

DESERT TRACKS



VOL. 4
NO. 4

SOUTHWEST CHAPTER
OREGON-CALIFORNIA TRAILS ORGANIZATION

NOVEMBER
1991

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THE "PRES" SEZ

We started this season with a successful outing on the Overland Route with Jim Byrkit providing an informative and interesting description of not only the trail, but how the geological features of the landscape caused the trails to be located where they were.

Our next scheduled activity is the symposium in January and we have another great slate of speakers again this year. You have or will be receiving a flier about the symposium and there is an article elsewhere in this newsletter.

Reba and Sheri tell me of all sorts of activities already planned for the outing in Yuma later in the spring, so I feel confident that this year is going to be a good one for SW OCTA.


I recall a high-school senior slogan which said "Push, Pull, or Get Out of the Way". My modification to this would be "Push, Pull, and Get Out of the Way". I have held the office of President or Chairman (I'm not sure which) for 2 years. As Jack Root did before me, I have pushed and pulled, and led in whatever manner seemed appropriate and now it is time for me to "Get out of the Way". It is reasonable that others share the burden of leadership (actually not much of a burden). Accordingly, at the last meeting, I appointed a nominating committee to be chaired by Dr. Susan (any new PhD gets to be called "Dr." for at least a year). The other members of the committee are Bob Lee of Safford, Sheri Lee of Tucson and Pat Etter of Mesa. I specifically gave the admonition that the committee was not to be reluctant to choose a member of the nominating committee itself for an office if it seemed appropriate. I suggested a time-frame of January for the change-over.

I would like to encourage all of the membership to consider the "value-added" which the chapter provides and to respond favorably if asked to serve in any official function. The logical continuation of leadership for the chapter is for this committee to locate one individual to assume the position of chair (or president). If no one individual was found, a co-chairmanship might be worked out. The alternative to these two choices would appear to be to discontinue the chapter. Our chapter has continued to add new blood and is more vitalized now than ever, and I feel confident that the committee will be able to arrange for the continued leadership.

I have enjoyed the four years in SW OCTA and will continue to support the group as has the other past chairman.

Harland

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TIME TO RENEW FOR '92

\$10 PER MAILING ADDRESS

USE THE FORM ON PAGE 5



**DATES FOR
YOUR CALENDAR**

PROGRAM SCHEDULE

JANUARY 18 -19:
Trails Symposium, Safford, AZ

MARCH 7 - 8:
Yuma, AZ area

APRIL 25 -26:
Animas Valley & Playa Lake, NM

THIRD ANNUAL TRAILS SYMPOSIUM SATURDAY, JANUARY 18, 1992

Our next scheduled activity is our Symposium. We have scheduled it in January so that those of our members who go North during the summer can participate.

A flier describing the Symposium is being sent to all of our members and you may have received it by now. We will meet in Safford at the Old Armory, 921 Thatcher Blvd. (Hwy 70), across the street from the Chamber of Commerce building and Firth Park. The Graham County Historical Society is hosting our meeting and Betty Lee is the Local Arrangements chairman.

Our weekend will officially start on Saturday morning about 8:30 am (social half-hour) with the presentations starting at 9 am. The symposium will finish between 4 and 5 pm. After the evening meal (on your own) we will reassemble at the Lee's place at about 7:30 pm for a combination formal business meeting and informal happy hour (byob). This combination makes our business meetings more interesting. Sunday morning, we will visit the Neri Jilda Ruins, an old Salado Indian Pueblo in the foothills of Mt. Graham. We will start around 8 am and finish up around noon on Sunday.

This year's symposium should again be top-notch, having speakers from New Mexico, Arizona, and California. We have nine speakers along with a few comments from the Graham County Historical Society. Their museum will be open for us to see during the noon hour on Saturday.

Motels in Safford include:

Sandia, 520 E. Hwy 70, (602) 428-1621 or (800) 950-SAND.
Rates 2 beds 2 persons \$33/night. Contact Leah

Best Western Desert Inn, 1391 Thatcher Blvd., (602) 428-0521
or (800) 528-1234. Rates \$52 for 2 persons.
Contact Ester

In addition, the Lee's have indicated that any one is welcome to park an RV at their house.

QUESTIONS? - CONTACT:

Program Chairman - Harland Tompkins
(602) 963-3565

Local Arrangements Chairman - Betty Lee
(602) 428-1196

All photos in this issue by the editor.

YUMA IN MARCH

SW OCTA will meet in Yuma, Arizona on March 7 and 8 at the site of the historic Yuma Crossing. The California/Nevada/Hawaii chapter has been invited to join us, the first time our chapter has asked another OCTA group to join an activity.

The weekend activities will begin on Saturday at noon. The outing will conclude about 2 pm on Sunday at a site about 80 miles east of Yuma. The opportunity will be offered for those who can remain later to visit another little known site, a prehistoric intaglio.

The Yuma Crossing Foundation and the Arizona Historical Society will host parts of the weekend with tours offered at the Quartermaster Depot and the Century House Museum.

Highlights of the weekend will be a historic overview of the Yuma Crossing and the trails that converged there. Speakers will include: Boma Johnson, BLM Archaeologist; Mary Lu Moore, Historian with the Attorney General's Office; and Pat Etter, OCTA member and author.

Sites to be visited over the weekend include Pilot Knob, a landmark on the river where the trails headed west; Sears Point, an Indian petroglyph site; and Arizona's Independence Rock, with its historic signatures (1846-1857).

For your planning purposes, note that **Motel rooms** may be hard to find at that time as Yuma is the site of baseball spring training by the San Diego Padres. It is therefore suggested you make your reservations as soon as possible. Among those available are: (all 602 area code)

In old town:

Best Western Coronado - 783-4453

On 16th Street:

Best Western Inn Suites - 783-8341

Shilo Inn - 782-9511

La Fuente - 329-1814

Travel Lodge - 782-3831

Motel 6 - 782-9521

Motel 6 - 782-6561 (a different one)

On 32nd Street:

Holiday Inn - 344-1420

Best Western Chilton - 344-1050

Airporter Stardust - 726-4721

There are numerous camping and RV facilities available in the area.

More details on this Yuma weekend will be available in weeks to come. However, it is suggested that you make your motel reservations soon.

Contact Reba Wells at 992-0339 if you have questions or need more information.

SOUTHWEST CHAPTER OUTING ON THE OVERLAND ROAD, ARIZONA

On October 5, Harland and Rose Ann Tompkins, Bob and Sheri Lee, Ruth and Jack Root, Susan Doyle, and Jim Byrkit met at noon at the flagpole in north Flagstaff, near the site of the original flagpole raised in 1876 by a party of emigrants from Boston, in recognition of the nation's centennial and which gave Flagstaff its name. Jim was to be our knowledgeable guide for the weekend's outing, and he briefed the assembled small but enthusiastic group on the history of Flagstaff's beginnings and the Overland Road we were to follow. The group consolidated into two vehicles with CB communication and we started west and south from Flagstaff.

Rose Ann had put together a very informative packet from Jim's maps and materials, which served us all well during the trip. That afternoon we stopped at several sites along the Overland Road from Flagstaff to the Prescott area which was first laid out in 1863. Most traces of the road are now gone, but Jim supervised the marking of the route with rock cairns in the Kaibab National Forest. We saw many of the cairns and stopped at some of the emigrant camps and springs. Dow Spring was still an impressive stream, now coming out through a pipe, and some of us drank its cool water. The recent drought had dried many of the pools, but it was easy to see how these would have been important to the early travelers. Nearby was an old stage station, a one-time sawmill, and remains of a narrow-gauge railroad bed.

We ended the day's trip at the lookout point on the brim of Sycamore Canyon, which rivals the view at Grand Canyon. That evening we met for dinner in a secluded dining room at the Afton House, and afterwards we held a business meeting in the Tompkins' motel room.

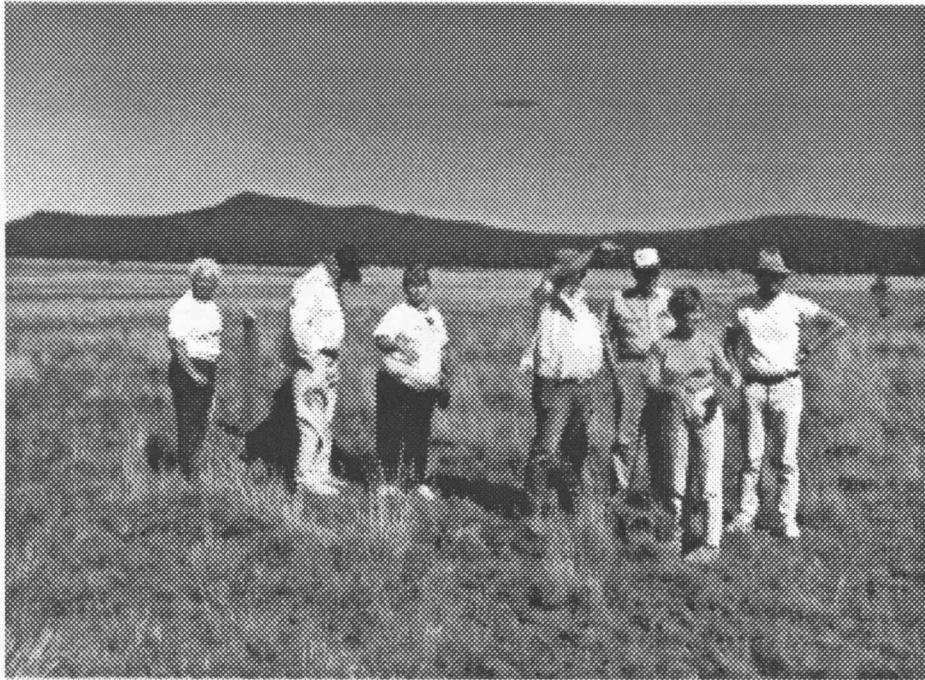
On Sunday Reba Wells and her friend Richard Beaudin joined us at the meeting place. The first stop was Pomeroy Spring, named for Lieutenant Pomeroy. There was no water in the rock tanks, except for a small amount in the deepest ones. The large amount of worked obsidian and chert we saw there seemed to confirm the fact that the Overland Road followed an older Indian trail, as is generally the case for emigrant trails. We also observed a large herd of sheep being moved across the dry wash and a tarantula making its way across the forest floor.

Later we stopped to photograph a spectacular stand of aspens in full fall color, one of the unexpected highlights of this lovely fall weekend. We ended the day with a picnic lunch at Bear Spring, after a very dusty 4WD into the area on the original Overland Road, and broke up around 2 PM. Thus ended another well-planned and thoroughly enjoyable chapter outing.

Susan Badger Doyle

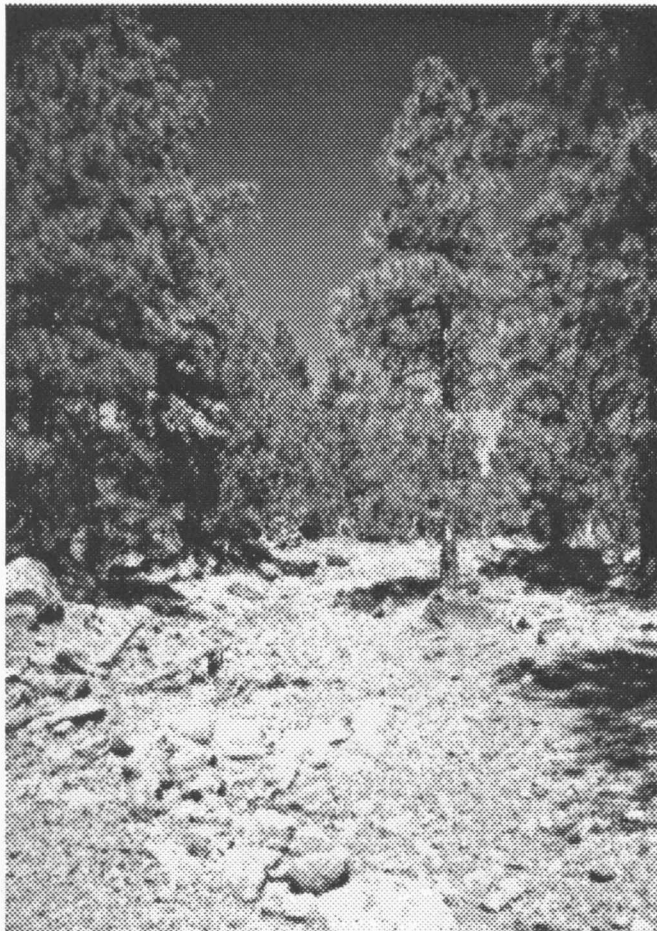
Right: This forest sentinel stands beside Bear Spring (in foreground) on the Overland Road. It was probably a young and hardy tree when the road was actively used by the military, miners and emigrants. This was the scene for the picnic lunch during the chapter outing.





Left: Jim Byrkit points out the direction the Overland Road went across Garland Prairie. It came through the hills in the background as it headed southeast from Flagstaff.

**COME TO THE
TRAILS SYMPOSIUM
IN SAFFORD, AZ
ON JAN. 18, 1992.
SEE PAGE TWO
AND WATCH FOR A
FLYER IN THE MAIL
FOR MORE
DETAILS!**



Above: A remnant of the Overland Road near Bear Spring in the Kaibab National Forest. Few traces of this road remain visible.



Above: Ruth Root gets a cool drink from Dow Spring. Jim Byrkit assured us the water was pure enough to drink and several tried it with no ill effects.

MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 5, 1991 BUSINESS MEETING

The October 5, 1991 meeting was called to order by President Dr. Harland Tompkins in the Geronimo Motel of Flagstaff at 9:08 PM. Others present were Rose Ann Tompkins, Dr. Susan Badger Doyle, Sheri and Bob H. Lee, Jack and Ruth Root, and Dr. James Byrkit.

Jack made the motion and Susan seconded that the minutes be approved as corrected. The treasurer reported \$340.09 in funds.

Old Business. Our January Symposium at the Graham County Historical Society: After much discussion we decided to ask Dr. Robert Trennert of ASU and Dr. Jim Byrkit of NAU to be our Invited Speakers. The GCHS has been able to arrange for an honorarium from the Arizona Humanities Council for Dr. Byrkit and at Harlie's suggestion, Bob Lee moved that Dr. Robert Trennert be offered a similar honorarium (\$150) from our funds. Motion seconded by Susan and passed unanimously.

Harlie informed us speakers for the Symposium thus far include Dr. Susan, Aubrey, Dr. Jim and Dr. Trennert, and Bob E. Lee. Harlie asked for more speakers.

Susan and Rose Ann gave us a brief report on the OCTA Convention.

New Business. Harlie appointed a nominating committee for next year's officers of Pat Etter, Bob E. Lee and Sheri Lee with Dr. Susan as chairman. Sheri made the motion the offices of secretary and treasurer be combined as neither one entails a significant amount of work and this would mean the nominating committee would need to seek one less nominee. Rose Ann seconded. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 9:52 PM.

Sheri Lee, Treasurer

"A mile or so beyond we found stuck on a tree a note addressed to the commanding officer of our escort [Lt. Col. Chaves] which we at once opened. It was dated Depot at Canon Springs [a.k.a. Snider's Hole and Dow Spring], January, 1864, and signed by Lieut. Pomeroy of the very company of our little escort. It informed us briefly that the road ahead was nearly impassable, that the Tonto Apaches had stolen forty of his mules and were in open hostilities; that twenty miles on, the road passed through dense woods, where the greatest watchfulness would be necessary."

From the account of Joseph Pratt Allyn, who was with the gubernatorial party caravan, traveling on the Overland Road.
(quote courtesy of Jim Byrkit's report: Overland Road Project)

SOUTHWEST OCTA MEMBERSHIP FORM

Chapter dues are \$10 per mailing address and are due each December for the next year. This is the only notice you will receive, to save postage costs there is no special mailing. You need to be a member of the national organization in order to belong to a chapter.

Make your check out to Sheri Lee, NOT SW OCTA.

NAME(S) _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE NUMBER _____

Send this form and your check to Sheri Lee, 5790 E. Territory Ave., Tucson, AZ 85715

The Overland Road followers pose behind one of the rock cairns that mark the road. In left foreground is one of the metal markers placed by the Kaibab National Forest after chapter member Jim Byrkit researched the trail route.



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FIRST CLASS MAIL

