

Fall Issue

2021



CALIFORNIA TRAIL HERITAGE ALLIANCE

The Wagon Tongue

“And a Good Time Was Had by All”

It all began in 2017 – our bid to hold the 2020 OCTA Convention was accepted. We had lots of energy, enthusiasm, ideas, and plans!



The Convention was held in September 2021 and was a great success by all accounts. The high caliber of the speakers, the expertise and talent of the activity station presenters, the knowledge and preparation of the tour guides, navigators and hosts – it all worked together and made our convention an unforgettable event.

Nearly one hundred individuals were involved in making this a successful convention – local volunteers and planners, CA-NV Chapter members who pitched in, speakers, activity station presenters, tour leaders and support personnel, registration desk people and many more. A special thanks to Duane Jones for his extraordinary work in lining up a second bus company after Coach USA backed out, and for doing such a great job with the food and entertainment.



The tours provided a very broad and wonderful perspective of trail history. They included the California Trail Highlights and the Humboldt is North – So Let’s Go South private vehicle tours, bus tours to Lamoille and Long Canyons, and the Gravelly Ford, Fort Ruby and Guns and Ruts tours. The van tour to the Ancient Antelope Trap was also a big hit. Presenters at the activity stations shared a lot of information about cradle board making, willow weaving, pioneer clothing and cooking, edible plants, phrenology, Shoshone bead and buckskin work, and Paiute rabbit fur blanket construction. Other stations included spinning and weaving wool, and the transformation of flax to linen yarn and linsey-woolsey fabric and detailed work with rawhide.



Speakers shared perspectives on westward migration, Lansford Hastings, John Studebaker, Sarah Winnemucca, and stories of the Shoshone and Cherokee peoples on or near the Hastings Cutoff. The history of Fort Ruby, the Mormon Battalion, teaching trail history and the modern Forlorn Hope trail run were other attractions.

Students of Dave Vixie, from the Paradise Seventh Day Adventist Academy sharing their real-life experience of six days on the trail was a special highlight.

All these wonderful events were possible because of the willingness of our local planning team (which included the Johnston’s from Klamath Falls) to be adaptable and flexible through four years of challenge and change. Our



many sponsors, especially Kinross Gold (Bald Mountain), Nevada Humanities, the California Trail Heritage Alliance, the Elko Convention Center and the Elko County Recreation Board, and Farmland Reserve were also an important part of our success!

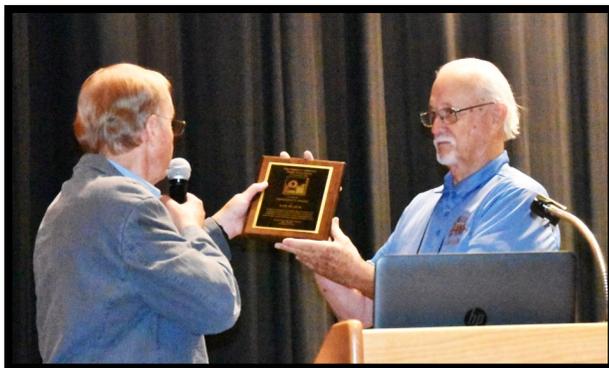
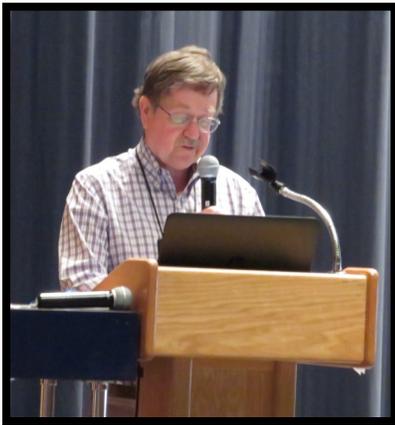
Yes, a good time was had by all.



OCTA 2021



OCTA 2021





UPCOMING EVENTS

CTHA Board Meetings

*At this time California Trail Center Foundation Board meetings will be held by computer/phone conference until further notice and will begin at 5:30 p.m.

- November 11, 2021 – Board Meeting
- December 2021 – NO MEETING
- January 13, 2022 – Board Meeting
- February 10, 2022 – Board Meeting

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/

The California Trail Interpretative Center's website message regarding their reopening:

"The California Trail Center is finally open again! Our days/hours of operation will be limited as we align our staffing and finish some crucial facility repairs but hope to extend these hours soon. Hours of operation for the time being will be Friday and Saturday from 9 am to 4 pm. Thank you all for your patience and we are very excited to be back serving the public."

The CTIC may open occasionally but you should call to make sure it is open before driving there. (1-775-738-1849)

CTHA Board of Directors

Core Members:

- Leah Brady
- Marlene Goddard
- Walt Goddard
- Helen Hankins
- Duane Jones
- Kevin Lee
- Grafton Miller
- Rebecca Stanton

At-Large Members

- Chuck Briggs
- Lisa Dinwiddie
- Paul Dinwiddie
- Jacqueline Lucero

- Larry Schmidt
- Jordan Thomas
- Frank Tortorich
- John Winner

Newsletter

Editor: Leah Brady

Contributors:

Helen Hankins

Pictures:

Isabel Sanchez

Brandolyn Thran

Historic Hastings Cutoff Scene of Today's Lessons



“This is so hard.” – these words characterized the perspective of an eleven-year-old boy I will call John, traveling by wagon and mules on the historic Hastings Cutoff before the recent Oregon-California Trails Association (OCTA) Convention in Elko. With 29 other 7th and 8th grade students, all wearing clothing of the emigrant period, this adolescent was learning real life lessons on a six-day trek along 64 miles of the Hastings Cutoff between Silver Zone Pass and U.S. Highway 93.

Walking along side five mule-drawn covered wagons, the students braved northeastern Nevada's arid country, a ferocious wind driven rain and hail storm and the unexpected responsibilities of setting up camp, cooking, and caring for their animals. Many of the students had not been away from home or their parents before this trip. It had not occurred to some that they would be cooking for themselves in their assigned groups. Not knowing how to cook pancake batter, one group threw it out – only to learn that the alternative was beans. A day later, with their new insight, stew replaced beans on the evening menu.

Under the caring and careful guidance of their teacher, David Vixie, the students learned about teamwork, organization, leadership, communication, and assessment of their efforts. Throughout the journey, Mr. Vixie shared excerpts from the diaries of the emigrants who had traveled the Hastings Cutoff 180 years ago. One of these was the diary of the great-great grandmother of one of the students! The students were expected to write something about their experiences during the day – a series of bullet points as events occurred. Based on these efforts, the students came to marvel that any of the emigrants had time to journal at all – due to all the required camp chores. When one group of camp tenders decided to eat supper instead of getting tents set up before dark, they learned there was a consequence – a required apology to their fellow travelers for not having set up the tents, an interrupted supper, and the still present need to get the tents set up for all.

During what seemed a terrible storm to the students – caught in the vast outdoors with only shaking wagons and flapping canvas for shelter, some students were fearful and worried. John said, “this would be unbearable if it wasn't for Mr. Vixie.”

The support of sixteen other adults who helped with a wide range of tasks and provided a largely invisible 21st century safety net was an important part of this endeavor. Kinross Gold Mines – Bald Mountain (White Pine County) provided key financial support for this remarkable educational experience. In kind support, including camp locations, was provided by Nevada Gold Mines. Support was also provided by the California Trail Heritage Alliance, a non-profit based in Elko NV.

Despite the strangeness of the outdoor classroom and its associated learning challenges, the students were awed by the vastness of this part of Nevada, the beautiful sunsets, and the fantastic splendor of a star-filled sky undiminished by city lights.



After coming off the trail, the students made a presentation to over 200 attendees at the OCTA Convention in Elko about their experiences and visited with convention attendees.

OCTA is the largest national organization promoting protection and preservation of historic trails in the U.S. There are over six hundred miles of historic trails in Elko and White Pine Counties, including the California Trail, the Hastings and Greenhorn Cutoffs, the Central Overland Trail and the Pony Express Trail. For more information, contact helenhankins@gmail.com.



OCTA Educational Trunks

In a collaborative effort with the Oregon-California Trails Association (OCTA), funded by a Union Pacific Foundation grant, three educational trunks have been created for use at the California Trail Interpretive Center near Elko NV. The trunks contain clothing, cooking utensils, toys, and other artifacts from the mid-nineteenth century. Accompanied by lesson plans, the trunks are intended for use by classroom teachers and other educators who desire to share this wonderful part of Western history with their students.



One trunk was also placed at OCTA headquarters in Independence Missouri.



Recently, the Nevada Outdoor School was able to work with the students from the Boys and Girls Clubs of Elko to view the *In Pursuit of a Dream* DVD and play some of the trail games found in the Educational Trunks. Here are some pictures that Brandolyn Thran shared with California Trail Heritage Alliance.

The Oregon-California Trails Association has many resources for teachers and other educators. Visit their website: <https://www.octa-trails.org/school-resources/>,

On This Day In September 1849... Entering California, Alonzo Delano found himself alone as he had gone ahead to check the trail. While sitting near the designated camping area, he was approached by a gentleman.

“You are alone.”

“Yes, I am in advance of my train, which was to come to this place; but I fear something has detained them.”

“No matter,” he replied; “I want you to go with me, and spend the night at our camp. Come,” said he, as I hesitated, knowing that none were well supplied with provisions; “you must go and share what we have. No excuse—no ceremony.”

“I followed him, and such as they had I freely shared, and the evening was whiled away in such pleasant conversation as well-bred and well-educated gentlemen know how to introduce. Gentle reader, if there is any mystery in all this, it may be explained by saying, they were Odd-Fellows; yet in all my journey, when circumstances have taken me from my own train, I have never, in a single instance, been denied the rites of hospitality; and although at this time, when our route had been lengthened nearly three weeks—when every individual had scarcely supplies enough for himself, and when a single meal was an item of consideration, the courtesy of a civilized land was extended, and the weary and hungered were not denied the enjoyment of hospitality, such as Messrs. Cox and C. C. Lane, of Flemingsburgh, Kentucky, extended to me.”



CALIFORNIA TRAIL

HERITAGE ALLIANCE



President's Message—October 2021

A few years ago, Mike and I had begun a 500-mile hike across the Pyrenees – the first leg of our journey from the French border to Santiago de Compostela. I have many memories of that month-long walk, but one that stands out to me is when a small Spanish woman passed us, and she cried encouragingly, “Animo” as she went by. “Onward” as the word translates is a good way to summarize what is happening with the California Trail Heritage Alliance.

In the recent past, many of us have been involved in various aspects of the Oregon-California Trails Association Convention. With that successful event behind us, we can concentrate more fully on many of our ongoing projects. Here is a quick summary of what I see ahead of us—

MET Mapping – Under the leadership of Kevin Lee, much work has been done in Ruby Valley and some work has been initiated in the Goshute Valley. With additional staffing at the BLM Elko District Office, the time appears right to approach the BLM about a long-term plan for mapping the Hastings Cutoff from the NV line to the Ruby Valley. Recent resetting of carsonite markers on the Greenhorn Cutoff suggest that some MET mapping along that route could better define the location or locations of the trail. Correspondence has been initiated with Jon Griggs, Manager of Maggie Creek Ranch, about this idea.

Educational Trunks - OCTA Manager Travis Boley brought most if not all of the items that go in the two educational trunks at the Trail Center and these were transferred to Gina Mele (BLM) during the convention. Thumb drives with diaries, maps, lesson plans and other information have been copied from the thumb drive at the Trail Center. It appears that the only remaining actions required are to make sure there are trunks to put the items in and a news release about their availability with a credit to the Union Pacific Foundation.

Stewardship Sites – Several members of CTHA took site steward training prior to Covid and have continued to monitor their sites. Please remember to monitor your sites and submit an updated volunteer form to the NV SHPO's office in Las Vegas.

OCTA Computer at the Trail Center – Kevin Lee has the lead on this project and has had discussions with Office Max as well as SNC staff at the Trail Center. Funds are available for the computer purchase. CTHA members have provided information to be uploaded including diaries that are not copyrighted and links to libraries with online resources.

Hot Hole Interpretive Panels – Interpretive Panels that will be placed permanently at the Elko Hot Hole were displayed at the OCTA convention on stands built by Kevin Lee. Kevin and Duane have been researching options for the California Trail Ox Yoke-State of NV and steel pole assemblage that will go at the site. Once this is completed, the panels and post can be installed.

Interpretive Panels in the Elko Downtown Corridor – Walt Goddard drafted a map prior to Covid about possible downtown locations for additional interpretive panels about Elko's history. Brad McMullen has been researching possible content for panels using a thematic approach. A date needs to be set for a walk around downtown to make preliminary choices for panel locations.

Newsletter – Leah Brady is once again working her magic and a lot of work on our quarterly newsletter. Submissions were due to her on October 10 and another quality publication should be out soon!

All these projects are exciting but many are nearing completion – suggestions for new endeavors are welcome! All of the CTHA Board members are unsung heroes/heroines – thanks for what you do!

Helen Hankins, President

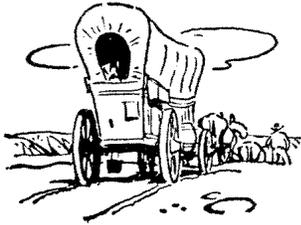


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Join your friends and neighbors and become a supporter of the California Trail Interpretive Center! Every membership supports the California Trail Interpretive Center and Trail preservation. When you join other enthusiasts to become a member, or renew 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: _____

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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 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

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Make Check Payable to: **California Trail Heritage Alliance, P.O. Box 1778, Elko NV 89803**

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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:

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Wagon Master	\$2,500.00 to \$4,999.99
Empire Building	\$5,000.00 or Greater

CONTACT US!

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