

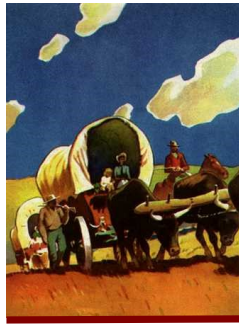
Summer Issue

2016

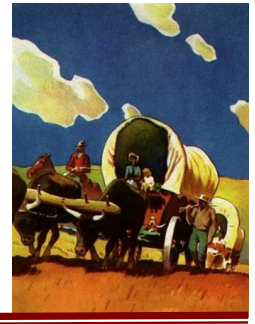


CALIFORNIA TRAIL HERITAGE ALLIANCE

# THE Wagon Tongue



## SUMMER REFLECTIONS ALONG THE TRAIL



By mid-summer, most emigrants reached the most trying section of the California Trail. Having reached Fort Hall, replenished supplies, they began the southwest journey through southern Idaho and into the Great Basin. Many traveler diaries wrote about the hardships but Keith Meldahl in Hard Road West summed it up by writing that

*“For the emigrants, the Basin and Range/Great Basin would dish out the harshest tribulations of the westward journey. Here geologic circumstances would mate with summer’s heat to spawn misery, thirst, hunger, abandonment, and death in frightful abundance.”*

Travelers would see and experience a countryside unlike any that they might have passed on their journey. One of the first areas that they would pass was the City of Rocks. This was a very extraordinary valley that was a couple of miles long and filled with massive granite blocks called “City of Rocks or City of Castles”. Many travelers camped there and marked the monuments of nature.

They then moved into what is now northeastern Nevada. The 1849 traveler, David Campbell later recalled that:

*“Those who came to California bore to the south and came into what is called the '1000Spring Valley', a level valley surrounded by mountains. There were large holes of water every few rods all over the valley, the water being as clear as crystal. They were from five to ten feet across; and the water was about one foot below the surface off the ground; and they never run over. The ground would shake them when a person walked over it. We could not see the bottom of them. I tried to touch bottom with a ten-foot pole, but couldn't do it. We had to guard our stock to keep them from getting into these holes. There were a few willows growing in this valley.”*

The weather also changed as they moved into the Great Basin. The summer days were extremely hot and nights very cold. Gordon Cone writes in his 1849 diary:

*“Wednesday August 29th The morning is cold, thermometer at 20° and ice fourth of an inch thick on our water pails. For this latitude (41½°) the weather is very cold for the month of august-- but our altitude is very high, which is the cause of the cold weather in these regions. The beauty of the valley continues, and is unsurpassed.....Friday September 7th Thermometor at 36° at sunrise, and at one P.M. 95° makeing a great difference in the weather since we entered the valley.”*

The extreme weather conditions were noted by John Cobbe, 1849, in his diary that:



## 2016 Trail Days



*The Trail Center had another successful Trail Days on June 4-5, 2016. More than 750 visitors came and spent the day with the Trail Days participants.*



*Here are but a few of the participants that volunteered during the weekend.*



# CTHA Parade Participants

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*The California Trail Center participated in the 2016 Elko Basque-Independence Day Parade.*

*Participants rode on a float and walked along the parade route. It was another great opportunity to share with the public and show our great volunteers that make the California Trail history come alive.*





## UPCOMING EVENTS

### CTHA Board Meetings

\*All California Trail Center Foundation Board meetings are held at the California Trail Interpretive Center and begin at 6:00 p.m.

August 16	CTHA Board Mtg.
August 2-7	OCTA Convention In Ft. Hall, Idaho
August 4-5	Western Heritage Festival In Elko, NV
September 20	CTHA Board Mtg.

## KEY LINKS

[www.facebook.com/pages/California-Trail-Center-Foundation/157116030992463](http://www.facebook.com/pages/California-Trail-Center-Foundation/157116030992463)

<http://www.californiatrailcenter.org/>

[www.emigranttrailswest.org](http://www.emigranttrailswest.org)

[www.octa-trails.org](http://www.octa-trails.org)

[www.appl.org](http://www.appl.org)

[www.blm.gov/nv/st/en/fo/elko\\_field\\_office/  
blm\\_programs/blm\\_special\\_areas/  
california\\_trail\\_historic.html](http://www.blm.gov/nv/st/en/fo/elko_field_office/blm_programs/blm_special_areas/california_trail_historic.html)

## Reflections from Duck Valley



Ruler of the Plains, by Owyhee Combined School student Anthony Hernandez

The California Trail Interpretive Center is currently presenting a new exhibit titled *Reflections from Duck Valley: A Native American Youth Art Exhibition.*

The exhibit officially opens August 1. This temporary exhibit features paintings by Native American high school students from Owyhee Combined School, located in the Duck Valley Indian Reservation, Owyhee, Nevada. The Duck Valley Indian Reservation is in both Nevada and Idaho, and is occupied by descendants of the Western Shoshone and Northern Paiute tribes.

"Reflections from Duck Valley: A Native American Youth Art Exhibition" opens on Aug. 1 and will run through October. The exhibit includes 31 paintings.

"Our students took a step back to reflect and paint depictions of both traditional and modern Paiute and Shoshone lifeways and culture," said Kit Julianto, art teacher at Owyhee.

Julianto worked closely with California Trail Interpretive Center staff to create the exhibit. "We appreciate the talent and creativity of these young artists, and we are proud to showcase their colorful and vibrant paintings at our site," said Park Ranger Alex Rose.

Some of the paintings are for sale through the Southern Nevada Conservancy, a Trail Center partner.

(CTIC Press Release)



## CALIFORNIA TRAIL INTERPRETATIVE CENTER STAFF

During this spring, California Trail Interpretive Center Education Intern, Susan Reese has had a very busy schedule. Her role at the CTIC is to research and disseminate information on the history of the California Trail to individual visitors, families, school groups, and bus tours visiting the facility. Her prominent personal goal is to provide fresh information about the subject of Pioneer History with components that will interest and engage persons of all age groups.

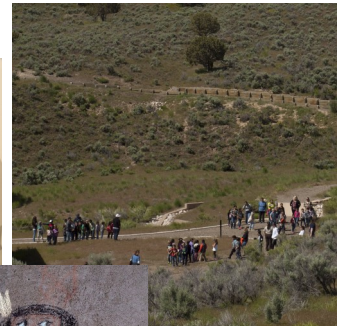
She has had several opportunities to work with over 500 school children from Elko County schools.

She has been able to team teach with the BLM employees at the California Trail Center and participated in training Docents for the California Trail Center.

Some of the activities that she planned were a chalk art event with a Pioneer Trail theme, utilizing the History Library for a story telling component, and guided a Pioneer Walk for younger visitors.



(Susan Reese Photos)



## Rabbit Stew

1 rabbit dressed and cut into serving pieces  
 ¼ c flour  
 4 T Butter  
 1 c potatoes chopped

2 onions chopped  
 Salt and pepper  
 ¼ c chopped carrots  
 Mixed Herbs

Mix flour and seasonings together. Coat the rabbit pieces with the mixture. Melt the butter and fry the rabbit pieces until browned. Put the pieces in a large pan and add the onion, carrot and potatoes. Cover with water and season with salt, pepper and herbs. Cover and cook for three hours.

- the Legends of America website.



## *Summer Reflections Along the Trail* (Continued from page 1)

"July of hail and raind on the care worn and weather beaten emigrants We went into camp  
erly this evening made 24 mils to day ---- Some few willows on the this creek this is all the  
timber it produces."

Mixed feelings came when reaching the Humboldt River. Anticipation was of a major river that would lead them on their 350 mile trek through the Great Basin. MacGregor writes in his Overland book:

*"...the Humboldt River just barely served as a lifeline across Nevada. The soil along its banks was alkali and dusty to the extreme, yielding a very poor quality of grass. Unlike most rivers the emigrants were familiar with, which became larger as they went down stream, the Humboldt maintained its skimpy width and volume to the end. There are few tributaries to feed it, and the heat and soft soil absorb or evaporate any contribution that they might make. The result is a foul-tasting, long, thin pond with a stagnant current increasingly laden with minerals as one progresses across Nevada. The river seemed to have no fish, only frogs...."*

Upon reaching the end of the Humboldt, travelers found that their trials didn't end. They still had the 40-mile Desert to contend with before reaching the Sierras. Gordon Cone, 1849, reflects that:

*"We have passed the "sink" or termination of Humboldt river; and after haveing travelled along its Banks four hundred miles, and enjoyed so many refreshing draughts from its limped stream, it is not without some little emotion that we see it in its final resting place, in the midst of a Desert..... The "Trucky", and "Salmon trout" or "Carson" rivers that rise in the Sierra Nevada mountains, are not as long as the Humboldt, but like it find one common level in the sands of the Desert.....We travelled all night, and until eight o'clock this morning. Some of the cattle have given out, and we are fearful that we shall not be able to get all our wagons acrost. We have eighteen miles yet to go before we find water, and water is what our cattle are suffering for. The heat of the Sun is almost unendurable; and as the whole country is covered with a thick coating of a saline matter, the atmosphere is highly impregnated with salt, that makes the thirst of both man and beast intolerable. In a distance of seven miles that we travelled this morning, we passed twenty six wagons that had been abandoned by emigrants whose teams had given out. A great many cattle are lieing dead beside the road, the ballance of the teams haveing been packed and driven on. These scenes and sacrifices are among the variety that go to make up the experience of those that cross these plains, "*

Based on these conditions, it was amazing that over 200,000 travelers completed the California Trail.

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# CALIFORNIA TRAIL

## HERITAGE ALLIANCE



### The Fun Never Stops

The Fun Never Stops at the California Trail Heritage Alliance – yes – you read that right. At our May meeting the Board voted to modernize the name of our 501(c)(3) organization. Our legal name will remain unchanged. This new handle will serve as our common “doing business as” name.

In addition we have added Bailey Benson Billington to our board. Bailey, who replaces Jonathan Foster, comes with much expertise in the non-profit world and many skills that will be helpful to us.

The board hosted John Ruhs, the BLM Nevada State Director, and Marci Todd, the BLM NV Associate State Director at a potluck dinner at the Jeff Williams family Gun Museum in Osino prior to Trail Days in early June. We briefed the State Director on many of our current activities and in our success at raising funds through grants to support marketing efforts for the Trail Center. John Winner gave a very good synopsis of our efforts to establish a library at the Trail Center that will house the “Western Emigrant Trails Collection”. An architectural assessment evaluating the feasibility of adding a new room to the existing building for the library has been completed by Jacques Errecart and is undergoing review by board members and the BLM.

The lighting is going in on the Interpretive Plaza as I write this update. The support of our members, board, Trails West and Oregon California Trail Association is greatly appreciated in this long-in-coming improvement. The Alliance has also been partnering with the BLM to troubleshoot and replace parts in the Humboldt River Water Feature – a primary part of the outdoor exhibits in the plaza.

The Alliance partnered with the BLM to have a parade in the annual Basque-Independence Day parade in Elko. The pioneer camp – complete with a spinner of wool and musicians was a big hit as it slowly rolled down Elko streets. Plans are underway for involvement in the Western Heritage Festival in early August as well.

Looking ahead, we will be doing more work on our Strategic Plan, hosting a private pre-view of a native American art exhibit for special members, working on the adopt a trail program and on plans for a bike path.

Thank you all for your support, interest, and help with all the things we do.

- *Helen Hankins, President*

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In the Humbug Poem by Madison Moorman, 1850, he writes:

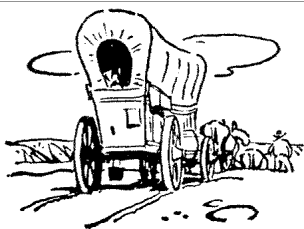
“...But when we to the Humboldt came  
It soon with us lost all its fame  
We viewed it as a great outrage  
Instead of grass to find wild sage...”



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[www.trailcenterfoundation.org](http://www.trailcenterfoundation.org)



## Join Today! - Membership Application

Join your friends and neighbors and become a supporter of the California Trail Interpretive Center! Every membership supports the California Trail Interpretive Center and Trail preservation. When you join other enthusiasts to become a member, or renew your membership, you directly support interpretation, education, and special events at the California Trail Interpretive Center, and help preserve the Trail and its history for the benefit of current and future generations.

Annual Memberships: ☐ New ☐ Renewal

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/ST/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

All members receive the informative electronic newsletter, electronic updates about special events and activities and a 10% discount at the California Trail Interpretive Center store. Invitations to one or more special events are extended to the membership levels above the Nancy Kelsey level.

Level	Lucinda Duncan	Nancy Kelsey	Virginia Reed	Elizabeth Townsend	Sarah Winnemucca
	Individual	Family	Supporter	Partner	Lifetime
Special Events)			1	2	3
Cost	\$25	\$50	\$75	\$100	\$200

\*Special Events may include presentations, workshops, tours, exhibit previews or other activities. Individuals who choose to make a donation equal to or greater than \$250 will receive recognition, if desired, on the Donor Wall in the California Trail Interpretive Center

PAYMENT: ☐ Check ☐ Visa ☐ MC ☐ Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Card # \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Make Check Payable to: **California Trail Center Foundation, 530 Idaho St., Elko NV 89801**

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IN ADDITION TO BECOMING A MEMBER OF THE CALIFORNIA TRAIL CENTER FOUNDATION, INDIVIDUALS OR BUSINESSES MAY ALSO MAKE A DONATION TO THE CALIFORNIA TRAIL CENTER FOUNDATION. FOR THOSE DONATIONS GREATER THAN \$250.00, THE DONOR CAN CHOOSE TO BE PUBLICLY RECOGNIZED ON THE DONOR WALL AT THE CALIFORNIA TRAIL INTERPRETIVE CENTER. RECOGNITION LEVELS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

### CALIFORNIA TRAIL CENTER DONOR WALL RECOGNITION LEVELS

<u>LEVEL NAME</u>	<u>DONATION AMOUNT</u>
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Trail Blazer	\$500.00 to \$2,499.99
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Empire Building	\$5,000.00 or Greater

## CONTACT US!

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