

DESERT TRACKS

1996



SOUTHWEST CHAPTER
OREGON-CALIFORNIA TRAILS ASSOCIATION

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April Mapping Trip by Rose Ann Tompkins

Armed with GPS units, CB radios, a variety of old and modern maps and various diary accounts, a group of five members and two guests spent a cold and rainy day rut hunting along the Rio Grande River in New Mexico. Those present were Don Buck, Rose Ann Tompkins, Richard Greene, Marie Greene, Tracy DeVault and guests John Gergan from Las Cruces and Beth Langstaff from Columbus, OH.



Don Buck follows trail trace up Hunter's Draw
photo by Rose Ann Tompkins

Don Buck, expert trail sleuth, used the 1849 diaries of William Hunter and H.M.T. Powell to figure mileages from known points. We mappers were looking for the place where the emigrants left the river and headed for Cooke's Peak and decided to investigate a canyon that looked like a good possibility. And the next day we did find old trail signs...swales, grooves and rust marks. Then we lost the trail until we got to Foster's Hole.

The dry wash leaving the Rio Grande valley is not named on the modern USGS map so we dubbed it Hunter Wash. While it may not be the only way the emigrants left the river, it is certainly one of the ways. Two and a half miles was not much trail to find for a week of work, but it is there and we will eventually find it. While it may appear this project is going slowly in terms of miles mapped, it represents much progress not readily apparent.

Document procurement and research continues, and an understanding of the remote areas where we are working comes from being on site.

Maps Acquired

by Rose Ann Tompkins,
Co-chair of Southern Trail Mapping Committee

OCTA purchased approximately \$600 worth of USGS 7.5 minute topographic maps for our chapter. By buying in quantity, the cost was approximately \$300. Also, the USGS raised the price of maps substantially about 10 days after this purchase.

In addition, SWOCTA purchased approximately \$160 worth of BLM Land Stat maps and General Land Office survey maps as authorized at the July, 1995 planning meeting.

SWOCTA now has two copies of the 7.5 minute topo maps to cover the area from the Rio Grande to Warner's Ranch along three trail corridors. In addition, the chapter has many of the Land Stat and GLO maps for the same area.

More maps will be obtained as funds are available.

From the Adobe Hacienda of the Trail Marm-

The 1996 Planning Meeting was once again a big success and a lot of fun for all participants. We had a lot of recreational time for birding, walking, horseback riding for one hardy soul, and computer games for our youngest participant, the Roots' grandson. We also had a very productive meeting.

This year the National Association is asking us to provide them with information on the number of participants for each outing for insurance purposes. As you may know, OCTA's insurance costs doubled this year based on the entire membership. With documentation of outing participants, we may be able to reduce our insurance premiums. Also, each outing participant will be required to sign a waiver before each outing.

Jack Root has volunteered to write our Chapter History for submission to OCTA. Thank you, Jack and to all our volunteers for their work. If there is anyone out there who would like to become more active in the organization, please feel free.

Marie Greene,
President of SWOCTA

New Route to California

from the Sangamo Journal, Springfield Ill,
June 20, 1849, page 3, col. 4
contributed by Rose Ann Tompkins

"In a note to the editor of the *Philadelphia Ledger*, Colonel Cooke states that on his journey to California, he took a route some distance south of that part of the Gila, which Lt. Beall describes as almost impassable. He says that he found this southern route a winding grassy, plain, and that he struck the Gila just where the mountains, which Lt. Beall speaks of, terminate. Col. Cooke says that emigrants leaving New Mexico from August to the last of September, can reach California by the route he discovered in thirty days with packs, or sixty days with wagons. On this route, they will pass for 125 miles (in Mexico) through a region where droves of fat, wild cattle abound; half way, they will pass a large town of the most friendly and hospitable Indians in America, who will eagerly sell provisions for white beans and cotton. Col. Cooke regards this route as infinitely preferable to that round the cape. By the latter, emigrants will arrive in California at the close of the working season, and be subjected to great expense for sustenance during the winter. By the former the emigrants would arrive at the proper season for commencing work-certainly a very important consideration."

Susan Receives OCTA's Highest Award

from Rose Ann Tompkins' presentation
at the 1996 National Convention

This recipient of OCTA's Meritorious Achievement Award has contributed generously of both time and talent to OCTA over the years, and I take great personal pleasure in presenting this award.

The recipient was a charter member of the Southwest Chapter, even though we first called it the Arizona Chapter-and she lived in New Mexico. We often traveled long distances to attend chapter activities, and she usually traveled the farthest. When she received her Ph.D. from the University of New Mexico, we, in the chapter shared a common feeling of pride in knowing this accomplished scholar. Since her move to Wyoming, she has become active in their chapter. Our loss is their gain.

On the national level, she was secretary of OCTA and served on the Board of Directors for six years. She volunteered to be the General Editor of a new publication project, the Emigrant Trails Historical Study Series. She made the idea into reality with the first publication in the series in 1995, *The 1849 California Trail Diary of Elizah Preston Howell*.

She is considered an expert on the Bozeman Trail and is currently editing a two volume set of 33 Bozeman Trail documents for Montana History. She also serves on a Wyoming Commission to examine applications to the National Registry of Historic Places.

It is with great pleasure that I present OCTA's highest award, the Meritorious Achievement Award to a friend and one of OCTA's leaders-Susan Badger Doyle.



Susan Badger Doyle
photo by Rose Ann Tompkins

SWOCTA Mourns Loss of Four Members

Jim Carter of Las Cruces, NM died Saturday, April 6, 1996 several days after heart surgery.

Jim was so excited about the Butterfield Trail in New Mexico and Arizona and led several outings for our chapter. He planned those trips in meticulous detail...we were scheduled right down to the minute.

Such attention to detail was no doubt the result of 27 years in the military where he was an Air Force "fighter ace" with more than 450 combat hours in the P-47 Thunderbolt with the 56th Fighter Group in Europe.

SWOCTA Chapter members will miss him and miss seeing the white cap he always wore, bobbing through the mesquite trees as he searched for remnants of the trails.

Jim's wife, Marion, remains a member of SWOCTA. Memorial donations for Jim may be sent to:

Dona Ana Historical Society,
500 N. Water St.
Las Cruces, NM 88001



Jim Carter
photo by Bob E. Lee

Two days later, Monday, April 8, 1996 **Paul Etter** of Mesa, AZ died from heart related problems.

Although Paul was not an avid trails buff, he liked the people who were. He came along on the outings with his wife, Pat, to enjoy our company. He was our "social director", "cheerleader", "devil's advocate" and our flora and fauna teacher.

Paul retired as a vice president of Fluor Chemical in California. He was tall with a long reach and won many awards for fencing. Paul was a docent for the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum and on an outing he loved to quiz us relentlessly asking, "What feather do you think this is?" or "What kind of creature pollinates this cactus?" Our outings won't be the same without him.

Paul's wife, Pat, remains a member of SWOCTA. Memorial donations for Paul may be sent to:

Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum
2021 N. Kinney Rd,
Tucson, AZ 85743.

Last fall two other members of SWOCTA died. **George Osborne** of Pomona, CA and **Ralph Thornton** of Burley, ID. Ralph was the president of the Idaho Chapter when he died. Ralph attended our symposium in Safford in 1992. Janece Thornton and Ruth Osborne remain members of SWOCTA.

Paul Etter
photo by Rose Ann Tompkins



One Man's Convention

by Jack Root

Elko was our 12th consecutive OCTA Convention and it was easily one of the best, thanks to many months of hard work by those who planned and carried it out. Paul Sawyer and Bob Pierce, the co-chairs, were seemingly everywhere from dawn to the wee hours making things run smoothly.

We signed up for the two-day 4WD trip over the western part of the Hastings Cut-off (Big Spring to S. Fork of the Humboldt). Our friend Bea Kabler, of Madison, Wisconsin rode with us. It was many hours over dusty trails. Sometimes the dust was so deep it became a dry fluid, and we needed windshield wipers to see the vehicle ahead. Diaries confirm that, in this sense, things haven't changed much in 150 years.

Highlights were the Big Spring, Mad Woman Spring, the Pequops, Mound Spring (where the ground shakes), Ruby Valley, and Harrison Pass over the Ruby Mountains. (Overland Pass, route of the Donner Party, was too dust-laden for safe travel.) Some of the pristine traces shown us were enough to excite any Rut Nut. Views from high above the South Fork of the tortuous wagon path through Six-Mile Canyon were spectacular.

On the return to Elko the dusty troupe visited what is locally known as the "Hot Hole"--another huge hot spring. No bathing though; it is securely fenced. Two car washes and an oil change later, the 4Runner was almost its old self again.

The rest of the week brought the traditional scholarly papers, book sales, bus tours, banquet and barbecue. This afforded lots of opportunities to visit with old and new friends of the trail.

Eagerly awaited by me was a trip (by van this time) through Thousand Springs Valley to "Record Bluff", near the confluence of Little Goose and Goose Creeks. This eerie formation is covered with dated inscriptions and emigrant artwork. What a thrill to eat lunch in its shadow and imagine the wagon trains stopping here long ago.

The next day was "the hike"...six miles of emigrant canyon, ending at Gravelly Ford and its unknown graves. It was a neat hike, with swales galore, and this aging adventurer loved every minutes, except for the oppressive heat, with shade virtually non-existent. I even had the good luck to spot a buried artifact--an old iron

wagon tire (wheel rim). Fellow hikers seemed impressed and pleased.

We topped off the week by attending the solemn dedication of a kiosk and interpretive tablets on I-80, a few miles west of Elko. The local members did all the work to create this at a point affording an excellent view of the mouth of Six Mile Canyon--the end of the Hastings Cut-off. Once again, Marta Lienhard Vincent marched up playing her bagpipes as she did at the Donner Spring dedication. This time she was greeted by a descendent of the Shoshone tribe who met her Great-Great Grandfather, Heinrich Lienhard, noted diarist, in this area in 1846. The Shoshone descendent, in native dress, was Alfrieda Jake. A touching moment. Well done Elko!

Having survived a very full and satisfying week, we decided not to push our luck. We reluctantly elected to forego a post-convention trip on the Applegate Cut-off under the guidance of Chuck Dodd and headed for home. That was one man's convention.

Public Relations Chairman

by Marie Greene

OCTA is asking each Chapter to appoint a Public Relations Chairman. If you are interested in this position for our Chapter please call me at 505-377-6342, I will put you in touch with the National Public Relations Chairman, Leslie Wischman and send you the PR guidelines.

Nominee for National Board

by Marie Greene

Presently, we are looking for someone to be a nominee from our Chapter to the National OCTA Board of Directors in 1997. Anyone interested in running will receive full support of SWOCTA. We can get an early start for next year's election if we start planning now. If you want to know more about what the position entails, call Rose Ann Tompkins at 602-963-3565 and she can fill you in since she has just finished serving six years on the Board.

AVAILABLE MAY 1, 1996

THE EAGLE PASS SITE: AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE
PROVINCE OF CHICHILTICALE

By Betty Graham Lee

CORONADO TRAIL buffs know that one of the controversial sections of the route taken toward Zuni by the Conquistadors was after they left the San Pedro River in southeastern Arizona. Bolton Haury, Udall and others speculated that the Province of Chichilticale was near the northern end of the Sulphur Springs Valley. A few miles away, a pass by the same name and ruins which stood there have never been sought out. No survey or archaeological testing has ever been done.

The author has set up an hypothesis using eight major postulates as criteria for locating this elusive but often mentioned stop. Limited archaeological testing was done. Lee's site report may convince historians that this famous retreat and resting place on the 1540 Spanish Entrada may have now indeed been located.

MUSEUM OF ANTHROPOLOGY PUBLICATION NUMBER 5, EAC Museum Council, Eastern Arizona College, Thatcher, Arizona, 1996. Maps, photos, illus., biblio., V+31 pp., 8½ X 11. \$8.75 (soft cover).

About the Author:

Betty Graham Lee is an instructor emeritus from EAC where she taught archaeological field methods and was director of the Museum of Anthropology. Her expertise in locating vanished trails stems in part from her activities with the Oregon/California Trails Association (OCTA) and her work as chair of their archaeology committee. In 1994 she was given the National Meritorious Achievement Award for this endeavor. She has authored both historical and archaeological papers on the southwest and has participated in digs from Washington State to Tel Gerisa in Israel.

Please send me the site report The Eagle Pass Site: An Integral Part of the Province of Chichilticale by Betty Graham Lee.

Name.....

Address.....

Number wanted (\$8.75 ea.) _____

Total _____

Make check or M.O. to:

S&H \$1.25 ea. _____

EAC Museum Council
P.O. Box 558
Thatcher, AZ 85552

TOTAL ENCLOSED _____

(May also be picked up at the Safford Chamber of Commerce building)

Mark your Calendars Now!

Prolific Planning Meeting Yields Busy Schedule

Oct 12, 1996 Trip to Hunter's Canyon where emigrants left the Rio Grande in New Mexico.
Charles Townley in charge of planning.

Oct. 13-20, 1996 Mapping trip-same area
Richard & Marie Greene-leaders

Feb, 1997 Scouting trip in Arizona for possible sites to be marked by our chapter.

April, 1997 Follow-up trip to Arizona to start developing selected site.

April or May, 1997 Mapping trip

May, 1997 Joint Conference of Trails Associations and local, state and federal governments, Las Vegas. NM, sponsored by the Coronon de los Caminos Chapter of the Santa Fe Trail Assn.

July, 1997 Planning Meeting, Strawberry, AZ

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