

DESERT TRACKS



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Number 3

SOUTHWEST CHAPTER
OREGON-CALIFORNIA TRAILS ASSOCIATION

December
1995

Editors - Jack & Ruth Root, 8422 E. Tourmaline Dr., Tucson, AZ 85715 - (602) 760-0903

TOWNLEY CALLS NEW MEXICO MEETING

Ed. Note: The following memo from Charles Townley explains the rationale for February's SWOCTA-sponsored workshop near historic Socorro, NM.

Historic trails organizations are doing a better and better job of helping to document our western trails. The Oregon/California Trail Association and its Southwest Chapter have been focusing on the southern trail and its many variants. It is both fun and important to tramp the trails and document their locations.

Arguably, it is equally important to carry out the community and political action necessary to protect and preserve historic trails. The Southwest Chapter of the Oregon/California Trail Association is inviting other trail associations to meet with us in Socorro, New Mexico to share ideas and proposals for community and political action. We will meet on Saturday, February 24, 1996 to share our experiences and to map our plans. We hope you can be with us as we begin this important effort.

We won't, however, forget the out of doors. We have arranged for a morning tour of historic Fort Craig for those who can come. This Fort, near the site of the historic battle of Val Verde, was a key component in the Union defense of New Mexico during the Civil War. We hope you can come and learn more about its history.

Also, late in the afternoon, participants will have an opportunity to watch the evening fly-in at the Bosque Del Apache National Wildlife Refuge. We can reasonably expect to see a sizable number of snow geese and sandhill cranes. We are also likely to see eagles, hawks, and maybe even a whooping crane.. Please come and join us.

Sincerely,

Charles Townley, Ph.D.
Dean of the University Library

:mfm

OREGON/CALIFORNIA TRAILS ASSOCIATION, SOUTHWEST CHAPTER
INVITES YOU TO A WORKSHOP ON DEVELOPING POLITICAL AND COMMUNITY
SUPPORT FOR SOUTHWESTERN TRAILS
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 1996
SOCORRO COUNTY, NEW MEXICO

- 9:00 a.m. Tour of Fort Craig by Charles Carroll, BLM archeologist. Meet at San Marcial (exit #124) on Interstate 25, 32 miles south of Socorro, New Mexico.
- 12:00 p.m. Lunch at the famous Owl Bar, San Antonio, New Mexico
- 1:00 p.m. Program - Bosque Del Apache National Wildlife Refuge, eight miles south of San Antonio, New Mexico on New Mexico, Route 1. The Federal Historic Trails Program, ~~David Gaines~~, Long Distance Trails Group, National Park Service. ^{John Conoboy}
- 1:30 p.m. State-level programs. Reba Grandrud, Arizona Historic Preservation Office. Michael Taylor, New Mexico Preservation Division.
- 2:00 p.m. Historic Trails activities: a panel. Representatives from the Camino Real Association, Mormon Battalion Association, Old Spanish Trail Organization, the Santa Fe Trail Association and the Southwest Chapter of the Oregon/California Trails Association will discuss their effort to achieve political and community support for historic trails.
- 2:45 p.m. Break
- 3:00 p.m. Random work groups will develop a general action agenda for trails organizations.
- 3:30 p.m. Trails organizations will meet to modify the general agenda for their particular organization.
- 4:15 p.m. Report back.
- 4:45 p.m. Birding (optional)
- 6:30 p.m. Dinner - Val Verde Hotel, Socorro, New Mexico

Please make your own hotel reservations. (The Super 8 (1-800-800-8000) is particularly recommended. Other hotels include Holiday Inn Express (1-800-Holiday) and Golden Manor (Best Western 1-800-528-1234.)

505 835 4626

49CK

Registration: Preserving Historic Southwestern Trails - An action Workshop--return by February 9, 1996.

We will attend the workshop _____

Number in party _____

Motel reservation at: _____

Return by February 9, 1996 to Charles Townley, Box 30006, Dept. 3475, New Mexico State University, Las Cruces, NM 88003-8006. Fax: (505) 646-6940, Phone: (505) 646-1508, Email: ctownley@lib.nmsu.edu

GAINES RECEIVE FRIENDS OF THE TRAIL AWARD

1995 OCTA Convention - Grand Island, Nebraska

It was hot, it was humid, but more than 350 OCTA members made it Grand Island for this year's convention. At least twelve SWOCTA members were in that number.

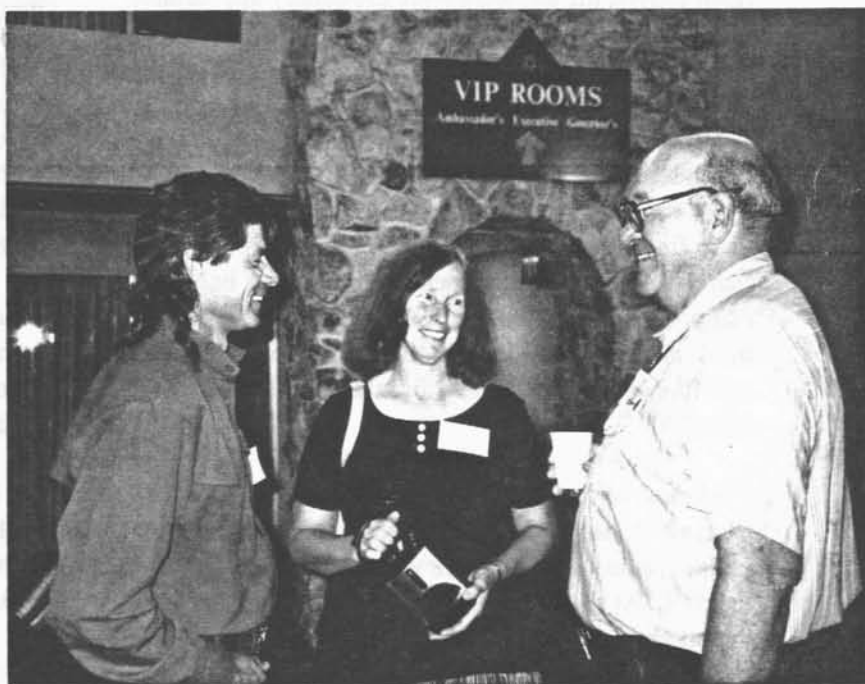
The convention was the usual blend of presentations, tours, and special events. The convention headquarters in the Midtown Holiday Inn provided good facilities for the group and things were keep running smoothly by Convention Chair, Helen Sundell and her various helpers.

From SWOCTA's viewpoint, a highlight of the convention was the awarding of the chapter's first Friends of the Trail Award. As a result of our outing to the Point of Rocks Ranch on the Santa Fe Trail in northeast New Mexico in September, 1994, we nominated the ranch owners, Pete and Faye Gaines. They came to the convention to receive the award, and our chapter should be proud to have added them to those who have been given this award by OCTA. The Gaines are a remarkable couple and indeed are Friends of the Trail.



Photos by Rose Ann Tompkins

Pete and Faye Gaines (seated), Friends of the Trail, enjoying their recognition at OCTA's National Convention, Grand Island, Nebraska. Behind them is Nebraska Rancher Joe Jeffrey, another awardee.



Richard and Marie Greene chat with Wyoming's Lee Underbrink at Convention.

Searching, Finding, and Mapping the Southern Trail

by Rose Ann Tompkins

For eight days, October 14 to 22, el tres exploradores, Don Buck, Richard Green and I, enjoyed the beauty and solitude of southwest New Mexico as we concentrated on the Southern Trail mapping project. It was hard work, sometimes frustrating, sometimes rewarding. Day after day we drove, walked, searched, sometimes found, and mapped.

Many of you have been on various chapter outings into this area and the names are familiar: Cooke's Canyon, Mimbres River, Cow Spring, Soldier's Farewell Hill. Armed with one car, two GPS (Global Positioning System) units, two portable CB radios, a measuring wheel, topographic maps, diary accounts and Don's trained trail eye, we continued the group's effort begun last spring at Cooke's Spring.

Our headquarters was at City of Rocks State Park about 25 miles north of Deming. This unique spot in the tablelands and mountains of New Mexico had few other campers sharing this wonderful campground. Much to our delight, there were showers as well as flush toilets; the showers were especially appreciated when we returned after the warm autumn days we encountered.

We quickly fell into a routine of getting up at dawn (as we watched the sun rise near Cooke's Peak), heating water for our coffee and oatmeal, plotting the previous day's findings on the maps, heading out to continue the search until darkness descended to force us back to camp, showering, heating water again for our dinner meal, and heading for bed to listen to the camp wind-mill, the coyote serenades, and the owls calling to each other.

I did most of the driving, ferrying Don and Richard from site to site, and often meeting them at some remote access road as there were few roads parallel to the trail. At times we all walked back and forth across the brushy landscape, trying to find the depression that would send us down the trail again.

The region has few roads, paved or otherwise, and we put 1000 miles on the Jeep while mapping those eight days. Most of the time, we had the landscape to

ourselves, though the cattle would sometimes watch us carefully; and we did see wildlife from time to time, coyote, javelina, antelope, jackrabbit, and birds, including roadrunner, quail, hawk, and once an eagle feeding beside the road.

Doyle and Fiona Reed had planned to come, but had to cancel. Charles Townley and his wife, Joyce, joined us the first day when we began at the west end of Cooke's Canyon. After that, it was just the intrepid trio, slowly working our way west.

Don said that it takes a lot of miles of walking to find one mile of trail, and he is right. But we did find trail, sometimes where we expected it, sometimes where we didn't expect it. Sometimes we found nothing, other times we found shallow swales, deeply eroded swales, lines of rocks thrown off of the trail, vegetation lines, graves, groves made by wagon wheels and rust marks on the rocks from those wheels.

The end of the week found us tired, but enthused by a successful hunt and more miles of trail on the map. The ranch owners we encountered were friendly and helpful, the weather was cooperative, and the scenery was spectacular. We are already planning another week of mapping in April, 1996. Although one vehicle and three people were able to do the job, we feel it would be better to have two vehicles (for safety sake) and four or five people.

Richard made a videotape of the week, concentrating on showing the trail and the landmarks. Besides having a record of what we did, he hopes to make a training tape for future mappers.

Don is writing a technical report of our week and it will be on file as part of the mapping project. If any chapter member would like a copy of his report, let me know and I will see that you get one.

I would like to personally thank Don and Richard for their dedication to this project. Don flew in from California and Richard from Virginia. Volunteers make OCTA what it is, and they certainly are great examples of the best.

This committee was formed since our last planning meeting. At present the committee consists of Rose Ann Tompkins and Reba Wells Grandrud. Rose Ann is working mainly in the area of getting the trail researched and mapped. Reba is working mainly in the area of awareness, both in the public and political areas.

Awareness.

Feeling that at present the general public in the Southwest is not aware that the area has a number of historic trails, and specifically the Southern Trail, this awareness will be addressed.

A listing will be prepared of all the historical societies and groups in the Southern Trail areas of New Mexico, Arizona, and California. We will check if OCTA members are also members of any of these groups, in order to see if we can use this bridge. We will attempt to educate these groups about the Southern Trail and its impact on the region. This could be done by putting together an information packet for each group and attempting to give presentations at their meetings. This means preparing one or more presentations to have available for these functions.

Media coverage will be sought. This can include general stories of the trail and stories about the mapping trips. Attempts should be made to include some newspaper or TV people on some of the trips in order for them to get first hand viewpoints. We will try to interest publications such as Arizona Highways in the Southern Trail.

A cooperative effort with the Mormon groups will continue to be sought, since much of the Southern Trail is in the same corridor as the battalion route.

At this time, it is felt that political interest will not be pursued until more mapping and evidence is collected. Then we can make more of an impact when we contact congressional people.

Mapping.

All mapping will be conducted using OCTA's *Mapping Emigrant Trails* publication. The prepared maps will not be available to the general public, but will be the property of OCTA. Eventually they will be available at headquarters for research purposes or to government agencies as part of cooperative projects.

A map survey is being prepared to show what maps the chapter now has and what maps we need. This survey includes historic maps, topographic maps, general land office original township survey maps, and BLM surface management status maps for the Southern Trail and two alternates, the Apache Pass Trail and the Kearny Pack Trail. These maps cover three states. Some maps are already in use, we will ask for funds from OCTA's Mapping Committee to cover the additional topographic maps, while the chapter will be asked for funds to cover the additional BLM and GLO maps.

In addition, a listing is being prepared of all emigrant or exploring party documents to assist in locating trail. These will include military documents and both east to west and west to east documents, from a time span up to the building of the railroads through the area. When feasible, portions of these documents will be available in various forms for use in mapping.

It is hoped that mapping will be done in at least three ways.

1. - From time to time (hopefully at least twice a year) a group opportunity will be available for a week long mapping trip. The first of these has been scheduled for Oct. 1995, with another in April of 1996. This may involve dry camping in remote areas. They will be announced in the newsletter and are open to anyone to attend.
2. - Weekend chapter trips will be available for those who cannot take a week. These could be set up as part of the chapter's ongoing outing programs, but need not necessarily be a part of that scheduling.
3. - Individuals may wish to map a portion of the trail near where they live, or in an area they are particularly interested in. This would be done at their convenience.

For all mapping trips, an attempt will be made to provide both the appropriate maps and the diary or document entries for the area in question. These materials will basically be "checked out" to those in charge of any mapping trip. All materials should be returned to the chapter person in charge of the maps, along with the results.

Conclusion.

This is a long term project, that length being dependent on how much work is put into it. The two committee members cannot possibly complete this alone. SWOCTA, CAL-NV, and Utah Crossroads members can all assist in either the awareness or mapping aspects of the project.

Rose Ann Tompkins
Reba Wells Grandrud

TRIP ON THE MOJAVE ROAD, APRIL, 1995

by Rose Ann Tompkins

OCTA's California-Nevada Chapter sponsored a road trip in April for those hardy souls intent on inflicting damage to their vehicles as they followed Neil Johns, the mad man of desert travel, into the wilds of the Mojave Desert. A total of nineteen people in eleven cars met in the parking lot of the Mojave County Museum in Kingman, Arizona on the morning of Monday, April 3. This was billed as a 4WD trip, with dry camping involved, only the hardy need apply. Nine of those on the trip were SWOCTA members, and four more of the nineteen we added to our membership. This made it as much a SWOCTA event as a CA-NV event (only we didn't have to plan it).

The first day and a half of the trip was actually done over the Beale Road in Arizona. This road, laid out by Lt. Edward Beale in 1857 and 1859, allowed emigrants, among others, to find their way from Albuquerque to the Colorado River. After crossing the river in the area of what became Fort Mojave, the trail continued across the Mojave Desert, connecting into a trail already in existence, running from Salt Lake City to the California coast.

After a short tour of the museum, we gathered to hear instructions and meet our guide for the day, Ed Edwards, a local historian who has lived all his life in the area and knows it well. Our first stop was the ruins of Camp Beale Springs, at the west edge of Kingman, a watering hole on the Beale Road and later a military outpost. Then we traveled to the east side of Kingman to view a trail trace near I-40 and find our way into Boy's Canyon, a route used before the springs mentioned above were found. Lunch in the canyon gave us time to reflect on what lay in store.

The afternoon found us crossing a valley on old Route 66, heading for Sitgreaves Pass. The swale of the Beale Road parallels this highway, now also becoming remembered in its own right as a thoroughfare for westward travelers of a different century. As we headed up the canyon, we stopped to view inscriptions dating from the road building crew of Beale. We then followed the trace of the Beale Road to the top of the pass, learning in the process that it was a trail not easily followed, then or now.

West of Sitgreaves Pass, we followed the drainage of Silver Creek, eventually stopping for the day to camp. Neil took Ed back to Kingman while everyone set up, admiring the surrounding canyon walls and the wildflowers which were to grace all our miles across the desert. We had traveled less than 60 miles.

Tuesday, April 4. We left camp about 9, our first stop was the abandoned ruins of Moss Mine. We continued down Silver Creek on the Beale Road, then left the drainage and followed the trace onto a ridge line heading for the Colorado River. It would seem evident that the Beale Road had taken the path of a preexisting Indian trail, as the rocks strewn along the ridge were covered with desert varnish that was often used as a palette for various petroglyphs. We saw our first desert tortoise, so close to our wheel tracks that we had to take care to miss him. The only flat tire of the trip occurred on this ridge and was quickly taken care of by a number of eager hands.

We dropped into Bullhead City and headed out to the Fort Mojave site. After looking it over, it was back to town to gas up and get ice for the coolers. We crossed the river and took advantage of the Laughlin, Nevada casinos for an inexpensive buffet. What a contrast, going from a wilderness of coyote howls, Indian petroglyphs, desert tortoise, and wildflowers in profusion to the overabundance of vehicles, tall hotels and mass confusion and never ending noise of the casinos. It was a form of culture shock. And, just as quickly, we were back into the wilderness.

We picked up the Mojave Road across the river from the Fort Mojave site and headed west from the highway. After stopping briefly at Granite Spring, we made camp at Balancing Rock. This was a beautiful site, with views in all directions. A granite outcrop included the balanced rock and a couple of rattlesnakes. Both rock and snakes seemed content to stay where they were and we were content to leave them there. The night skies continued clear, with all the stars that come with such, though we did notice that you could see the glow of both Laughlin to the northeast and Las Vegas to the north.

Wednesday, April 5. Left camp at 9, going back out to the road and continuing along it. As we neared Piute Canyon we could see traces of the original road parallel to the present road in places. We stopped at Fort Piute, talked about how the road went up the canyon. Since it can no longer be driven, a few elected to hike partway to the top while the rest of us took most of the vehicles on. We stopped along the wash that comes out of the canyon to view petroglyphs. We went to the overlook to Piute Canyon to wait for the hikers and to have lunch. It is a spectacular view from this overlook, hard to imagine wagons coming up that jagged cut in the rocks.

After lunch we sidetracked a bit to view more petroglyphs as we continued along the road. We arrived at Goff's schoolhouse late in the afternoon, our camping

place for the night. Dennis Casebier gave us a tour of his facility, touching on his historical goals for the area. One welcome part of this stop for all of us was the availability of water, flush toilets and showers.

Dinner music was again provided by Dave Hollecker, inducing the Bucks and Greens to a bit of dancing in the cooling evening. Since Goff is on the railroad line, we went to sleep with the train whistles and rumbling cars on the rails. We had traveled about 100 miles in the last two days .

Thursday, April 6. Left Goff about 9 am, took a side trip to hike a canyon. Then we returned to the Mojave Road at the point we had left it on Wednesday to go to Goff, and continued west. This is a beautiful part of the desert with an abundance of desert vegetation, including large Joshua trees. The spring bloom continued, sometimes looking like a carpet of color. Lunch was at Rock Spring, with time afterwards to hike up the canyon, following the water as it trickled out of the rocks, and finding both Indian petroglyphs and military inscriptions. Going on, we stopped at Government Hole and at Marl Spring. The latter was named by Whipple on his 1854 survey trip. A vital water source, it shows the use of the years, with ruins (probably Army), fences and water tanks. Neil directed us to a nearby wash for our last campsite.

This being our last evening on the road, we gathered for a happy hour and group picture. After dinner, the evening campfire was a time of discussion and visiting. Days travel was 52 miles.

Friday, April 7. After leaving camp, we took a side trip off the road to view Rocky Ridge, an early route used by travelers. Back on the main route, we came to a mail box which contains a book to be signed by those passing by. It also contained a variety of small items left by people. The road went into a sandy wash which we followed. Lunch found us up a side canyon among lava flows. This side road was a challenge to drivers but the stop for lunch was worth it. We parked at the top of a lava wall which would be a waterfall during heavy rain. After lunch, and back on the road, we passed Seventeen Mile Point and headed for Soda Lake. It was thought that it would be too wet to cross the lake bed, but we were able to do it. We stopped at Government Monument to place rocks on the pile and take pictures. We arrived at Zzyzx via the back, locked gate in midafternoon. Eventually we got in and the group broke up as this was the end of the road trip. Days travel was 58 miles.

The weekend was spent at a trail seminar at Zzyzx, joined by others, mostly OCTA members. Both mornings were talks, with afternoon field trips. Saturday's trip was to Afton Canyon, where the Mojave Road is following the Mojave River. There were stops at various historical places along the way.

The mileage from Kingman to Zzyzx was about 280 miles. These are slow and difficult miles today, just as they were for those using the route in the 1800s. It is also a wild and beautiful country.



NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT

Your nominating committee has been teleconferencing since the planning meeting last July hoping to fill all the vacant offices with talented and willing people. At the February 24, 1996 meeting, this slate of officers will be presented for confirmation by the membership: for president, Marie Greene of Angel Fire, NM; for secretary, Ruth Root of Tucson, AZ; and returning as treasurer, Harlie Tompkins of Chandler, AZ. The appointed position of Mapping Coordinator will continue to be held by Rose Ann Tompkins of Chandler, AZ; as Membership Chairman, Richard Greene of Angel Fire, NM and the new Newsletter Editor will be Sheri Lee of Tucson, AZ.

The terms run for two years and elections take place at the first meeting in evenly numbered years. The nominating committee is made up of the past four former presidents.

Jack Root, Harlie Tompkins, Doyle Reed and Sheri Lee



Harland & Rose Ann Tompkins
1125 W. Mission Drive
Chandler, AZ 85224-2354

FIRST CLASS MAIL



DESERT TRACKS
Jack & Ruth Root
8422 E. Tourmaline Dr.
Tucson, AZ 85715

INVITING NEW MEMBERS

We have just mailed invitations to 90 OCTA members along the Southern Route, from Arkansas to Arizona, from southern Colorado to southern Texas, inviting them to join SWOCTA. Our present chapter membership stands at 40 families, but we have room for many more. If you know OCTA members who have not yet joined SWOCTA, whether they live in the southwest or not, please invite and encourage them to join our chapter.

Richard Greene, Membership Chairman

FROM THE RUSTY, DUSTY WAGON OF THE TRAIL MARM

As I reach the end of the (presidential) trail and review my past two years as your Trail Marm, I must admit that I have learned a lot, but certainly not everything, about being the leader of such a diverse group. I came into this position naively believing you all were members for the same reason I am...to map and preserve trails. Slowly I came to realize stomping through the sage brush does not appeal to all of you. You are members for many other reasons including, but not limited to, sharing research, panel discussions, book reviews, being entertained by guest speakers, receiving the newsletter and a few of you...just for socializing. Needless to say, it is impossible to present outings that include all of these things at one time. As I share my learning experiences with our new president, Marie Greene, I am confident she will devise interesting new outings to accommodate more of you. It has been fun, and I thank you for all your advice, help, support and patience.

Sheri Lee, Outgoing President