

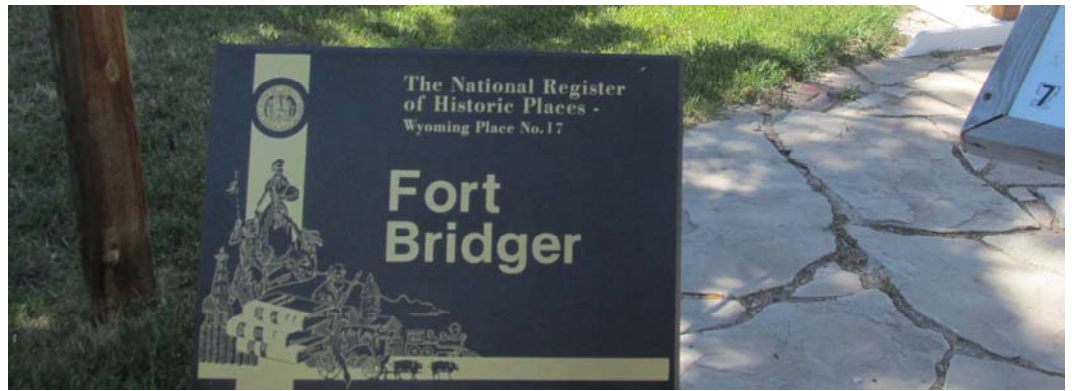
Winter ISSUE

2018



CALIFORNIA TRAIL HERITAGE ALLIANCE

THE Wagon Tongue



In 1928, Fort Bridger was designated a Wyoming Historical Site. This was about 75 years after Jim Bridger, a fur trader had established his trading post along the emigrant trail to California and Oregon.

Fort Bridger is located on the Blacks Fork of the Green River in Wyoming. It was considered a vital resupply post for emigrants on the Oregon, California and Mormon Trails. It later served as a crossroad for the Pony Express Route, Transcontinental Railroad and the Lincoln Highway. Today, it is still located in the Bridger Valley, also named for Jim Bridger, just off Interstate 80.

Jim Bridger had the foresight that emigrants would need to replenish their supplies, having traveled through Wyoming without any other place to purchase supplies since Fort Laramie. He and business partner, Louis Vasquez, built their trading post in a fertile valley that emigrants could rest and replenish supplies before traveling on to Fort Hall or on the new route to the Salt Lake.

As emigrants traveled, they had expectations of an established trading post so with the exception of the abundance of grass and water that had a variety of fish for the emigrants, they were sadly disappointed when they arrived at Fort Bridger,

"Fort Bridger, as it is called, is a small trading-post, established and now occupied by Messrs. Bridger and Vasquez. The buildings are two or three miserable log-cabins, rudely constructed, and bearing but a faint resemblance to habitable houses. Its is in a handsome and fertile bottom of the small stream on which we are encamped, about two miles south of the point where the old wagon trail, via Fort Hall, makes an angle, and takes a northwesterly course." - Edwin Bryant, 1848

Fort Bridger was a significant part of history for the emigrants It was also at Fort Bridger that the fated Donner Party changed their route. As noted by Harlan Jacobs in 1846,

"FROM Laramie we kept on to Fort Bridger, where we halted for three days. Here we met a man named L. W. Hastings, who had written the book which I have mentioned. (Note: Lansford Hastings book - The Emigrant's Guide to Oregon and California) He had just come from California, and professed to know all about the proper way to get there. He got all the emigrants together, and recommended that we leave the old trail and make a cut off from Bridger to pass round the south end of Salt Lake, and strike the Humboldt river one hundred and fifty miles above its sink. He said we would thus save three hundred miles of travel, it being that much nearer than the way by Fort Hall. There was a difference of opinion among our chief men. Governor Boggs and his company, our captain, Judge Moran, and some others were in favor of the Fort Hall route, but my uncle and old man Pyle, and James F. Reid, and George Donner were in favor of the cut-off recommended by Hastings."

(continued on page 3)



Jim Bridger

Born in Richmond, Virginia,
Raised in St. Louis, Missouri,
Blacksmith apprentice, boat handler,
Good shot and skilled woodsman.

Trapped with Ashley-Henry fur trading company,
First white man to set eyes on the Great Salt Lake,
One of the first partners of the Rocky Mountain Fur
Company,
First to report on the geysers and petrified fossil
forests of Yellowstone.

20 year trapper,
Traveling all over the Rocky Mountains,
Lived among the Native American people,
Married and had children with native women.

With Louis Vasquez, established Fort Bridger,
Capitalized on the emigrant trade,
Continued the fur trade as a business owner,
Catering to the emigrants and his native friends.

Warm and humorous,
A storyteller,
Shared mountaineer crafts, and perils of his
and others adventurous lives with visitors.



Change came as he competed with the Mormon trade,
Forced to leave Fort Bridger,
In 1858, lost ownership of the fort and moved back to
Westport, Missouri,
Suffering from rheumatism and failed eyesight, died
in 1881, on his farm.



Fort Bridger (continued from page 1)



Bridger also continued his business in the fur trade by trading with the Native Americans that he had befriended during his previous travels in the west. Emigrants such as Edwin Bryant remarked about the traders and natives.

"About five hundred Snake Indians were encamped near the trading post this morning....There are a number of traders here from the neighborhood of Taos, and the head-waters of the Arkansas, who have brought with them dressed buckskins, buckskin shirts, pantaloons, and moccasins, to trade with the emigrants. The emigrant trade is a very important one to the mountain merchants and trappers...In a trade, they have no consciences, taking all the "advantages;" but in a matter of hospitality or they are open-handed - ready, many of them, to divide with the needy what they possess."

Bryant goes on to say,

"An immense number of oxen and horses are scattered over the entire valley grazing upon the green grass. Parties of Indians, hunters and emigrants are galloping to and fro, and the scene is one of almost holiday liveliness. It is difficult to realize that we are in a wilderness, a thousand miles from civilization..."

However, by 1853, things had changed from this idyllic lifestyle to tragedy with Bridger's family. He was also facing competition with the Mormons that settled in the area. Conflict occurred. Bridger moved his family back to Missouri and returned to scouting. While he was out of the area, the Mormons took control of the trading post. It was claimed that Vasquez sold Ft. Bridger by power of attorney which was disputed by Bridger and later the claim was rejected by the government.

Relations with the Mormons deteriorated with the federal government and by 1858, The Army established its military presence by claiming the fort as an official Army post. Mormons had burned down Fort Bridger so Camp Scott was established as a temporary post. Later, the Army rebuilt Fort Bridger to use as a base to protect laborers on the transcontinental railroad, gold miners in South Pass and the Shoshone Indians that remained in the area.

Fort Bridger has served many purposes. During the Civil war, volunteer units were stationed there. In 1860, the Pony Express used Fort Bridger as one of it's stations. The barn that was used for the Pony Express is still standing today. Once the expansion of the railroad reached the west, most forts became obsolete. That included Fort Bridger. It was finally closed in 1890.



The site became part of a cattle town and in 1928, was sold to the Wyoming Historic Landmark Commission to be recognized as a historic monument. Some original buildings remain today and now contains a museum with artifacts from different time periods.

Fort Bridger Treaty



In 1863, the Fort Bridger Treaty was made with the Eastern Shoshone and Bannock Indians on July 3rd. This treaty established Shoshone lands very generally between the Bitterroot Mountains to the north, Wind River Mountains to the East and Uintah Mountains to the South.

The Western Border was not defined but was understood to reach as far as the Oregon Territory border. The 1868 Fort Bridger Treaty defined the lands more explicitly. Chief Washakie's Eastern Shoshone band was one of several bands involved in the treaty.



Trail Alliance Activities



UPCOMING EVENTS

CTHA Board Meetings

*All California Trail Heritage Alliance Board meetings are held at the California Trail Interpretive Center on the 3rd Tuesdays of the month and begin at 5:30 p.m.

Feb. 20 CTHA Board Meeting , BLM office

Mar. 20 CTHA Board Meeting , CTIC

Apr. 17 CTHA Board Meeting , CTIC

California Trail Days
May 19-20, 2018

KEY LINKS

www.facebook.com/pages/California-Trail-Center-Foundation/157116030992463

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

www.emigranttrailswest.org

www.octa-trails.org

www.appl.org

www.blm.gov/nv/st/en/fo/elko_field_office/blm_programs/blm_special_areas/

MET Mapping in Ruby Valley

These photos show rock alignment (88) where the emigrants moved the rocks aside for an easier path and a buckle (85) found during our MET Mapping work in Ruby Valley.





FEBRUARY TRAIL CENTER ACTIVITIES

ELKO, Nev. – Create valentines, take a virtual tour of the Trail, and discover what owls eat. Visit the California Trail Center during February for a variety of family friendly programs.

The following programs are free and open to everyone:

Feb. 3, 10:00 a.m.: Asa Kenyon, California Trail Emigrant

Lynne Kistler will dress as her great grandfather, Asa Kenyon, and present a talk about the Forty Mile Desert. Learn how he settled in Nevada after traveling the California Trail. Following the talk, the Elko County Art Club will present an art activity with soft chalk pastels.

Feb. 4, 2:00 p.m.: Junior Ranger Program: Mountain Man Show and Tell

Attention all kids: The bold explorers known as mountain men were away from civilization for months or years at a time. In the wild, they often had to make their own gear. Join Education Program Technician Tim Burns and discover what a mountain man kept in his “possibles bag,” and other tools he used as he explored the rugged West.

Feb. 11, 2:00 p.m.: Junior Ranger Program: Old Fashioned Valentines

Did you know the oldest Valentine discovered dates back to the 1400s? Join Ranger Erika and create hand-made valentines. Make a quilted pioneer themed card, and write a personalized calligraphy note. These cards make wonderful gifts for friends or family.

Feb. 17, 10:00 a.m.: Virtual Tour of the California Trail

Do you know what it was like to travel 2,000 miles in a covered wagon? Mariett Foster Cummings does, and she will share her experience of traveling the California Trail in 1852. See the sights, hear the sounds, and feel the emotions that a typical emigrant would have felt on the five-month trip. Ranger Greg will be joining Mariett to give some modern context to her experience.

Feb. 18, 2:00 p.m.: Junior Ranger Program: A High Desert Winter

Traditional Great Basin Native Americans carefully planned and adapted to the harsh climate of the high desert. Join Tim Burns and learn about their winter survival strategies.

Feb. 25, 2:00 p.m.: Junior Ranger Program: What do Owls Eat?

Unlike humans, owls do not chew their food. Instead, they swallow their food whole. Some owl pellets can have up to six separate animals! Join Ranger Erika to dissect owl pellets, and learn what owls eat. Can you piece together an entire skeleton?

For more info, contact—Alex Rose at 775-738-1849 or CAtrailcenter@gmail.com.



Winter fun at the Trail Center



In December, kids had a great time at the Trail Center doing the various Xmas crafts. Trail Alliance members volunteered by teaching and assisting the children as they traveled



through the various centers. Children were able to make candy cane reindeer, snowflakes and personal silhouettes.

Visitors were also treated to music by Southwind and hot chocolate.

Core Members:

Kerry Aguirre
 Tamara Baker
 Bailey Billington
 John Collett
 Walt Goddard
 Marlene Goddard
 Helen Hankins
 Duane Jones

CTHA Board of Directors

At-Large Members

Kevin Lee
 Blaine Benedict
 Leah Brady
 Larry Hyslop
 Jacqueline Lucero
 Gratton Miller
 Larry Schmidt
 Frank Tortorich
 John Winner

Newsletter

Editor: Leah Brady
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 Helen Hankins
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CALIFORNIA TRAIL

HERITAGE ALLIANCE



President's Message

'Tis the season to ponder the year past and to look forward to projects ahead of us. I believe the California Trail Heritage Alliance is fortunate on both counts. Since we have shared our 2017 accomplishments in past issues, I will focus on the year ahead.

Hot Hole – Kevin Lee took a proposal to the Elko City Council to fence the Hot Hole with more attractive and safety fencing. His proposal was accepted. The Alliance will now be working to obtain grant funds to help pay for the fence and interpretive panels.

Bike Path – NDOT has issued a Request for Proposal for the bike path from Elko to the California Trail Interpretive Center. We look forward to further work with them in the spring and summer. NDOT will be contacting stakeholders directly about upcoming meetings.

Trail Stewardship – BLM staff will meet with the Board of the Alliance at our January meeting to select a Trail Segment or segments that the Alliance wishes to “adopt”. Helen Hankins and Mike Mauser have received the State Historic Preservation Officer training for trail stewardship. We are looking forward to another training in June.

Trail Mapping – John Winner conducted classroom and MET Mapping seminars in October and November. The highlight was actually mapping part of the Hastings Cutoff in Ruby Valley. Hankins has just submitted an Application to the Fish and Wildlife Service to map in the Ruby Lake National Wildlife Refuge. An application will be submitted to the local ranger district for mapping on the Humboldt Toiyabe National Forest in Ruby Valley as well.

Educational Program – Duane Jones, Helen Hankins, and Chuck and Pami Briggs and Connie Jacobs met with OCTA officials via a teleconference to discuss the educational program OCTA has initiated and is operating in Independence Missouri School District. Chuck and Pami are considering exploring the possibility of a similar program in the Elko School District.

CTIC Support – Duane Jones attended a recent meeting at the California Trail Interpretive Center to discuss the “big picture” for the Center. From all accounts it was a productive and successful meeting. Leah Brady, Helen Hankins and others participated in the recent Pioneer Kids Christmas. Many board members are looking forward to supporting the annual Trail Days in mid-May.

Grants – Due to Duane Jones's efforts, the Alliance was successful in getting grants from Travel Nevada for billboards, Nevada Magazine and Travel Guide, and Trail Days.

Outreach – The Alliance is partnering with the Southern Nevada Conservancy and the CTIC to sponsor and fund a “Media Kit” to help promote the CTIC with the media.

Retirement of Blaine Benedict – It was with sadness that we accepted the resignation of Blaine Benedict from our Board of Directors. He has been a mainstay in the development and success of the Trail Center for a decade or more. We will miss him greatly. Blaine has proposed to help with bringing a Studebaker Exhibit to the 2020 OCTA convention – it is wonderful that he will still be working with us.

I am looking forward to an exciting and productive 2018.

- Helen Hankins





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www.californiatrailheritagealliance.org



DONOR WALL

IN ADDITION TO BECOMING A MEMBER OF THE CALIFORNIA TRAIL HERITAGE ALLIANCE, INDIVIDUALS OR BUSINESSES MAY ALSO MAKE A DONATION TO THE CALIFORNIA TRAIL HERITAGE ALLIANCE 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>
Pioneer	\$250.00 to \$499.99
Trail Blazer	\$500.00 to \$2,499.99
Wagon Master	\$2,500.00 to \$4,999.99
Empire Building	\$5,000.00 or Greater

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 Supporter membership levels & above.

Level	Individual	Family	Supporter	Partner	Lifetime
Special Event(s)			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 Heritage Alliance, P.O. Box 1778 Elko NV 89803**

CONTACT US!

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