in the 1830s because it was the shortest distance between Fort Hall and Fort Boise. Our efforts have been hampered by the fact that other trail buffs have not done a thorough research of this area. They assumed that the trail only went west on the south side of the Snake River and never actually got out and walked any of the trail. It is slow and it takes time, we have spent 20 some years walking, driving, researching the first surveys of this area and transferring this information to new up to date government U.S.G.S. survey maps. We are able to show where the trail went even though it may not be visible due to modern construction such as farming, road building, etc. But surprisingly enough, a good many miles of the existing trail are still visible on both sides of the Snake River from border to border of the State of Idaho. In fact, some of the most prominent ruts anywhere in the State are located in Jerome County. The Bonneville Flood washed all the top soil off the rocks, from Devils Corral to Jerome Golf Course leaving the land unsuitable for agriculture.

Our first big break came when we were attending the National Oregon Trail Convention in Baker City, Oregon a few years back. On one of our tours we stopped at a little book store in Wallowa, Oregon where they had a bunch of Oregon Trail diaries. My first step in viewing these old diaries is to see what they have to say when they reach Fort Hall. I found a copy of Rev. Edward Parrish's diary written in 1844 in which

he stated that 8 or 9 miles below Fort Hall we crossed the Lewis River as that was what the Snake River was first called. This was the break we were looking for. You would think this enough proof to establish the fact that the first wagon train crossed the north side in 1844. But we only opened Pandora's Box. This goes against the assumption of other trail historians but I am ready to take Rev. Parrish's diary and present my case as to why I think he went on the north side of the river and not south side as claimed by other trail historians. I would like to take Parrish's diary and follow it from Fort Hall to Fort Boise and with excerpts from other diaries and show you why there is no doubt in my mind that Parrish was on the north side of the Snake River. I run into the argument why would he take an unknown route when the year before Dr. Whitman led a wagon train on the south side. First this route was not an unknown trail, Hudson Bay fur traders had been using it since the very beginning of the fur trade. In the late 1950's I and another fellow took this north side route from American Falls to Lake Channel looking for Indian Artifacts. Back then, hunting Indian Artifacts was a popular hobby, today you wouldn't even dare think of it. Little did I know then that we were following the north side route of the Oregon Trail. We would stop at all the sand blows and check for signs of old Indian camp grounds. At this one sand blow along side the road we were following, I came across a lot of interesting artifacts. There were 50 caliber, copper case, rifle cartridge, 36 caliber cartridge case, 40-82 cartridge, 32-40 cartridge, 25-20 cartridge plus other cartridge cases, square nails, horse nails, brass button off a military uniform plus a handle to a knife and numerous white buttons but what really caught my eye was what I thought were long white tube beads plus what looked like pieces of a doll. I didn't give these things much thought until I had a chance a few years later to show them to Ruth Gruhn an archeologist who was excavating the Wilson Butte Cave at that time. She told me what I had were artifacts from a Hudson Bay fur trading camp. What I thought were Indian beads were pipe stems from trade pipes and the pieces of a doll were what was left of the bowls. If I had known then what I know now about the Oregon Trail I would have been back there the next day screening that sand blow. Now all that area is under cultivation. Back then I could gotten away it without anyone ever giving it a thought. But at least I think it proves the north side route was well known from the very beginning.

One of the first reasons why I think Parrish split from group he started out with occurred Wed. September 11, 1844 to quote Parrish's diary on that date "*Clear and cold this morning. Neal and Mitchell Gilliam and Mr. Jacob Hoover, each with a few families and wagons were all camped together and all started as if going to make a day's drive. My friend, Mr. Holly, and myself led off, followed by Mitchell, Neal and Mr. Hoover. We went three miles when Mitchell turned down, and Neal turned up a small spring branch, Mr. Hoover following us. This was carrying out what the Gilliams had arranged the afternoon previous, the object being to get rid of us. So let it be.*" What did Parrish mean by this

statement? I think he was saying if you don't like our company, you go your way and we will go our way. After the Sept. 11th episode there is no more mention of Mitchell, Neal or the Gilliams, In his journey down the north side of the river. I am sure that when Parrish reached Fort Hall that he talked to anyone he could find about what lay ahead and was there anyway to avoid traveling with Gilliams. Since there were fur traders and mountain men there who were familiar with the North Side Trail I am sure was he told about it.

[All the remaining text of Rickett's analysis is included in the earlier portion of this article.]

more detail for this crossing for an unknown reason. All large river crossings were dangerous. There were people who drowned at this crossing.¹³ The descriptions of both crossings match the established crossings on the main Oregon Trail.

for emigrant wagon travel by John Thomas Jeffreys in 1854¹⁴ and is far different than the Northside Alternate route proposed by Ricketts because the supposed Northside Alternate route would have traveled southwest from Fort Hall.

RICKETTS: Another interesting diary quote is taken from Dr. Thomas White's diary 1852. quote: *I forgot to say that the country around Ft. Hall for many miles is low & and flat had been overflowed in early part of the summer that I was there, here too is considerable timber, & by crossing snaker river at this point, & striking north west direction to Ft. Boise, the distance will shortened near one half, but I am told that the first 30 m. is low & many bad places. The Hudson Bay Company pack that way, & after passing the first thirty miles, the route is better than the other, with better water & grass till you reach Ft. Boise.*" I think this diary entry is very interesting and enlightening. It shows that the north side route was well known about before 1852. A very good reason why I think Parrish took this route in 1844. I rest my case.

JE: *Hudson's Bay Company packers had been using a pack train route on the north side of the Snake River for many years. Their route crossed the Snake River above Fort Hall at the mouth of the Blackfoot River, traveled northwest across the desert to the Big Lost River, went west across the Camas Prairie, before rejoining the main Oregon Trail on Ditto Creek. This route would be opened*

CONCLUSION

I believe that Ricketts's analysis of the Parrish diary and his conclusion that Parrish was the first to navigate the north side of the Snake River in a wagon in 1844 is in error. The primary points offered in support of the Northside Alternate found in Ricketts's analysis that are incorrect include:

- 1 noting streams where none exist
- 2 ignoring descriptions of river crossings to force them to fit other locations
- 3 using impossible travel distances to fit assumed locations
- 4 making assumptions which are not supported by the actual entries of the journal.
- 5 Parrish had knowledge of the miles to travel the next day, indicating he used a guidebook that would not have been available for a new route.

Based upon the analysis of the Parrish journal provided above and knowledge of the area, I believe Rev. Edward Evans Parrish confused crossing the Portneuf River with crossing the Snake River, and that he followed the main Oregon Trail across Idaho. All other entries in the Parrish journal from Fort Hall to Fort Boise indicate that Parrish followed the existing

13 Celinda E. Hines, "Life and Death on the Oregon Trail," in Holmes, ed., Vol. 6, 1853-1854 (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 115-16. Also found in *Transactions of the Oregon Pioneer Association*, #46 (1918).


14 See Jerry Eichhorst, "The Jeffreys Route Across Idaho and Attacks on Wagon Trains in 1854," *Overland Journal* 38, no. 3 (2020): 91-107.

Oregon Trail along the south side of the Snake River, forded the Snake River at Three Island Crossing, traveled along the foothills to the Boise River, and followed the Boise River to its mouth at the Snake River, where he crossed the Snake River for the second time. Parrish confused crossing the Portneuf River with the Lewis or Snake River, which misled Clair and Virginia Ricketts many years later.

Although there are what appear to be wagon ruts along the north side of the Snake River near Twin Falls, there is no evidence they are from emigrant wagons traveling to Oregon in the era of the Oregon Trail. No emigrant journals have been found that describe emigrant wagon travel on the north side of the Snake River to Oregon between 1843 and 1869 along the route of the Northside Alternate east of where the North Alternate crossed the Snake River at Salmon Falls.¹⁵

¹⁵ The author has a collection of over 2700 accounts of people who traveled in Idaho. The only journal reference to someone crossing the Snake River below Fort Hall and above Salmon Falls that I have found is that of Rt. Rev.

The author believes these ruts to be later freight and farm roads for local settlers. Some of those roads may have been used by later travelers to Oregon as well.

The Northside Alternate has no supporting journal evidence that it was ever used for emigrant wagon travel to Oregon during the Oregon Trail era. Therefore, all references to the “Northside Alternate” in Idaho should be eliminated, and all trail markers along this supposed route should be removed. 

Augustine Magloire Alexander Blanchet, 1847, who took his horses across the Snake River ten miles below American Falls to travel down the north side of the river. His wagons traveled the normal Oregon Trail route on the south side of the river. This crossing would have been near Rock Creek, twenty-five miles downstream from the Portneuf River crossing. Edward J. Kowrach and J. B. A. Brouillet, *Journal of a Catholic Bishop on the Oregon Trail: The Overland Crossing of the Rt. Rev. A. M. A. Blanchet Bishop of Walla Walla from Montreal to Oregon Territory March 23 1847 to January 23 1851. Blackrobe Buries Whitmans* (Fairfield, Wash.: Ye Galleon Press, 1978).



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