

DESERT TRACKS



Volume 10
Number 1

SOUTHWEST CHAPTER
OREGON-CALIFORNIA TRAILS ASSOCIATION

March
1997

Editor - Sheri Lee, 5790 E. Territory Avenue, Tucson, AZ 85750-1801 - (520) 299-7143

SWOCTA to be given "Customized Tour" by Park Rangers On April 20 Outing at Ft. Bowie

Sunday, April 20 - Fort Bowie, Arizona

The day will begin at 10 AM, in order for people to have time to drive to the area. We will meet at the Fort Bowie parking lot. For those who have not been there before, there is no public parking right at the fort, but a walking trail of about a mile leading from the parking area to the fort. For the walk, Ranger Larry Ludwig will be our leader, showing us where the various trails came through the area.

Ludwig has said that those unable to walk that far can meet us for lunch at the fort. They will be allowed to use the handicap entrance for this. Therefore we can leave our lunches in the vehicle(s) that will drive into the fort.

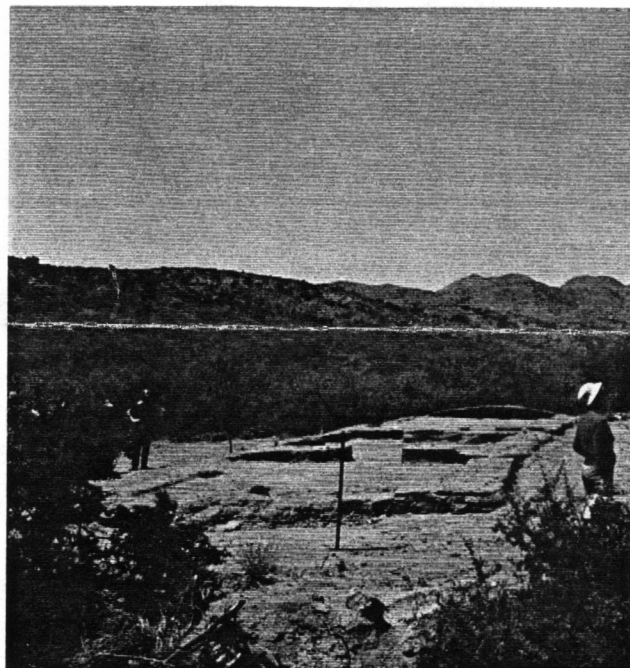
Following lunch, we will have a guided tour of the fort itself. Even if you have visited Fort Bowie before, this visit will have emphasis on the trails, and a guide for giving us more detail than is otherwise available.

You will need to bring your lunch, sturdy walking shoes, water, hat and sunscreen. Weather is variable at this time of year, it could be very warm. If you have questions, contact Rose Ann Tompkins.

SWOCTA to Map Apache Pass Area Week of April 21-25

During the week following this chapter activity, the Southern Trail field mapping group will stay on to map the trails of the Apache Pass area. We will be dry camping, and will spend the days hiking the trails, using OCTA's MET manual and other mapping aids. If you would like to join in this mapping, contact:

Rose Ann Tompkins
1125 W. Mission Drive
Chandler, AZ 85224
(602) 963-3565
email: tompkin@primenet.com



In a previous outing, SWOCTA members view a foundation reconstructed at Ft. Bowie by park rangers. Photo by Sheri Lee

This Could be your Last Desert Tracks

If there is a red star on your mailing label, our Strongbox Custodian reports we have not received your 1997 dues, which were due last December 1, 1996. Please renew...we want you!...we need you! There is a renewal form on the last page of this issue. Thanks!

SWOCTA Field Trip to Sears Point and the Oatman Massacre Site, AZ

by Richard Greene

On the warm, sunny Saturday morning of January 18, at 9 A.M., twelve SWOCTA members were led by Boma Johnson of the BLM office in Yuma, AZ to the Oatman Massacre Site located west of Gila Bend, AZ on the south side of the Gila River.

Rut Stompers in attendance were Richard and Marie Greene, Charles and Joyce Townley, Harland and Rose Ann Tompkins, Jack Root, Peter Bennett, Jon Harvey, Tracy DeVault, Pat Etter and her Aunt Doris from Canada, making this a truly international outing, and Boma Johnson who is now an honorary member of our chapter.

In 1851, Royce Oatman, his wife and seven children were determined to get to California. So determined they risked proceeding on their own in a solo wagon. They reached the steep, rocky slope at the bottom of the bluff west of what is now called Oatman Flat. Unable to get their loaded wagon up the rocky slope, they unloaded and hand carried their supplies to the top of the bluff. They encountered some Indians on the bluff and a massacre ensued. All but three of the children were killed: the survivors were Olive age 16, Mary Ann age 10 and Lorenzo age 14. The two girls were held captive and Lorenzo was left for dead.

Lorenzo was rescued while Olive remained captive for six years. In 1857 Lorenzo obtained Olive's freedom. Unfortunately, Mary Ann died in captivity.

The massacred remains of the Oatmans were subsequently buried in the flat near the wagon road and a DAR marker stands nearby.

Our party saw, on top of the bluff overlooking the Gila River Valley, a simple white metal cross with "Oatman Massacre" printed on it and beside it was an impressive swale up which the Oatmans had come. The rocky slope showed plenty of evidence it was used by emigrant wagons going to California; that is an abundance of "rust" deposits and grooves in the rocks. From the bluff we could look upon Oatman Flat and across to a bluff which showed the trail the emigrants used to come down to the flat.

It never ceases to amaze me in the Southwest's barren land there is so much fertile history. Before I joined SWOCTA I traveled the road between Gila Bend and Yuma. While awed with the landscape I drove as fast as I could and was totally unaware I was following the route of the emigrants and missing places like the Oatman Massacre Site and Sears Point. I am now glad to know about these places and to spot and see them



*Looking east down swale at Oatman Massacre site. Boma Johnson of BLM guides our group down the steep grade.
Photo by Rose Ann Tompkins*

with a group which tells me about the history and geography of the area. The area is truly emigrant history at its best.

After our tailgate lunch, Boma Johnson took us downstream to Sears Point, sometimes called Arizona's Independence Rock. He was terrific. His enthusiasm was apparent and he has extensive historical knowledge of the lands around Yuma. He led us about a mile on the emigrant wagon trail which is evidenced by all the rust marks on rocks, and across large sections with more "desert varnish" than I had ever previously seen. The road is quite obvious as it has a surprisingly smooth pavement like quality in places.

As we walked in the warmth of the sun, Boma told us the area was religiously significant to the Native Americans - even today. We saw lines and circles of rocks on the surrounding hills and Boma mentioned some rocks are still changing positions to this day. In all his visits to the area, Boma has never seen or met anyone moving the rocks.

Looking east in Sears Point area. Trail has "pavement" look in this section as it consists of small rocks pressed into the ground.
Photo by Rose Ann Tompkins



Did I mention the petroglyphs? If you want to feast your eyes on petroglyphs, then Sears Point is a great place to see them. There are more petroglyphs than you can get near and photograph.

Those of us who scrambled around the rocks of Arizona's Independence Rock were thrilled to see the signatures carved here. As of October, 1982, thirty-seven names were recorded and deciphered. The two standout signatures for me were those of "J.Griffith, April 15, 1848" - the stylistic letters and quality of the carving were exceptional - and "Lucien Maxwell". I am partial to Lucien Maxwell.

In Northern New Mexico, the Maxwell Land Grant once encompassed 1.7 million acres and Lucien Maxwell was, and still is, a large figure where I live. Maxwell and Kit Carson established a ranch at Rayado, then Maxwell made Cimarron the headquarters for his land holdings and built the Aztec Mill which still stands today as a museum. Maxwell is buried in Fort Sumter in the same cemetery as Billy the Kid. He led an incredible life.

As we finished visiting each site we discussed putting up an OCTA marker. The BLM has difficulty monitoring these sites, and the Sears Point site is especially vulnerable with the extensive petroglyphs. We believe the Oatman Massacre Site offers the easiest access; is well documented historically and most importantly is on the emigrant trail to California. The agency would also prefer to mark the Oatman site first, and would rather have one inclusive marker, perhaps a four-sided one, with OCTA providing the text concerning the emigrant trail and the Oatman affair for one side. Boma mentioned the BLM wants to recognize the other trail users through the area as well; that is the Native Americans, Spanish, the military, including the Mormon Battalion, Butterfield and Anza.

It was agreed Randy Brown, OCTA Chair for Graves and Sites, should be informed of SWOCTA and BLM's proposal to put up a marker at the Oatman Massacre Site so he can determine if it is suitable to OCTA. We also discussed doing something for the Sears Point area. We will follow up with Boma to learn what will fit into BLM's plan for Sears Point.

Boma and the Townleys left for Yuma; Tracy DeVault left for Prescott in his 1946 truck with a max speed of 35 m.p.h., and most of us returned to Gila Bend to eat dinner at the eclectic Outer Limits Restaurant. In Gila Bend, we were grateful to find anyplace to eat.

We welcomed Peter Bennett and Jon Harvey to SWOCTA and on their first field trip. To all our hard core SWOCTA trip members-it's always good to share these experiences with you.

We have prepared a draft for the Oatman Massacre marker. It is proposed we ask SWOCTA to review it. We will then send SWOCTA's reviewed draft to BLM for its consideration and send Randy Brown, OCTA Chairman, Graves and Sites Committee, a notice of our intent to put up a marker.

After agreement is reached between BLM and OCTA, SWOCTA will work with BLM to install the marker and develop plans for a dedication ceremony.

Be prepared to discuss your review of the draft at our March meeting or, if you are not going to be there, please send your comments to:

Richard Greene
P. O. Box 483
Angel Fire, NM 87710
Phone 505-377-6342

We have taken our first step in putting up a marker...thanks to everybody for their support. The proposed draft for the marker is on the next page..

THE OATMAN MASSACRE

In this area in 1851 six members of the Royce Oatman family were massacred by Indians.

The Oatmans were going to California. They had come across the flat and stopped their wagon at the bottom of the rocky slope that leads to the top of this bluff. Their exhausted oxen could not pull the loaded wagon up the slope. The Oatmans unloaded the wagon and carried their belongings up the slope.

On top of this bluff they encountered Indians. The Oatmans were low on supplies and were unable to satisfy the Indians' requests for food. The massacre then occurred. The entire family, except for three children, were killed.

The three survivors were Lorenzo, a boy of fourteen, Olive, 16, and Mary Ann, 10.

Lorenzo was thought to be dead by the Indians and thrown off this bluff onto the rocks below. He survived and was rescued by other California bound emigrants.

The girls were taken captive by the Indians. Mary Ann died in captivity. Olive was held captive for about six years and in 1857 Lorenzo obtained her freedom.

The massacred bodies of the Oatmans were buried down in the flat and a monument has been erected to their memory. The flat became known as Oatman Flat.

OREGON-CALIFORNIA TRAILS ASSOCIATION

1997

This is a part of your American Heritage. Honor it, protect it, preserve it for
your children

From the Adobe Hacienda of the Trail Marm

We missed everyone who was not able to make it to the January outing. Our guide, Boma Johnson, was knowledgeable about the Trail and especially about Indian lore. We all learned a lot from him. We hope to see you in April at the next field trip.

The Planning Meeting will be held in Strawberry, AZ. Rose Ann and Harland Tompkins will be our hosts. Please plan to attend, but if you cannot make it, then send me any suggestions for future outings or any type of program you would like the Chapter to sponsor and we will work it into the schedule for next year.

I will be attending the mid-year meeting for OCTA in Independence, MO on March 22, 1997. If you have anything for the Board to consider, just let me know. I will relay any concerns or ideas from our members.

If you want to become more active in the chapter, but do not know what you can do, here are a couple of ways to volunteer: as our Public Relations Officer or as a candidate for the national Board of Directors. See the related articles elsewhere in this newsletter.

There is always more work and more fun to be had by being more active. See you on the Trail soon.

Marie Greene
President

The following is a copy of the Mid-Year Report each president is required to submit to the chairman of OCTA. This copy is included for your information.

February 12, 1997
Mid-year report

Dear Jackie,

Looking forward to the Board Meeting in March. Following is a summary of our activities for the past year.

April, 1996 mapping trip in southern New Mexico
7 participants
Mid-year planning meeting at Angel Fire, NM
8 participants
October, 1996 field trip to Hunter's Draw, NM
15 participants
October, 1996 mapping trip to So. New Mexico
6 participants
January, 1997 field trip to Sears Point and the Oatman Massacre Site, AZ
13 participants

Waivers were signed for the October and January trips and will be kept on file for approximately one year.

We are planning another year of fine activities for our Chapter and hope to have even more participation this coming year.

There are no items our Chapter needs to have on the business agenda at this time.

Yours truly,

Marie Greene, President
Southwest Chapter

The Illinois Journal
Tuesday, Feb. 13, 1849

The Gold Fever. The gold fever is now raging in this benighted region to a greater degree than ever. We heard of a story this morning, which no doubt is as authentic as the majority of the items afloat, and which beats anything we have read yet. A runaway soldier is said to have discovered a lump or a rock of gold that weighed 839 pounds 11 1/2 ounces; he was afraid to leave it, and mounted guard upon it; and at the last account he had sat there 67 days, and had offered \$25,000 for a plate of pork and beans, but his offer had always been indignantly refused, and the poor fellow only laughed at for the niggardliness of his offer, by parties going further on, where the article was said to be more abundant. *Contributed by Rose Ann Tompkins*

**Planning Meeting
Saturday, July 19, 1997
Strawberry, Arizona**

For the third time in our chapter's lifetime, we will have our annual planning meeting at the Tompkins' cabin in Strawberry, Arizona. For those of you who have missed this experience, it is nestled in the pines at 6000 feet elevation, just under the Mogollon Rim. The large covered deck provides a shady spot to gather while we have our serious discussions as well as fun together.

Friday, July 18 - If you would like to come early for the weekend, you may arrive anytime after 7 pm. We will be driving up from Chandler and will not be there earlier in the day. Bring your favorite beverage and some snacks and we will have an evening to visit.

Saturday, July 19 - The actual planning meeting will begin at 1 pm. This will allow those who wish to travel that Saturday morning to get there. We will try to have some special program for the evening.

Sunday, July 20 - Those who wish are welcome to stay until afternoon, when we will be making our departure for Chandler.

Alternative activities in the area are numerous. Harland will be glad to take anyone horseback riding either Saturday or Sunday morning. There are opportunities for hiking and 4WD experiences, both historic and scenic. We can plan these ahead if you express interest, or we can do things on an impromptu basis.

Saturday breakfast, lunch and dinner, plus Sunday breakfast will be available. As has been the custom in recent years, we will provide the food with everyone dividing up the cost.

Since sleeping space is limited, it is important that those who need overnight accommodations let us know. We have room for some and if necessary we may be able to rent the cabin next door as we did the last time. There are also motels closeby, but summer weekends get booked up early. We will provide maps so you can find us, as it is a typical summer area with hard to find nooks.

Let's not forget however, that though the planning meeting is always fun, our main purpose is to plan the chapter activities for the next year. We need your input, ideas and willingness to plan and carry out a chapter event.

Contact:

Harland or Rose Ann Tompkins
1125 W. Mission Dr.
Chandler, AZ 85224
(602) 963-3565
email - tompink@primenet.com

SWOCTA Needs a Public Relations Officer

by Marie Greene

Our national organization is requesting each chapter have a Public Relations Officer. This person would only be responsible for the following:

Regularly placing announcements of all chapter activities including meetings and outings in local "community calendars". This is simple, just send a postcard to the newspapers and to TV and radio stations.

Providing information on chapter activities to the national Public Relations Officer for publication in electronic formats. This is simple, just send a postcard to OCTA.

Possibly speaking to local civic organizations about the trails, the emigrants and OCTA's preservation activities. Not so simple, but it is optional.

You have been wondering how to get involved and now SWOCTA needs you; here's your chance! This is easy, no hiking or 4WD necessary! Just contact Marie Greene by phone at 505-377-6342; by Email mariegreene@worldnet.att.net, or by snail mail at P.O. Box 483, Angel Fire, NM 87710.

National Board Member Election

by Marie Greene

Here's your opportunity to get in at the top and contribute to the preservation of the trails! Almost from the beginning of SWOCTA, we have had at least one person, maybe two or three, on the national OCTA Board of Directors. Now is the time for you to become a Director and speak for the preservation of our Southwestern Trails.

A national Board Member needs to attend two board meetings a year; one at the National Convention in the summer and a mid-year meeting in the spring. The locations vary, but all locations are interesting. OCTA provides reimbursement for the travel expenses. An agenda and items to be discussed are mailed to you in advance of the two meetings for your review. All OCTA business decisions are decided by a vote of the entire Board.

There are 12 directors with ideally 4 positions being open for election each year, but sometimes someone resigns early opening up more positions. A term is 3 years. A director is limited to 2 successive terms.

Our national Board Members are good, dedicated individuals with whom you will enjoy associating. They are all very important to the continued success of OCTA.

It is nice to have a representative or two from our Southwestern Chapter always on the Board! Think about it and then contact Marie Greene by phone at 505-377-6342, or mail at P.O. Box 483, Angel Fire, NM 87710 or Email at mariegreene@worldnet.att.net for the application form. The chapter will arrange for your letters of recommendation. The election will be held this summer, so there is not a lot of time left to think about this. Do it now!

**Ranch Family Wrangles Over Road
Neighbors Fight to Keep Gates Open**
by Richard Benke, AP

The following article first appeared in the (Phoenix) Arizona Republic, Thursday, Feb 27, 1997:

The family that owns the environmentally renowned Gray Ranch is battling to have a stretch of dirt road in New Mexico's rugged Bootheel protected as private land despite county insistence it's public.

The family, in a lawsuit filed Friday, asserts private property rights of the Canoncito Ranch in the extreme southwestern corner of New Mexico. Their attorneys also say the family has a long-standing commitment to protect the environment in the Bootheel.

But the dispute has aligned rancher against neighboring rancher in the lonely area bordering Mexico and Arizona. Some neighbors-despite assurances from the family that the road will always be accessible to them-say it should be public.

Others, including outdoor enthusiasts and the U.S. Forest Service, also oppose closure, saying it would deny access to public lands. Former District Attorney Tony White, who represented Hidalgo County early in the dispute, said he believes the county will win. But he said it's an unusual case in that both sides stand for worthy principles-public interest vs. protection of land.

"Everybody I've dealt with I thought was sincere, acting in good faith. There really are no bad guys in it", said White. "And that's why it's a shame to go to court, because somebody will end up losing."

Attorneys for the Mr. and Mrs. Willis D. Hadley Irrevocable Trust, established for grandson Seth Hadley, filed the lawsuit to have the state district court in Lordsburg declare part of the road private. Seth Hadley, beneficiary of the trust that owns the Canoncito Ranch, is the son of Gray Ranch owner Drum Hadley.

The trust contends the road was never publicly dedicated. "We've looked, and we can find no record of dedication," attorney Murray Giles said. "This is where Seth Hadley lives. This is his home. We're not willing to concede this is anything but private property."

Hidalgo County Commissioner Lloyd Payne said the road was created in 1846 by Lt. Col. Philip St. George Cooke blazing a wagon trail to California.

"Since that time, the road has been used continuously by the public," Payne said.

Two neighbors who now disagree with the Hadleys initially had been on their side. When Stephen and Meira Gault bought their ranch in 1991, they believed two dirt roads crossing their land were private.

"So we put up signs that said "Private Road", Meira Gault said.

Their view changed after neighbors, county officials, passing motorists and their own attorney-Constance Brooks of Denver-told them the roads were public.

"Once we realized it's not private, we changed our minds, and we're fine with it," Meira Gault said.

County Roads 002 and 003 converge on the Gaults' 7,000 deeded acres. The court dispute involves a portion of 002 that crosses Seth Hadley's land.

County Road 002-or the Cloverdale Road, as the Hadleys call it-runs from the Cloverdale crossroads about eight miles north to a Coronado National Forest road called the Geronimo Trail, named for the Apache warrior who roamed there.

County Road 003, which the Hadleys call Foster Draw Road, runs east-west for about four miles between New Mexico 338 and the Gault ranch.

Giles and co-counsel Ken Wagner contend Hidalgo County abandoned the roads in 1990, when the County Commission voted to discontinue maintenance.

But Payne says that vote never halted public ownership.

When the county resumed road maintenance last year at Gault's request, Wagner filed a notice of intent to sue.

Wagner seeks to declare only 1 1/2 miles of the Cloverdale Road private. Keeping it open serves no real public need, he suggested.

Cordelia Cowan, whose Cloverdale Ranch sits at the southern tip of the road, disagreed, saying she often drives it to get to Douglas, Ariz., via the National Forest.

"It's a very pretty drive" she said. "I just don't feel like that road should be closed to anybody who wants to get to public land."

Besides leading indirectly to the National Forest, the road also touches tracts owned by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management and the State of New Mexico.

(SWOCTA has traveled these roads many times when researching and mapping the Southern Route which includes Whitmire and Guadalupe Passes. The photo on our back page is of the old general store still standing at Cloverdale)



Boma Johnson of Yuma BLM explains what we are about to see at Sears Point. From left to right: Tracy De Vault, Jon Harvey, Charles Townley, Pat Etter, Pat's Aunt Doris, Peter Bennett, Joyce Townley, Boma Johnson, Jack Root & Richard Greene. Photo by Rose Ann Tompkins

Membership Renewal for 1997

The Southwest Chapter fee of **\$10** per year for either individual or family was due on December 1st. Please make your check for **\$10** payable to our Strongbox Custodian (treasurer), **Harland Tompkins** and mail it to:

Harland Tompkins
1125 W. Mission Dr.
Chandler, AZ 85224-2354.

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, 9 digit zip _____

Telephone _____

E-mail address _____

(We are seeking this information to see how many members are on the Net and can be reached electronically.)

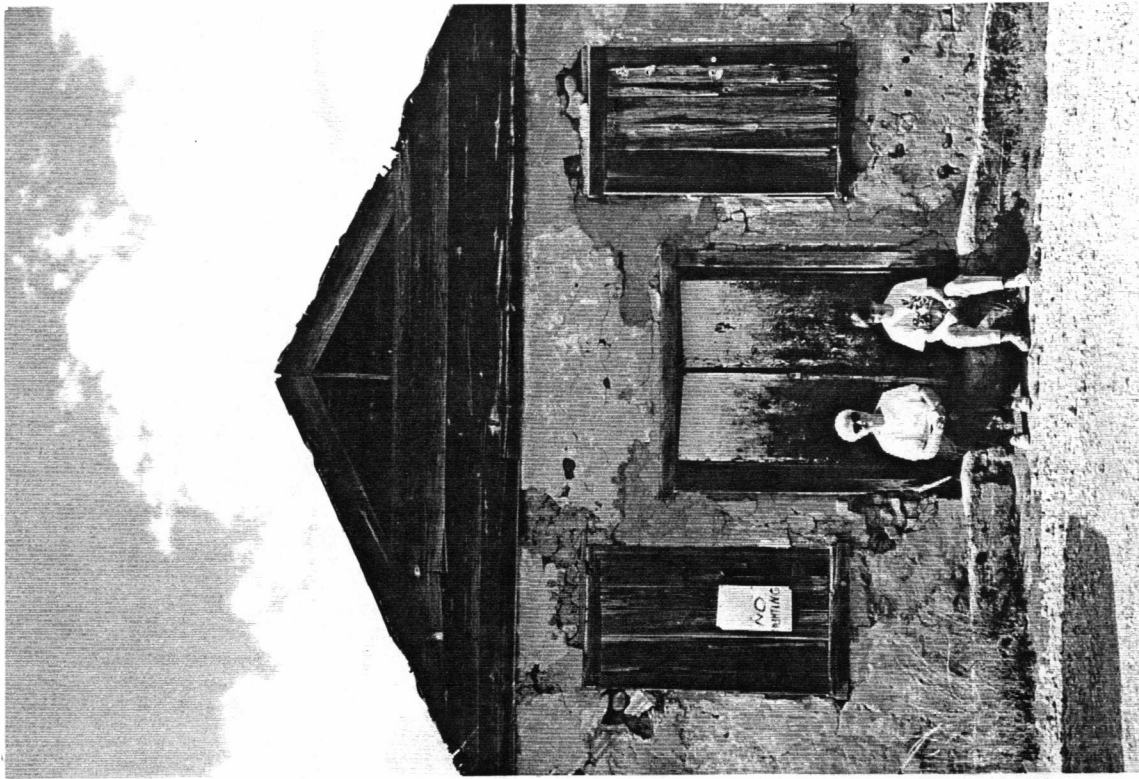
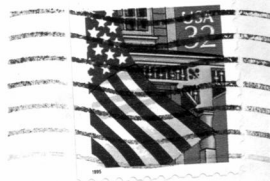
Please return this form.

Thanks,
Richard Greene
Membership Chairman

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They missed it by 150 years.

SWOCTA members Ruth Root and Susan Badger Doyle sit in the sun on the steps of the old Cloverdale, NM store just waiting for a wagon train to roll by and offer them a ride to California. (see related article page 6).

