

DESERT TRACKS



VOL. 5
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SOUTHWEST CHAPTER
OREGON-CALIFORNIA TRAILS ORGANIZATION

APRIL
1992

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FROM THE PRESIDENT --- DOYLE REED

Our sincere thanks to Reba Wells and her helpers for an outstanding meeting in Yuma. They did a wonderful job in spite of the weather not cooperating. We do need, the rain though the weather man could have timed it just a little better.

Now it is on to our next activity, the outing to Animas Valley and Playa Lake in New Mexico, April 25-26. Pat Etter is developing the final plans and the details are in this news letter.

Following that, we have our Annual Planning Session at the home of Jim and Marian Carter in Alto, New Mexico. Since this will be the first of these meetings Fiona and I have been able to attend, it may be like the blind leading the blind. But we are looking forward to seeing all of you there.

Items which need our attention:

First, Lesley Wischmann, chairperson of the OCTA Public Relations Committee has asked for a person from the chapter to be a member of that committee. I prefer someone volunteering rather than twisting arms to fill that position. Please contact me if you are interested.

Second, we need activities and leaders for the functions we want to support during the coming year. Come to the planning session with your ideas and plans. You learn a lot more if you organize and lead an activity than if you only attend. Give it a try.

**JULY 18: Annual Planning Meeting
Details in a special mailing soon**

Other matters which need addressing:

Can we get liability insurance for the chapter? The CA-NV-HI Chapter has a policy arranged under the umbrella of the California State Historical Society. Is anyone knowledgeable enough to inquire about such a connection with the Arizona Historical Society. Please at least inquire.

Should we ask persons going on chapter outings to sign a waiver of responsibility form as recommended by National? The CA-NV-HI chapter has such a form based on the one prepared by OCTA. A version is being used for the next outing.

Questions have been asked about a classification system for outings so we won't find ourselves hanging on vertical cliffs. The Sierra Club has such a classification for their outings and a copy is printed below. Can we adapt this to our use?

Enjoy your trail research. Doyle.

HIKING CLASSIFICATIONS

- Grade 1 - up to 6 miles
- Grade 2 - 6 to 10 miles
- Grade 3 - 10 to 15 miles
- Grade 4 - 15 to 20 miles
- Grade 5 - over 20 miles
- Class A - less than 1000 feet gain
- Class B - 1000 to 2000 feet gain
- Class C - 2000 to 3000 feet gain
- Class D - over 3000 feet gain

(Editor's note: Will someone scale this down more in line with our usual hikes and bring or send it to the planning meeting?)

Y IS FOR YUMA AND A YEN FOR YESTERYEAR

by Patricia A. Etter

- A** Is for an OCTA Southwest **ADVENTURE**, which we entered into with **ABSOLUTE ALACRITY** in Yuma, **ARIZONA**, at 11 a.m. on March 7, 1992.
- B** Is for **BOMA** Johnson of **BLM**, who led us over the detritus **BLUFFS** on the south side of the Gila River to search for petroglyphs and overlanders' graffiti scratched into the desert varnished rocks. We were dressed in our **BAGGY** pants and sturdy **BOOTS** and went out on a day that was not **BALMY**. Nevertheless, we went **BOLDLY** into the **BACK** country **BURSTING** forth with energy. Nor could we **BACK** out since there was no trail to follow. We must also honor the golden **BRITTLEBUSH**, **BEAUTIFUL** in full spring **BLOOM**.
- C** Is for the **CHEERFUL CALIFORNIANS**, joining our **CARAVAN** to add to the **CHRONICLE** of our **CROSS-COUNTRY COURSE**. We are thankful to the **CREOSOTE** bush hanging to the hillside that saved Aubrey Haines from falling down the slope. But we heard Wilma say as he **CRASHED**, "Aubrey, watch the **CAMERA!**"
- D** Stands for our **DEFIANCE** as we refused to give in to aged **DISARTICULATED** bones and hopped over steep **DETRITUS** bluffs **DISREGARDING** lightning striking the mesa top, black storm clouds, and a cold, **DRENCHING** rain. And we are grateful to Reba Wells, who **DEVISED** and **DESIGNED** the trip that we will **DRAW** on memories from for a long time.
- E** Must be for the fact that we have to **ELABORATE** on the beauty of the desert, and for Bunkie **EVANS**, who **ERSTWHILE** drove her low-slung green auto with **ELAN** through deep water and slimy mud, and also for **EVERY-ONE ELSE** who **EXITED** on that awful river of oozy, slushy, and turbid muck.
- F** Means that **FORTY**-odd people who came from California, Arizona (even Missouri), shared a non-**FICTIONAL** adventure. Accolades to **FIONA** Reed who **FEARLESSLY FORGED** ahead on the rocky slope despite recent cataract surgery.
- G** We had our first meeting at Yuma's **GARDEN** Cafe on Saturday, where we expected to dine under a **GLORIOUS** sunny sky. Instead, we **GATHERED** indoors to **GORGE** on **GOOD** food and **GAILY** donned raincoats and chatted with new friends and old comrades as we planned our rendezvous near the **GILA** River.
- H** **HO!** for the Century **HOUSE!** where members of the Rio Colorado Division of the Arizona **HISTORICAL**
- Society **HANDED** out **HEAVENLY HORS** d'oeuvres. Do you remember the **HAM** rolled around crunchy asparagus tips? The chilled chili-cheese souffle? The shrimp and tangy sauce? The mesquite cookies?
- I** Stands for **INDEPENDENCE** Rock, where prehistoric man **INCISED** petroglyphs in the desert varnish. Later, travelers along the Gila Trail **INCLUDED** their names on the rocks. Only God knows why they put their names in such **INACCESSIBLE** places. Then there were the **INTAGLIOS**—mysterious formations of rocks and stones placed by prehistoric man. We enjoyed hearing the myths and legends that Boma expertly interpreted for us.
- J** All members retained **JOVIAL** spirits in spite of **JUMPING** and **JOSTLING** over a **JUMBLE** of rocks for an interminable time. But not one was **JAUNDICED** at **JOURNEY'S** end.
- K** Some of our **KNEES KNOTTED** as we **KNUCKLED** down to climb **KNOLL** after **KNOLL**. Some of us were **KLUTZES** slipping on rocks as we **KEPT** a **KEEN** eye out for petroglyphs and graffiti.
- L** **LET** us not forget **LOOSE** rocks, the **LEADEN** skies, and the **LIGHTENING** that streaked the mesa top, which **LEFT** us **LONGING** to **LUXURIATE** next to a cozy fire. Some of us got **LOST** and **LOOKED** anxiously for footprints to follow back to our encampment and for awhile, were **LEERY** of ever seeing our friends again.
- M** **MAMA MIA!** Not to **MAKE** a **MOUNTAIN** out of a **MOLEHILL**, but we had never **MUSHED** through such a road before. Our **MANDIBLES** clenched as the drivers **MANEUVERED** through the **MUCK**, and only one of our wagons **MIRE**D, but it was soon **MUSTERED** out.
- N** This **NARRATIVE** is true. There were no **NAMBY** pambies on the trip. In spite of our average age of fifty-plus, we **NEGOTIATED** the rugged **NON**-trail and once safely back at the circle of wagons and filled with **NOURISHMENT**, were already feeling **NOSTALGIC** about the good time and joking about the **NEAR** misses when a misstep might send us plummeting down the steep hillside.
- O** **OCTA-SOUTHWEST!** Its members are almost **OBESSIVE OBSERVERS** of **OVERLAND** trails. They are also **OMNIVORES** of great good taste and will chow down with elan. As a result, they are great fun to be with. Remember too, that desert varnish (the dark stain on rocks) only **OCCURS** where there is a special **ORGANISM** to help it grow.

P **PILOT** Knob was on our Saturday tour. We **PERKED** up after the talks at the library, **PILED** into our respective wagons, and **PLUMMETED** west, crossing the Colorado to Imperial County, California, where we saw that state's first historic spot. It was near **PILOT** Knob that Hernando de Alarcon **PLANTED** his **PLUCKY** self on California soil in 1540.

Q Did not we have enormous fun at Yuma's **QUARTERMASTER** Depot, which has been restored to pristine condition. Some brought out a **QUART**, and **QUAFFED** their **QUOTA QUIETLY** at their cars, and chatted about the successful day as we waited to **QUEUE** for the special barbecue that was to come. **QUASI**-rain started to fall—one more time—and eventually came down in great **QUANTITY**, so we headed for the Depot, where we ate inside the historic building by romantic candlelight.

R We were **RAVENOUS** even after our late lunch and six o'clock **REFRESHMENTS** at the Century House. We **RATTLED** on at dinner, **RECALLING** the day's events and were eager to be in **READINESS** and **REBOUND** to the coming adventure at Sears Point. Three cheers for Gwen **ROBINSON**, Special Projects Coordinator for the Yuma Crossing Foundation, who contributed to the success of our **RETREAT**. And we have to **RESERVE** special **ROUNDS** of applause for Doyle **REED**, who actually drove back over that mucky, yucky road twice.

S **SEARS** Point Archaeological District, or **SPAD**, contains well-preserved petroglyph **SITES**, trails, and other prehistoric cultural features that will help us in our **STUDY** of the prehistory of **SOUTHWESTERN** Arizona. We were off to **SCOUT** the area. **SO** we drove about 80 miles east of Yuma to **STOP** Road, where we left the pavement for an adventure on one of the **SOGGIEST** desert roads and drove for **SEVEN SENSATIONAL** miles to our rendezvous with adventure.

T **THE** group became **TRAIL** blazers as **THEY** **TREKKED** over **TREACHEROUS** rocks, but were **TRIUMPHANT** when **THEY** found the name of overlanders who had scratched names on the rocks, **TESTIFYING TO** **THE** use of the Gila **TRAIL**.

U It was amazing, but many of those scrambling the rocks were **UNTOUCHED** by fear, and when the rains came, they nonchalantly produced **UMBRELLAS**. We wondered if they planned to **USE** them to soar down to the flatland below.

V We can **VOUCH** for the fact that the **VOYAGERS** on the **VILLANEOUS** road will **VIE** for the opportunity to **VERBALIZE VICCITUDES VIVIDLY**, and with great **VITALITY** and **VERACITY**.

W **WE** must not forget to pay honor to Saturday's **WESTERN** Barbecue, the Kamman Sausage, Salsa, Tortillas, Spanish Rice, Beans, and Coleslaw. **WOW! WONDERFUL!**

X Stands for the **XEROXES** that explained our outings, and **XENOPHOBIA**, which nobody had.

Y Hooray for **YUMA** Crossing, which is an interesting historic site long used by the padres, mountain men, gold seekers, stagecoaches, thus becoming an important gateway to California.

Z Well, the **ZERO** hour finally arrived, and our **ZEALOTS** wished they had **ZEPPELINS** when they **ZIGGED** and **ZAGGED** the seven miles back over that **ZANY**, mushy road.

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MINUTES OF SWOCTA BUSINESS MEETING - MARCH 7, 1992

The meeting was called to order at 12:50 PM in the auditorium of the Yuma County Library, Yuma, AZ by president Doyle Reed. Members present (25) were Jim Byrkit, Pat and Paul Etter, Wilma and Aubrey Haines, Ormie and Baldwin Lamson, Sheri and Bob Lee, Pat Loomis, Mary and Bill Mueller, Fiona and Doyle Reed, Ruth and Jack Root, Shann and Bill Rupp, Mary Jo and Ed Sprague, Rose Ann and Harlie Tompkins, Reba Wells and new members Carlos and Mary Brown. Several guests also attended.

A motion was made to accept the secretary's report as printed in the last newsletter. The treasurer reported a balance of \$481.00 in cash on hand.

The treasurer asked for a motion to reimburse Rose Ann \$83.85 for the cost of printing the symposium notes. The motion was made by Harlie and seconded by Rose Ann. Motion carried.

The president asked for a motion to allow the treasurer to pay this, and other bills that arise, at her discretion as long as receipts are presented. This motion was made by Ormie Lamson and seconded by Mary Mueller. Motion carried.

Articles for the next newsletter must be received by Rose Ann by April 1.

Pat Etter tells us the next outing will be mostly on private land. She says we can drive the roads into the Animas Valley. Details are being worked on and will appear in the next newsletter.

The meeting was adjourned at 1 PM.

Sheri Lee, Secretary



Left: With Ruth Root joining in, Jack Root, left, and Sheri Lee, right, toast their mutual birthday when they celebrated with their spouses last November. We don't spend all our time rut stomping! Photo by Bob Lee

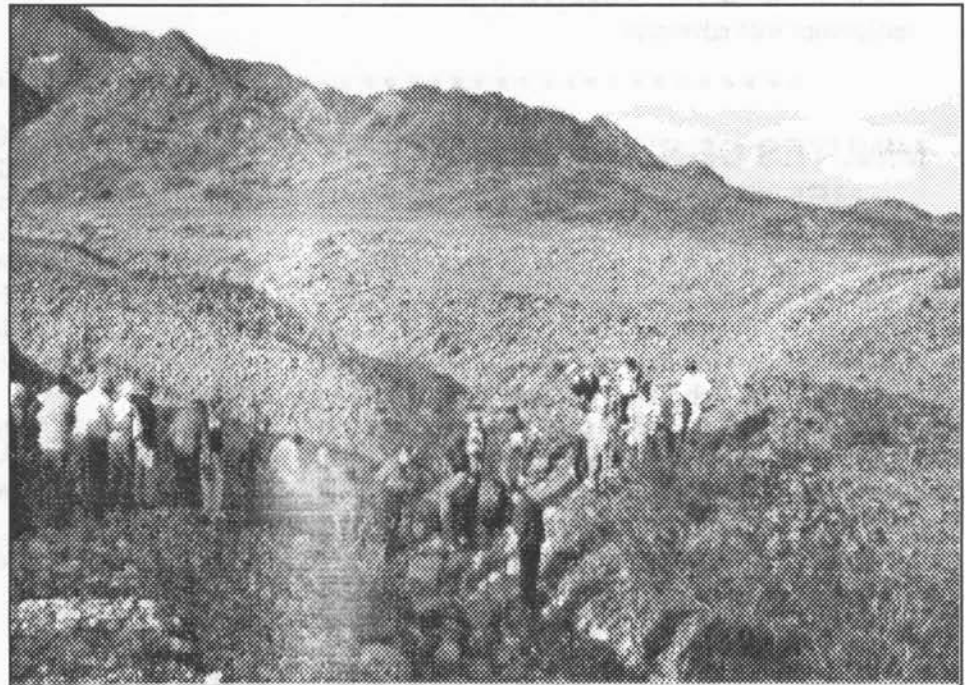
ASCOT - The Historic Trail Subcommittee, a subgroup of the Arizona State Committee on Trails is interested in researching and promoting historic trails that are suited to recreation. The subcommittee is currently accepting nominations for historic trails to include them in the State Trails System. For more information or to volunteer to assist the subcommittee, contact Reba Wells (542-4009) or Bill O'Sullivan (542-2119 or 841-8899).

**INCLUDED WITH THIS NEWSLETTER
ARE SEVERAL INSERTS**

1. A current roster of chapter members.
2. One of the new OCTA brochures.
3. One of the chapter brochures.

**SHARE THE LAST TWO WITH
A FELLOW HISTORY BUFF**

Right: Boma Johnson, BLM Archaeologist leads the group on a walk at Pilot Knob, explaining the history of the trails in this area across the Colorado River from Yuma.



NATIONAL BOARD MET IN MARCH

Chapter President, Doyle Reed, and two chapter members who are also members of OCTA's Board of Directors, Susan Badger Doyle and Rose Ann Tompkins, recently attended the mid-year board meeting in Independence, Missouri.

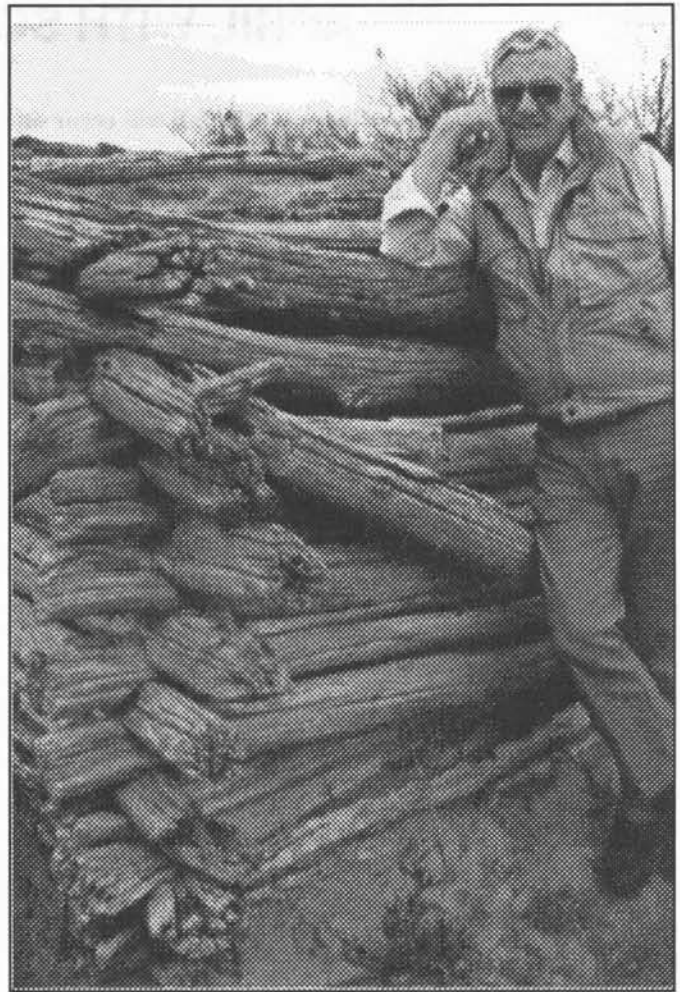
Among decisions made was the appointment of Jim Budde, OCTA's Treasurer, as Chairman of a Task Force to look into methods of increasing revenue in order to carry out some special projects the organization would like to accomplish.

The convention packet for Rock Springs had been mailed just before the meeting and all OCTA members should have received it by now. The program looks outstanding.

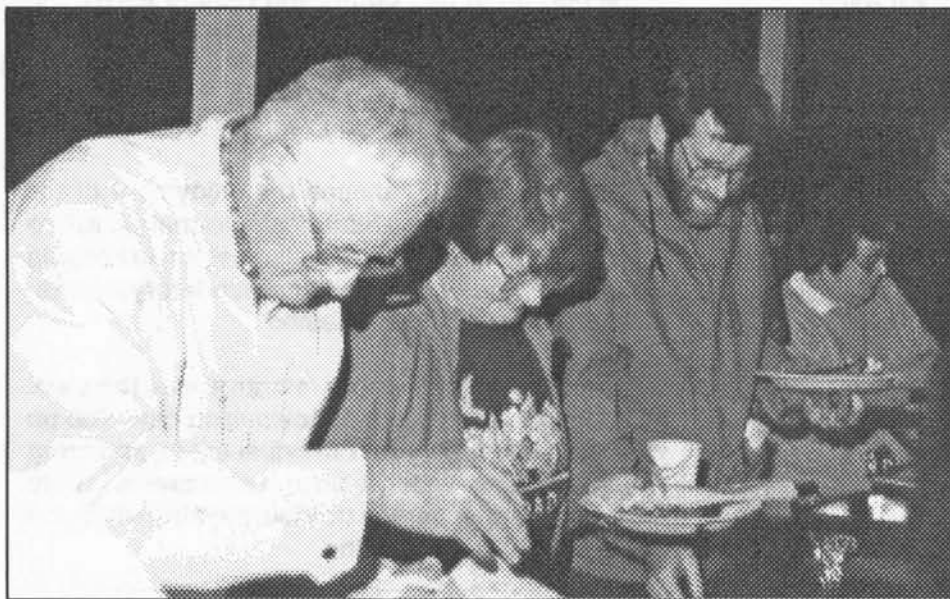


MAPS AND PROCEEDINGS AVAILABLE

The chapter has purchased a number of OCTA's "Western Emigrant Trails" maps. These will be available at chapter outings and meetings. They are the folded version and are \$5 each. This is the same price as ordering them from headquarters, but you can save the postage cost by getting them through the chapter. Also the chapter is able to get a price break by ordering them in quantity and it does help the treasury. Symposium Proceedings are also available at the meetings. One copy is free to each member unit, otherwise, they are \$2.50 each.



Above: At the remains of the homesteaders log cabin in the Gila River Valley, Paul Etter looks the part of the laid-back rancher.



All photos except the "birthday" picture were taken during the Yuma outing by the editor.

Left: In the barbeque line at the Quartermaster Depot, Jack Root, Sheri Lee, Bob Lee, and Ormie Lamson fill their plates. The cool, rainy evening meant that jackets were needed, but the dining areas were cozy with candle light and good company.

APRIL WITH SOUTHWEST OCTA

The last SWOCTA outing until the fall will occur on April 25 and 26.

The purpose of this trip is to explore and define sections of the Southern Trail to California that lie in the "Bootheel" or southwestern part of New Mexico. The trail in this area had long been in use by Indians, then Spanish and Mexican traders, but was first made famous when Phillip St. George Cooke led the Mormon Battalion this way in 1846. Thousands of goldseekers followed this trail in 1849.

Please note that we will be in two locations this trip. Douglas, Arizona on Friday night, April 24; and Lordsburg, New Mexico, for Saturday night, April 25 (and Sunday night, April 26, if you elect to spend the full day on the trail).

Although the outing doesn't officially begin until Saturday morning, for those of you who have arrived in Douglas by 7 PM on Friday, meet us at La Fiesta Cafe about that time for dinner. It is at 524 8th Street (phone 364-5854).

Saturday, April 25

Our trip will start in Douglas on Saturday morning, April 25, at **7:45 AM sharp**. Our destination is Lordsburg. Since there are no services between Douglas and Lordsburg (the way we are traveling), plan to assemble at the Travel Lodge parking lot with breakfast eaten, the car full of gas, and with lunches, water, hat, sunscreen and other necessities for survival. We won't kick you out if you have not yet purchased your CB radio, but we highly recommend it for your added enjoyment and safety during the trip.

We will head east on the Geronimo Trail. Our first stop is Guadalupe Canyon to view the famed Capped Rock, which was drawn by John Russell Bartlett of the 1852 boundary survey. Emigrants trekked down this canyon by the score, so you will be walking in their footsteps. Here we will double up and share rides in 4WD vehicles to minimize our impact on the canyon.

The rest of the day looks like this:

- * Lunch and rest stop in Coronado National Forest
- * Geronimo Trail to Animas Valley
- * Cloverdale Springs, New Mexico
- * Follow emigrant trail up Animas Valley
- * Lordsburg for dinner (place to be announced)
- * Chapter meeting at dinner location following dinner

Sunday, April 26

Ready to go at **8:00 AM sharp** with tummies, lunch buckets, water bottles, and gas tanks full. CBs on

Visit the Nature Conservancy Headquarters at Gray Ranch, Highway 338, Milepost 54, Animas Valley, 9:30 AM.

Drive the trail to the summit of Whitmire Pass for lunch, photographs, walking around, looking for ruts and then on down to Playas Valley.

Time permitting, we will drive the Playas Valley and drive or walk to Playas Lake, a usually dry lake bed, which the Emigrants of '49 crossed to Whitmire Pass.

If you plan to attend, complete the registration and release form on the next page and return to Pat Etter. The proper number of helpful handouts and maps will be prepared for attendees.

If you have questions, call Pat at (602) 964-3967.

Various facilities are available in both Douglas and Lordsburg, including the following:

Douglas, Arizona

Travel Lodge (our meeting place on Sat.)

1030 19th St. (602) 364-8434

\$32 - single \$36 - double (2 beds or queen)

Motel 6

111 16th St. (602) 364-2457

\$22.95 - single \$28.95 - double

Lordsburg, New Mexico

Best Western - Western Skies Inn

1303 S. Main (505) 542-8807

\$41 to \$45 - AAA, AARP, Corporate discounts

KOA Lordsburg

(505) 542-8003

\$14.50, full hook-up, 2 people

one Kamping Kabin at \$18.50 for 2

PLEASE REMEMBER THESE IMPORTANT POINTS TO MAKE OUR WEEKEND ENJOYABLE FOR ALL

A portion of this outing will require a 4WD vehicle. We need to know how many such vehicles will be available and how many will need to hitch a ride with someone who does have 4WD. Please indicate such information when you register for the outing.

A CB radio will enhance the enjoyment of the outing for you as some historical information will be transferred as we travel. It is also helpful in keeping the group together. This is not a mandatory requirement, but is strongly suggested.

We will be traveling into remote areas; there will be no facilities after leaving town each day. Top up your gas tank, have your breakfast eaten, and bring your lunch, extra water, a hat and sunscreen. There is the usual \$2 per person trail fee, payable when you arrive on Saturday morning.

REGISTRATION FOR SOUTHERN TRAIL OUTING, APRIL 25 - 26, 1992

NAME(S) ATTENDING: _____

MY PHONE NUMBER: _____

____ I will be driving a 4WD vehicle ____ I will have a CB radio

I can accomodate _____ extra riders in my 4WD

I/We need a ride for _____ people for the 4WD portion of the outing

Return to: Patricia Etter
1051 S. Dobson Rd. #218
Mesa, AZ 85202

Questions? call Pat at (602) 964-3967

by April 21

**ALL THOSE ATTENDING - PLEASE SIGN THIS WAIVER AND
RETURN WITH REGISTRATION**

I understand and agree that neither the Oregon-California Trails Association (OCTA), its Directors, officers, employees, agents, and representatives, and the Chapters of OCTA and their respective officers, agents and representatives, nor, to the extent legally permissible, any private or public (state or federal of instrumentality of either) landowner or tenant or licensee in possession of any land, and their respective agents and employees, on or over which any tour, field trip, or outing of OCTA or any of its Chapters takes place or through which it travels, shall have any responsibility or liability, in whole or in part, for any loss, damage, injury to person or property, delays, cancellations, changes in schedule, programs or itinerary, or mechanical defects or failures, or for any negligent act or omission of any nature whatsoever which results from or arises out of or occurs at, during or in connection with any of the activities, programs, tour, field trips or outing of OCTA or any of its Chapters (which may involve or include primitive or pristine conditions), or any accommodations, transportation, food or other services or facilities furnished or supplied in connection with the same, or any changes or substitutions therefor or of common carrier equipment, or for any additional expenses occasioned thereby or any liability sustained or incurred as a result of any of the foregoing.

I understand further that by registering at, attending or participating in any such activity, program, tour, field trip or outing I shall be bound by the foregoing and deemed to have consented and agree to the same by such registration, attendance, or participation.

In attending and participation in any such activity, program, tour, field trip or outing, I agree to comply with and follow the directives, restrictions and requirements of those conducting or leading the same.

SOUTHWEST OCTA OUTING - APRIL 25 and 26, 1992

Signed _____

Date _____

Signed _____

Date _____

Right: During the March outing, participants gather in the Gila River bottom near Sears Point (shown at left of picture) after they have circled their wagons. The group soon headed off on a hike to Arizona's Independence Rock and its emigrant inscriptions.



Below: The remains of a homestead cabin lingers in the Gila River bottom, complete with vestiges of a canal put in to water the crops. Floods drove out those early homesteaders.

DESERT TRACKS
Rose Ann Tompkins
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FIRST CLASS MAIL

