



CROSSROADS

News of the Utah Crossroads Chapter
Oregon-California Trails Association
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Following the Bidwell/Bartleson Trail - Fall OCTA Crossroads Chapter Tour

Oscar Olsen & Terry Welch

Anyone who has visited pioneer trail routes has wondered what it was like. That thoughtful phenomenon has added meaning as we visited a portion of the 1841 Bidwell/Bartleson Trail. Imagine being a part of a well supplied group being guided by an experienced guide, Thomas Fitzpatrick. At the soda springs a group of nineteen turn south to explore a possible short-cut to the Humboldt River. There were no maps, they took wagons where no wagons had ever travelled—their instructions from Fitzpatrick were “simple”; stay on the west side of the Bear River until you reach the Salt Lake (at Corinne) and turn right until you find the Humboldt (something around 200 trackless miles).

Our group met in Corinne and headed west making short stops at the T-rail markers west of town, on to the Conner Springs marker and to the Golden Spike Monument. A short distance further found us cresting a hill at the Cedar Springs marker where we could see the nearly treeless sage and salt grass plain north of the Great Salt Lake. We parked and just looked. Other than the starkness of the terrain compared to their mid-west homes, we speculated that they would have wondered and speculated about “water”.

Good water was a concern from the time they left the Oregon Trail near present day Soda Springs, ID. A few excerpts from John Bidwell will convey what they faced: Aug. 18, “suffered much for water, the water being so salt we could not drink it... fifteen miles.” Aug. 19, “Started early, hoping to find fresh water, when we could refresh ourselves and our herds as the day advanced, and we could see nothing before us but extensive arid plains, glimmering with heat and salt. At length the plains became so impregnated with salt that vegetation entirely ceased;”. Bidwell goes on to explain that members of the group spent time doing side trips to clusters of trees which turned out to be mirages.

We stopped briefly at the ghost town of Kelton to review a bit of the town’s interesting history. In its day, it flourished as a bustling railroad stop complete with hotels, bars, businesses, a stage station on the Kelton to Boise route (at one time it was said to be the most frequently robbed stage in the west) as well as a mining, cattle and sheep shipping point. [Con’td. Next page](#)



Kelton Cemetery



Stew at the Sun Tunnels

At Kelton and Lucin, we noted the need for intensive effort on the part of the railroad to construct the flumes that were several miles long to bring fresh water to passing steam engines.

We visited T-markers at the Morris Ranch (with permission), Owl Springs, where the Kelsey family of 3 abandoned their wagon and put their worldly possessions on the backs of animals. Then it was a side trip to the Sun Tunnels and on to the marker at Shibley Springs, a visit to Donner Springs and home.

We enjoyed the scenery—with its muted fall colors. We enjoyed each other's company and the personal contemplation of the Bidwell/Bartleson group who exemplified what it is to be a pioneer to the extreme. On a list of "good days", this day ranked very high. (We were grateful to have access to Roy Tea's trail guide to provide historical narrative.



Convention Committee Update and Other Chapter News

2018 OCTA Convention Chairman, Gar Elison

As the Convention Planning Committee Chairman I would welcome anyone willing to work with us to make this a great convention.

Please contact me at octaconvention2018@outlook.com, cell 801-850-8014

At the Chapter meeting November 10th, the 2017 officers were elected and they are:

President - ~~Joseph Hatch~~ (withdrew)
Vice President - Marcia Buckalew
Secretary - Laura Anderson is continuing as Secretary
Treasurer - Drew Wanosik is continuing as Treasurer

These officers will assume office January 1, 2017 unless they are a continuing officer.

Ron Andersen agreed to be the reporter for contributed service in support of the Oregon & California Trails & the Mormon Trail. Therefore when you attend a Chapter event, do field trips along any of these three trails or the alternates for each trail, help install signage and marking of the trails, do research related to a trail and events along the route, attend a national annual conventions or half year symposium etc. please report volunteer miles, out of pocket expenses,

and hours were involved including travel hours so we can show we contribute a good match of effort in behalf of the trails' education, preservation, and marking. Ron's Contact is: <ron-andersen@comcast.net>, call or text 801-969-4698.

Important Update about Chapter Officers: December 3rd

Right after our November meeting when we elected a new set of officers, Dr. Joseph Hatch had a medical problem and had to back out of serving as President. Gar has called almost every chapter member and found no one agreeing to serve.

The current Bylaws do not prevent a former president from running again for the office of chapter president, or a current president from being president for more than two consecutive one year terms. That was one of the changes the new Bylaws made. It was done because several on the board felt that getting a president was the hardest thing Crossroads does, yet the most fundamental to the organization.

I have asked the Board to approve the votes I received, which are 100 % supportive of Terry Welch continuing to serve as the Chapter President. I anticipate the membership to approve and do not believe this to be different than as is often said, "Of those present and voting 100 percent have approved Terry as Chapter President for 2017." Terry Welch has agreed to serve again if elected.

The following history of Crossroads Officers from 1990 through 2016 may be of interest:

Crossroads Officers				
<u>Year</u>	<u>President</u>	<u>Vice Pres</u>	<u>Secretary</u>	<u>Treasurer</u>
1990	Dave Bigler	Al Mulder	Linda Thatcher	Peter DeLafosse
1991	Al Mulder	LyndiaCarter	Morris Goates	Peter DeLafosse
1992	Al Mulder	LyndiaCarter	Morris Goates	Gar Elison
1993	Al Mulder	George Ivory	Morris Goates	Gar Elison
1994	Al Mulder	George Ivory	Morris Goates	Gar Elison
1995	George Ivory	Randy Wilson	Eldon Fletcher	Gar Elison
1996	George Ivory	Vern Gorzitze	John Eldridge	Gar Elison
1997	George Ivory	Vern Gorzitze	John Eldridge	Gar Elison
1998	Vern Gorzitze	Roy Tea	John Eldridge	Gar Elison
1999	Vern Gorzitze	Steve Berlin	John Eldridge	Gar Elison
2000	John Eldredge	Steve Berlin	?	Gar Elison
2001	John Eldredge	Steve Berlin	Ron Anderson	Gar Elison
2002	John Eldredge	Steve Berlin	Angie Larkin	Gar Elison
2003	Brent Reber	Marie Irvine	Angie Larkin	Gar Elison
2004	Brent Reber	Marie Irvine	Angie Larkin	Gar Elison
2005	Brent Reber	Marie Irvine	Angie Larkin	Gar Elison
2006	Brent Reber	Marie Irvine	Craig Fuller	Gar Elison
2007	A Oscar Olson	Allen Heaps	Craig Fuller	Drew Wanosik
2008	A Oscar Olson	Allen Heaps	Craig Fuller	Drew Wanosik
2009	Linda Turner	Roger Tschanz	Craig Fuller	Drew Wanosik
2010	Linda Turner	Roger Tschanz	Craig Fuller	Drew Wanosik
2011	T Mike Smith	E Leo Lyman	Craig Fuller	Drew Wanosik
2012	T Mike Smith	E Leo Lyman	Craig Fuller	Drew Wanosik
2013	Gar Elison	Terry Welch	Craig Fuller	Drew Wanosik
2014	Gar Elison	Terry Welch	Craig Fuller	Drew Wanosik
2015	Terry Welch	Mike Landon	Craig Fuller	Drew Wanosik
2016	Terry Welch	Mike Landon	Laura Anderson	Drew Wanosik
2017				



Heading for Donner-Reed Pass on the Hastings Cutoff—Oct 2014—CCM Photo.

Mark your calendars for August 2-6, 2018 as the Utah Crossroads Chapter will host the National OCTA Convention in Ogden.

BLM's 'Hastings Route' Video Alert:

Be aware of an airing of BLM's 30 minute broadcast about retracing the footsteps of the Donner-Reed Party along Utah's Hastings Cutoff. See how some of the partnering is paying off in getting the trail message out to new audiences and reaching the younger people with a message they can grab onto.

We finally have a date for the Hastings Cutoff film to be shown on public television, KUEN TV-Channel 9 in Salt Lake City, Utah. The film will be broadcast on December 28th at 8:00 PM. BLM will be putting out a short video blurb to promote this. Might this fit into the Convention as an exhibit or elsewhere?

Kelly Rigby, BLM's UT State Office videographer, produced a 30-minute broadcast called, "Hastings Cutoff-Retracing the Footsteps of the Donner-Reed Party" which will air on KUEN TV-Channel 9, December 28, 2016 at 8:00 p.m. Please share the broadcast with family and friends. To get you excited, Kelly also produced a minute and a half teaser YouTube: <https://youtu.be/7avYKRgHzb4>

"Travel back in time and experience the adventure as three interns retrace the fateful steps of the Donner-Reed Party, traveling the ninety-mile waterless stretch of the California Trail known as Hastings Cutoff. This alternate route, sold as a 'shortcut' across the Great Salt Desert (Utah) by Lansford W. Hastings in 1846, proved devastating for the Donner-Reed Party and many who attempted the perilous journey.

Now designated as a National Historic Trail, Hastings Cutoff is considered by many as the most arduous stretch of Western migration trail in the United States."



Successful Annual BBQ

Oscar Olsen

Our September social/dinner turned out well at Ft Douglas with our usual near 50 in attendance. Steve Allred, from Grantsville, provided an interesting demonstration of knapping—the art of how Native Americans chipped obsidian to make arrowheads.

Craig Anderson gave us an interesting presentation outlining the various trails through the Tooele/ Grantsville area as well as providing insight into relationships between early settlers and the local Indian residents. Both Steve and Craig are active members of the Twenty Wells Chapter of the Sons of the Utah Pioneers.

Two items of business are worthy of note; (1) a plaque recognizing Vic Heath for his years of service to trails projects, which was announced at the Ft Hall national convention, was formally presented to him. (2) Beginning in 2017, all of our local lectures/socials will be held at the Ft Douglas Facility. Scheduling at the county complex is becoming increasingly complex.



Oscar, Gar and Terry—Ft Douglas BBQ

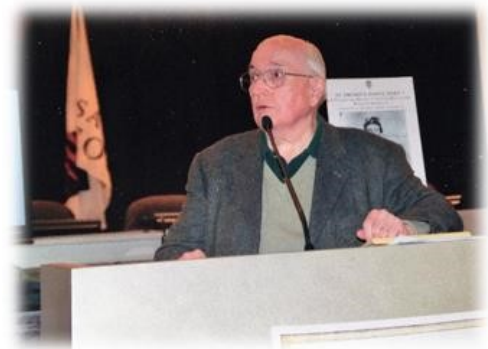


Linda Turner with guest speaker Craig Anderson, Ft. Douglas BBQ

Fall Lecture—Bill MacKinnon

It was a pleasure for our chapter to welcome Bill MacKinnon. He happened to be visiting in Utah from his native California. His passion for western history was obvious. His specialty in elaborating on the Utah War from the perspective of the U.S. Government and the military was most illuminating. In an entertaining way, he illustrated the daunting task moving an army across the country with the difficulty of distance and lack of adequate provisions as well as sometimes self-inflicted problems of aging leadership among army officers and how many of them had serious health issues. All of this led to many personnel problems with attendant leadership confusion and lack of confidence among the troops. It was a most enlightening evening.

Bill MacKinnon has produced an article for OCTA's "Overland Journal" that chapter members may be interested in reading. He writes; "I just want to give you a heads-up that the new (Fall 2016) issue of OCTA's "Overland Journal" carries as its lead article my piece titled "Exodus and the Utah War: Tales from the Mormon Move South, 1858." This is the article mentioned when he met with the Crossroads Chapter on November 10.



Scheduled Events

December 28, 2016 The
"Donner-Reed Party Along
Utah's Hastings Cutoff" on
Utah's KUEN TV Channel 9 at
8:00pm

August 2-6, 2018 OCTA's
National Convention, Ogden,
UT

Utah Crossroads Chapter

Oregon-California Trails Association (OCTA)

<http://www.utahcrossroads.org>

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OCTA-CROSSROADS

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