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CRATERS OF THE MOON NM

OVERLAND JOURNAL

CRATERS OF THE MOON NM

Volume 14, Number 4, Winter 1996-1997



Statement of Purpose
of the
Oregon-California Trails Association

The purposes for which the Association is organized are as follows:

1. To initiate and coordinate activities relating to the identification, preservation, interpretation, and improved accessibility of extant rut segments, trail remains, graves and associated historic trail sites, landmarks, artifacts, and objects along the overland western historic trails, roads, routes, branches, and cutoffs of the Trans-Mississippi region.

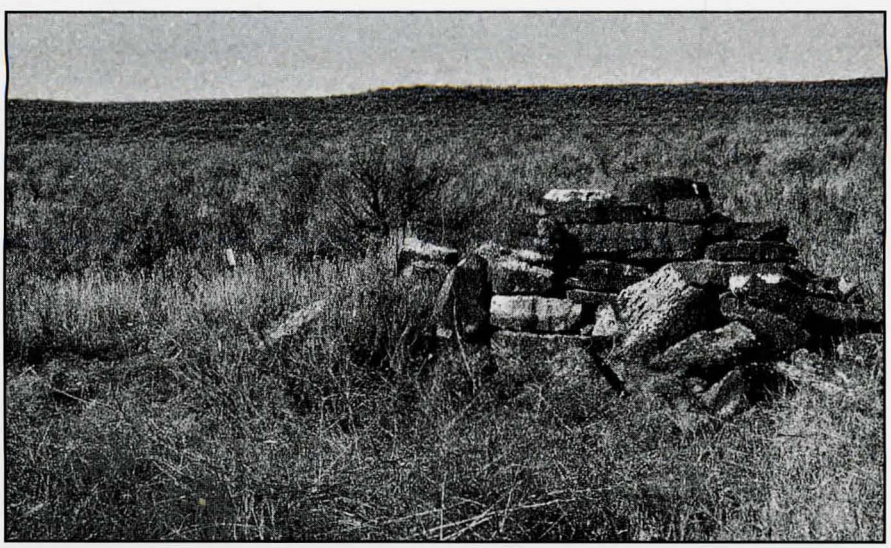
2. To prevent further deterioration of the foregoing and to take or pursue whatever measures are necessary or advisable to cause more of the same to become accessible or more so to the general public.

3. To implement these purposes by acquiring either alone or through or jointly with other—federal, state, local, or private—title to the land or lands on which any of the same is located or a preservation or other easements with regard to the same—by purchase, gift, or otherwise—and by cooperating with or initiating, coordinating, and assisting the efforts of such others to do so.

4. To publicize and seek public exposure of the goals and activities of the Association so as to create popular awareness of and concern for the necessity of preserving the foregoing.

5. To facilitate research projects about the aforesaid and to publish a journal as a forum for scholarly articles adding to the sum of knowledge about the same.

It shall be the further purpose of the Association to be exclusively charitable and educational within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.



Ruins of Root Hog station, located on McTucker's Road; emigrants wrote of finding water here. The station and road are included in Fred Dykes' article on Jeffrey's Cutoff in this issue. (Fred W. Dykes)

On the cover ...

An emigrant wagon train photographed in Echo Canyon in 1867. (Nebraska State Historical Society)

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For her article, "To California on the Southern Route—1849" (Volume 13, No. 3, *Overland Journal*), Patricia A. Etter received the Westerners International Coke Award for the best journal article dealing with a western history topic published in 1995. The award, a three-dimensional replica of Charlie Russell's buffalo skull, was presented during the Western History Conference in Lincoln, Nebraska, in October 1996.

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COLD, HARD FACTS ABOUT JEFFREY'S CUTOFF

by Fred W. Dykes

INTRODUCTION

JEFFREY'S CUTOFF IS A 230-MILE LONG Oregon Trail cutoff located entirely within the state of Idaho. The cutoff originally left the main Oregon Trail at what is now the Fort Hall townsite, and headed to a ferry on the Snake River at the mouth of the Blackfoot River. A later variation crossed the Snake River one mile upstream from the original Fort Hall.[1]

Once across the river, the routes converged at Danilson Springs near present-day Springfield, Idaho. This was the nearest water source to the spring at Big Southern Butte, thirty miles to the northwest. With scant water available at the Butte, emigrants lost no time in making their way to the Big Lost River, eight miles away. After following this stream for five miles, the route went cross country to the Craters of the Moon area. The trail there led along the northern edge of the lava flows to the Little Wood River valley. Crossing the mountain ridge to the west of the valley at Bradley's Summit, emigrants descended to the Silver Creek area and continued west to Big Wood River valley. A hilly area separated the Wood River area from the Camas Prairie. This prairie was the best part of the route, with abundant water and feed for the stock. Leaving the prairie, the route descended to Dixie Creek and crossed over into Long Tom Creek valley. The wagons then faced the worst part of the trail in crossing the Danskin Mountain Range, a steep rugged area that tested them to the limit. Finally, they reached the head of Ditto Creek canyon and followed it down to the main Oregon Trail northwest of Mountain Home, Idaho.

In a recent article in the *Overland Journal*, Jack and Patricia Fletcher quoted Dudley Gardner's assessment of the history of the Cherokee Trail.[2] Gardner's statements seem quite appropriate for the Jeffrey Cutoff as well, and might read—substituting Jeffrey Cutoff and its location for that of the Cherokee Trail: "As an alternate emigrant road, Jeffrey's Cutoff that passes through southern Idaho along the northern edge of the Snake River Plain provides numerous problems to the historian. First there was, until about ten years ago, a paucity of readily available documentation concerning Jeffrey's Cutoff. Second, secondary sources have tended to muddy the water. . . . Conflicting reports, numerous conjectures, ignorance of its existence. . . compound the problem. . . . Currently, some of the best evidence we have regarding Jeffrey's Cutoff are the G. L. O. maps." Additional complications arise from the fact that the cutoff was absorbed into a longer route, with the same name applied interchangeably to both routes. Also, fifty miles of the eastern end of the cutoff were relocated after the railroad came to Blackfoot and the cutoff began to be used for stage and freight traffic.

In the preface to both *The Oregon Trail Revisited and Maps of the Oregon Trail,* Gregory Franzwa asked readers to inform him of any errors or changes noted.[3] Surely any historian, professional or amateur, would feel the same way about his or her publications.

The goal of this article is to update recent publications dealing (or not dealing) with Jeffrey's Cutoff and to present an up-to-date description of the trail based on the latest research involving trail diaries, interviews, and field study. Trail buffs may then note corrections in pertinent documents and feel confident that they have accurate information about the cutoff. No attempt is made to give reasons or to assign blame for errors in earlier works. Most of the problems have been the natural result of a developing body of information concerning the cutoff. As additional information is unearthed, problems in earlier reports become apparent.

NAME

MOST, IF NOT ALL, RESEARCHERS REFER TO the cutoff under study as Goodale's Cutoff. I am one of the few, if not the only researcher, to identify this cutoff as Jeffrey's. There are reasons for this discrepancy. One thing





Left: McTucker's Road crosses a crevice in the Cerro Grand lava flow about six miles east of Big Southern Butte. (Note possible rock fill of crevice in the foreground.) Right: Granite marker, located on State Highway 86, noting a section of Goodale's route. (The author)



A swale on the Toponce Stage Road, two miles north of Big Butte Stage Station. (The author)

to keep in mind is that there is a section of emigrant trail that was opened by Tim Goodale and is appropriately named for him. Goodale led a large group across the cutoff in 1862, in what was the first recorded use of the route since 1854. That was ten years after the first reported use of the route. From the junction of the cutoff with the main Oregon Trail twenty-seven miles southeast of Boise, Goodale followed the main trail through the Boise area. He then turned northwest, blazing a new trail to the Snake River at the site of present-day Brownlee Dam. According to one source, at this point Goodale left the train under duress when it was learned that no trail existed on the other side of the river. However, another source mentions no difficulties at this time and states that Brownlee paid the men of Goodale's train to build a road west from his ferry, out of the Snake River canyon.[4]

Once across the river, the party made its way to along an existing pack trail about fifty miles to a junction with the main trail near the new Oregon Trail Interpretive Center now at Baker City, Oregon.[5] This section of Goodale's route is identified by a granite marker located on State Highway 86 two miles south of Halfway, Oregon.

Judging from the trail literature, until fairly recently many people interested in emigrant trails were unaware of the existence of the Goodale route. Most of those aware of the route only recognized the first 230 miles that had been opened by Jeffrey. Aside from the one-page document that officially named the cutoff for Goodale, there has been only one brief publication covering the entire route. Recently an article was published covering the route from Boise westward. Certainly many aspects of Goodale's train deserve investigation, but lack of reference material hinders such research. For example, if the Goodale Train consisted of 338 wagons at the start, and only 60 arrived at Cambridge, Idaho, what happened to the other 278?[6]

It would seem that one cannot unambiguously refer to both the first 230 miles of Goodale's route, and the entire route, as Goodale's Cutoff. If one chooses to research only the original Jeffrey route with abundant trail diaries and physical evidence, why should the waters be muddied by calling it Goodale's Cutoff?

Having established the ambiguity of identifying the cutoff as Goodale's, it does not seem inappropriate to use the name of the person who opened it for emigrant travel, John T. Jeffrey. He is said to have opened the road in 1852, but the first known emigrant records of travel by that route are from 1854. In that year, Winfield Scott Ebey identified Jeffrey as the one who located the road. The same year, Mary Stone Smith encountered Jeffrey at Big Wood River and called him the proprietor of the road.[7]

Jeffrey, along with John G. Garner of Olympia, Washington, and others, established the route as a money-making enterprise. They did not attempt to charge a toll for use of the trail, inasmuch as it had existed for countless generations as a major Native American thoroughfare. Instead, they established a ferry across the Snake River just below the mouth of the Blackfoot River, intending to make their profit by ferrying emigrants across the river. In 1862, Medorem Crawford reported that the bridge across the Portneuf River, built by General Lander, had been destroyed and a ferry established by the same people who owned the Snake River Ferry.[8] Whether or not it was Jeffrey and company who destroyed the bridge has not been determined.

The cutoff also could be called "Wyeth's Route" after Nathaniel Wyeth. He followed the route when he left Fort Hall on 6 August 1834. This was two days after the fort was completed. Many other trappers and explorers also had used the route, including Captain Bonneville. Perhaps the most accurate name would be the "Bannock-Shoshone Camas Prairie Trail." The Camas Prairie was the source of Camas bulbs, a major food supply for the indigenous peoples, and trails from all over southern Idaho led to the prairie. In 1860, George Goodhardt established himself in the Fort Hall area as an independent trapper. He became close friends with Joe Pattee, who was using the fort as his headquarters. George eventually married Pattee's daughter, Lizzie. They were associated closely with the Native Americans in the area, as Lizzie was partly descended from these people. In his memoirs, George told of several trips with Native Americans to gather Camas bulbs, following the cutoff route.[9]

In 1863, the cutoff was improved by Utah interests wanting better access to the mining districts around Boise.[10] One probable improvement was bypassing steep descents on the westward route so that wagons could travel to the east also. The trail then became known as the "Old Emigrant Road." Residents of Camas Prairie still refer to it by that name. The *Sixth Annual Report of the United States Geological Survey of the Western Territories* (1873) reported that the old emigrant road crossed the Snake River near the mouth of Ross Fork and "thence ran in an almost direct line past the westernmost of the Three Buttes to the foot of the Salmon River Mountains."[11] It seems certain that the reference to Ross Fork is in error, as Ross Fork did not empty into the Snake River. The only logical stream would be the Blackfoot River, and the crossing was the one originally established by Jeffrey and his associates.

The last published use of the Jeffrey name prior to 1989 was in 1932, as Jeffries Trail. In a report last published as a revised edition in 1972, the Goodale name was given to the route. This report refers to maps dated in 1859 and 1863 that identified the trail as "Jeffers Road."[12] Therefore, the choice of name was not through lack of knowledge of the earlier name.

CHANGES

AS PREVIOUSLY MENTIONED, the first changes in the original route were made in 1863 and probably were directed mainly toward making the route usable for wagons headed eastward. Several areas in the lava flow area at Craters of the Moon would have required improvement. One spot of obvious change is a ridge called Tom Cat by local residents; it is located between mileposts 223 and 224 on U. S. Highway



Above: Sometimes, emigrant trains were made up entirely of men eager to reach mining areas. This drawing appeared in Harper's Weekly *in 1871. (Nebraska State Historical Society) Below: Nellie Slater Stanton with her husband, Frank, and children (left to right) Royal, Martha, Ida, and Willis. Photographed in 1913 when Nellie was sixty-five years old, Nellie traveled the Goodale Cutoff with the Goodale Train in 1862 as a fourteen-year-old girl and helped bury her father on Big Lost River. (Photo courtesy of Wilbur Chitwood, Nellie's great-grandson)*



20-26-93. Here, five different routes across the ridge are visible, created as the crossing was repeatedly improved.

In December of 1878, the Utah & Northern Railroad reached Blackfoot, Idaho. Blackfoot then became a railhead for freight destined for the mines in the Wood and Salmon river areas of Idaho. Passengers for these areas and the Boise area also disembarked from their trains there. By 1 June 1879, Alexander Toponce had a stage line running from Blackfoot to the Challis, Idaho, area. The Toponce stages crossed the Snake River at Blackfoot and headed downstream to join the cutoff route near the Snake River ferry. Toponce established the first dinner station at Big Southern Butte. His employees piped the water from the spring there one mile down the slope of the mountain to a cistern at the stage station site.[13] The pipe consisted of three-inch square timbers about five feet long, with a two-inch hole bored down the center. Many of the pipe segments have survived and are found in local museums.

With an adequate water supply available at the Butte, it was no longer necessary to make the detour to the Big Lost River and cross the rugged lava flows near Box Canyon. The stage route headed directly for Old Arco on Big Lost River, three miles south of present-day Arco. Emigrants immediately took advantage of the new route. The following summer, Toponce opened a branch line from Arco to Belleview.[14] This intersected the cutoff nine miles west of Arco and followed it to the Big Wood River valley.

Blackfoot merchants were concerned that when the railroad continued its northward construction, their profitable business supplying the mines in central Idaho might be adversely affected. So one of the merchants, James McTucker, took some supplies, wagons and men and laid out a new road directly from Blackfoot to Big Southern Butte in order to shorten the route. McTucker's Road was about thirty-nine miles long when finally completed, compared to about fifty for the route via Danilson Springs. The only problem was that there was no water available along the way. So, a way-station was established twenty-three miles from Blackfoot. It became known as "Root Hog," from the unsanitary appearance of the keeper and the facilities. Water was hauled to Root Hog from the emigrant spring at the Big Butte Station, sixteen miles away. Although a mere seep now, the spring must have been quite large prior to 1915 when two Frenchmen, homesteading at the Butte's northwest corner, began digging into a moist, tree-covered spot on the mountain. They struck the aquifer at a lower level than the emigrant spring and diverted most of the flow.[15]

At first, McTucker's Road made a circuitous detour through what is now the Atomic City area. This was necessary, as the Cerro Grande lava flow blocked the direct route. When a trail was blasted through the lava, emigrants began using McTucker's Road. This was approximately in 1881. However, the old cutoff route between Danilson Springs and the Butte must had continued to see some use, as stages were leaving mail at Danilson Springs in 1901.[16] Also, much work was done to straighten the old route, requiring the removal of tons of lava rock. There is some speculation that this was done by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s.

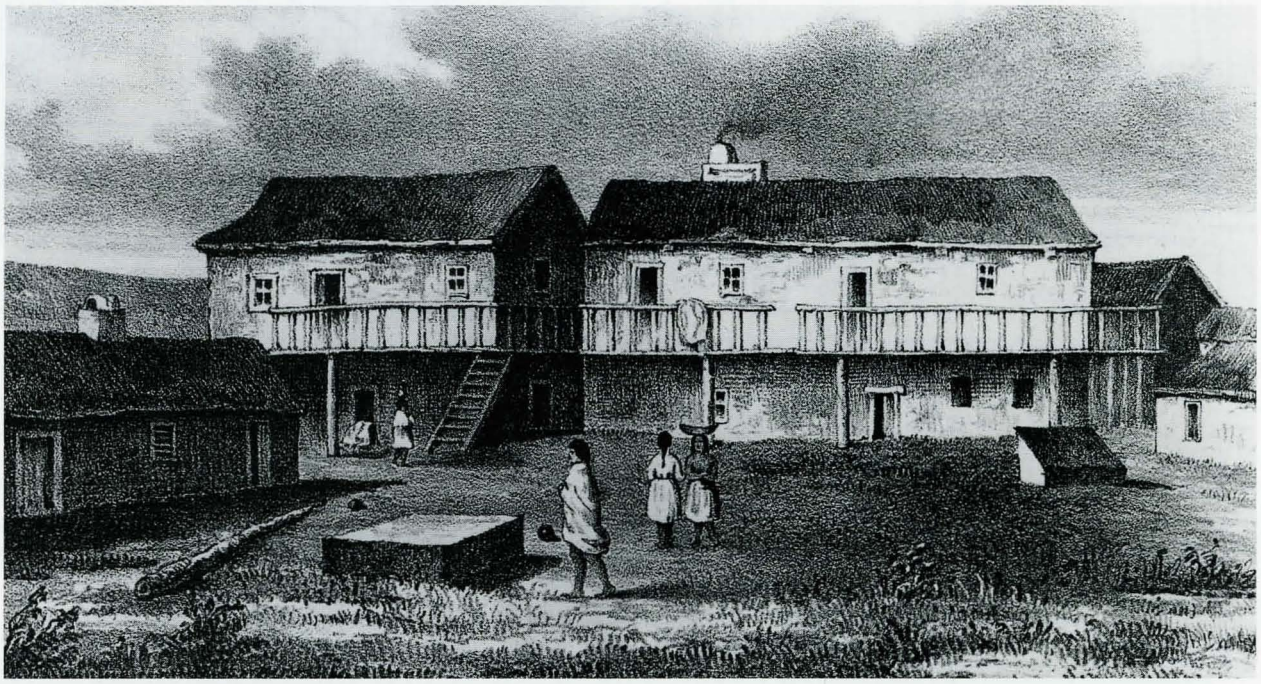
Katherine Forbes in 1895 reported leaving the main Oregon Trail about fifteen miles east of the Fort Hall townsite, crossing over the divide onto the Lincoln Creek drainage, and following that creek past the Fort Hall military post and into Blackfoot from the east. She and her family arrived at Root Hog at 10:00 a.m. and had to wait until 1:00 p.m. for the water wagon to arrive from the Big Butte Station, so that they could water their stock. After leaving Root Hog, the Forbes did not follow the route to the Big Butte Station. Instead, they continued in a northwesterly direction through today's Atomic City area, and on to Big Lost River. This was known as the "Lower Road," while the route to the Butte was called the "Upper Road."[17] The problem with taking the Lower Road was that the river sometimes ran dry in late summer and fall. In that case, no water was available until the emigrants reached Old Arco.

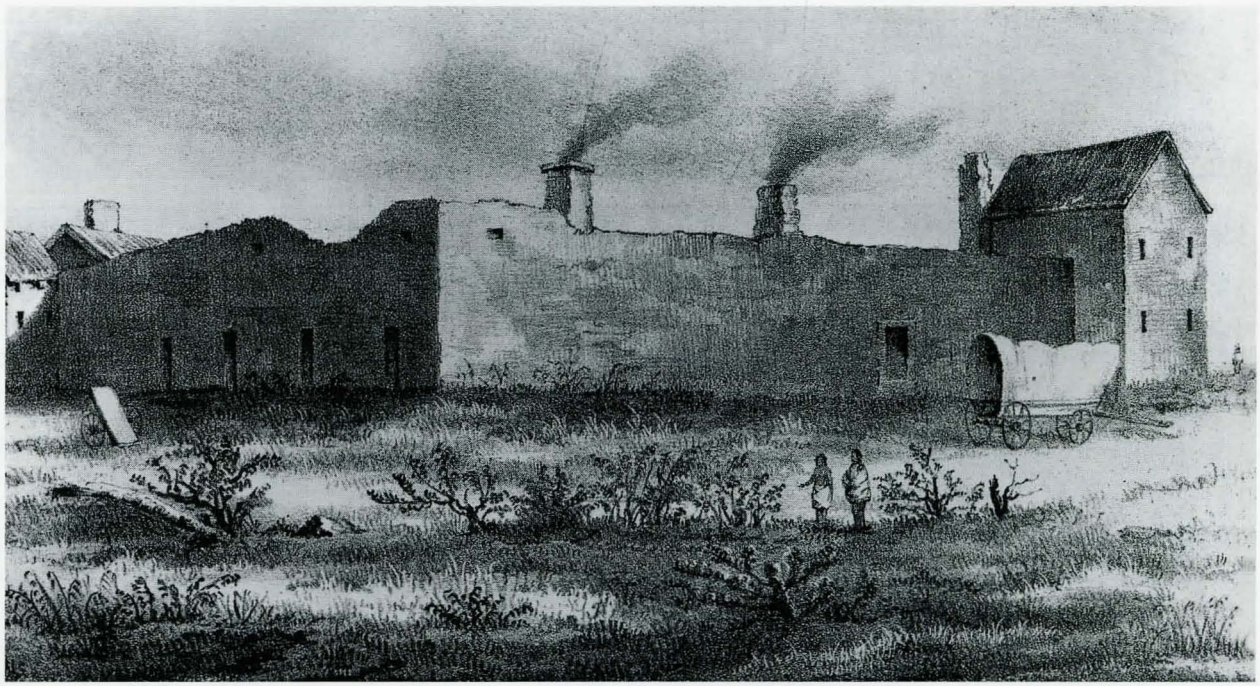
TRAVELERS AFTER 1852

THE FIRST KNOWN ACCOUNT of emigrant travel over the cutoff is that of Mary Stone Smith. This diary formerly was considered to be that of an anonymous emigrant. Recently, Rose Ann Tompkins carried out research that identified the author.[18] Mary was a member of the Chandler Robinson Huntington Train that crossed the Snake River on 20 July 1854. In her diary, although short, there is much interesting information. She recorded the amount of supplies taken and the directions given at the Snake River ferry for following Jeffrey's Cutoff. In a possibly unique circumstance, she wrote of finding her mother's grave near the western end of Sublette's Cutoff. Her mother had been a member of a train that headed for Oregon the previous year.

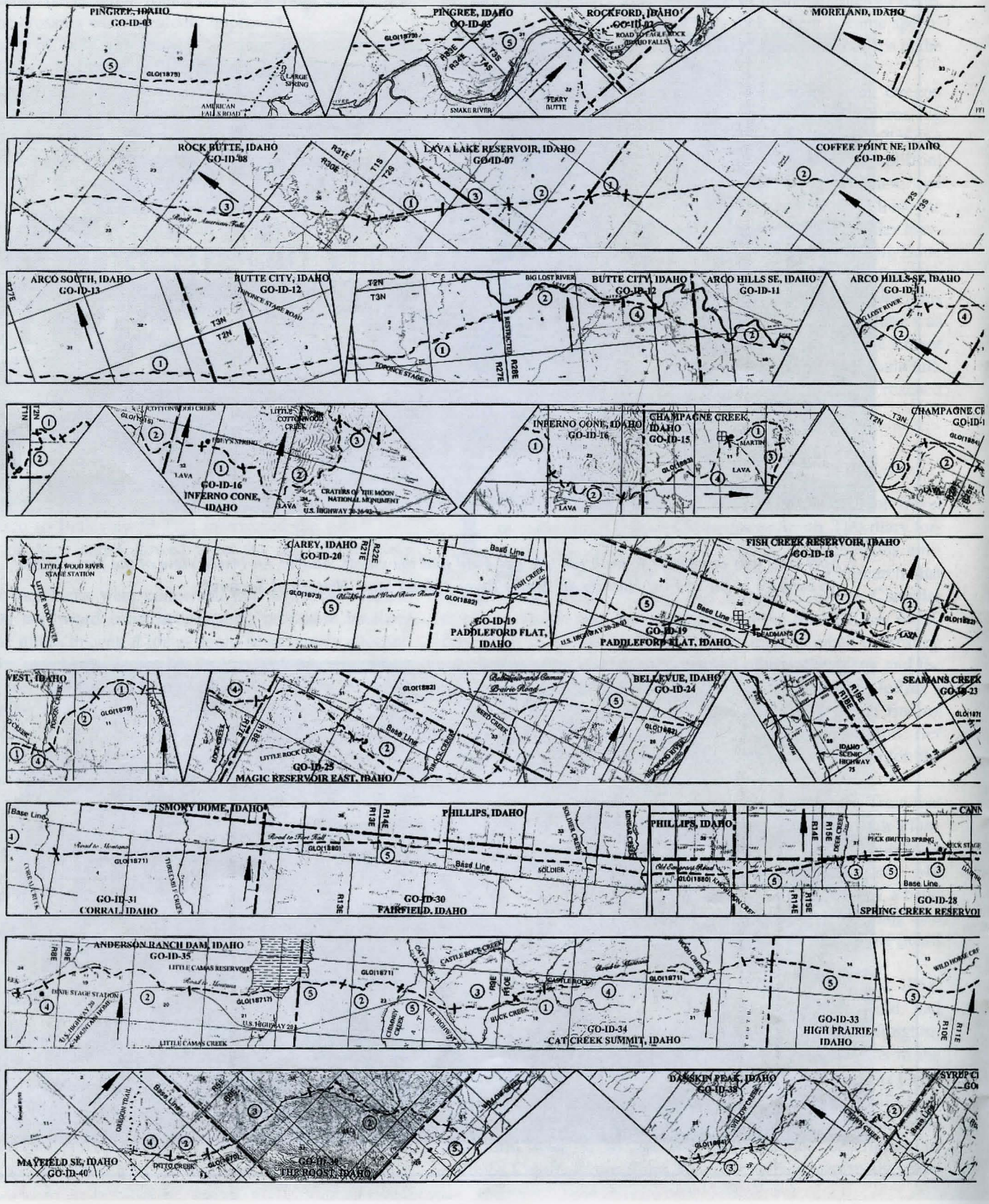
Harvey H. Jones and his wife documented the Yantis Train that crossed the Snake River 25 July 1854. The Yantis Train was a fairly large one of about twenty wagons. Some of this group were involved in trying to rescue victims of the Ward Massacre. Mr. and Mrs. Jones were killed near Auburn, Washington, by a band of Indians on 28 October 1855.[19] Mr. and Mrs. George King also were killed at the same time; King had been officer of the guard for the Ebey Train.

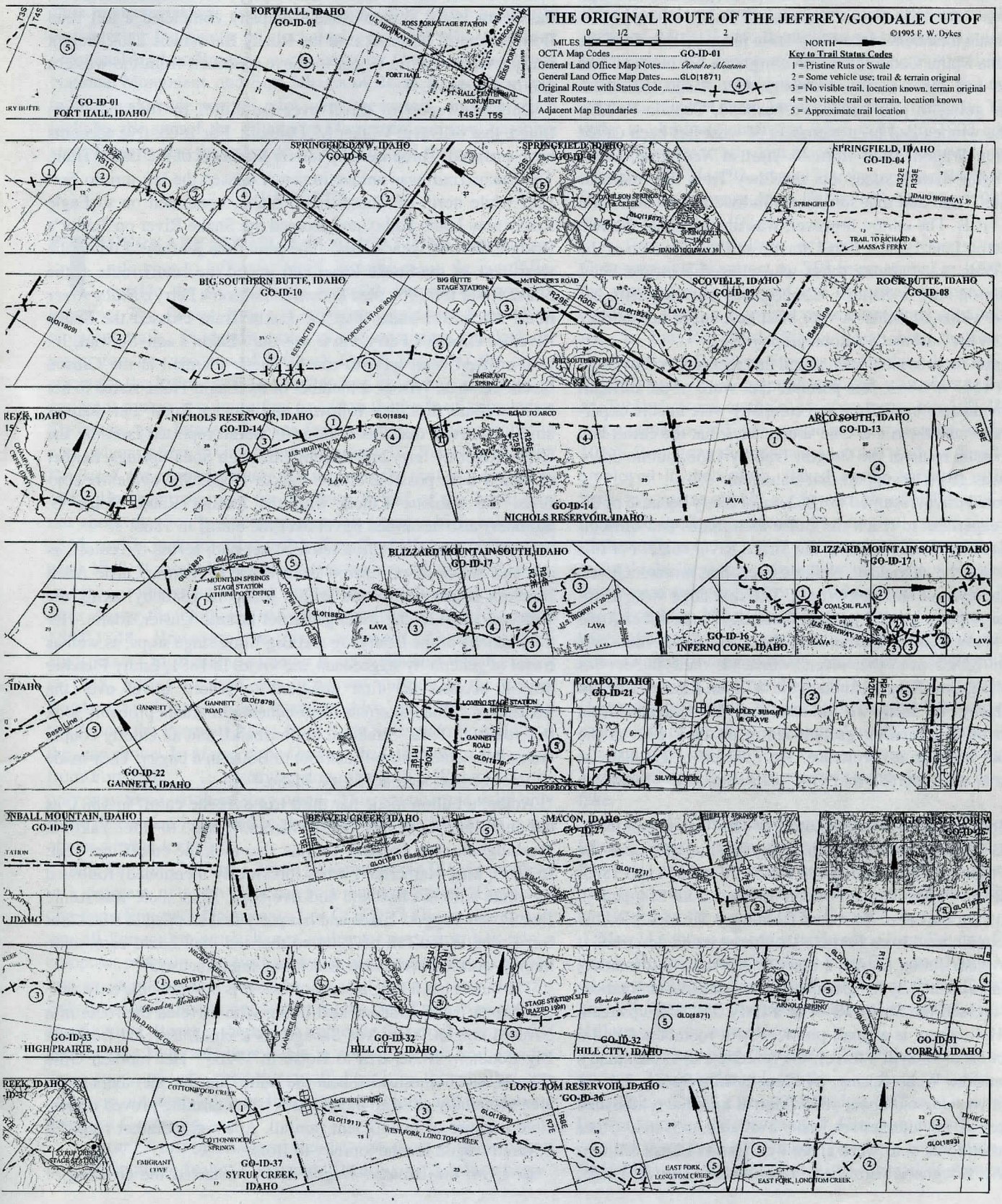
The Ebey Train crossed the Snake River on 1 August 1854. Winfield Scott Ebey, though only twenty-three years old, had been elected captain of the train on July 5 when the Washington-bound wagons had separated from the California wagons in the group. Winfield kept diaries of the trip from Missouri to Puget Sound, and later transcribed these into journals. He died of tuberculosis eleven years after reaching Puget Sound. His journals form what is by far the most detailed description of Jeffrey's Cutoff. *Platte River Road Narratives* incorrectly states





Fort Hall was important to both the Oregon Trail and the cutoff. Above: An inside view of the fort. Below: An exterior scene of Fort Hall on the Snake River. (Idaho State Historical Society)


PINGREE, IDAHO
GO-ID-03
PINGREE, IDAHO
GO-ID-03
ROCKFORD, IDAHO
GO-ID-02
MORELAND, IDAHO
ROCK BUTTE, IDAHO
GO-ID-08
LAVA LAKE RESERVOIR, IDAHO
GO-ID-07
COFFEE POINT NE, IDAHO
GO-ID-06
ARCO SOUTH, IDAHO
GO-ID-13
BUTTE CITY, IDAHO
GO-ID-12
BUTTE CITY, IDAHO
GO-ID-12
ARCO HILLS SE, IDAHO
GO-ID-11
ARCO HILLS SE, IDAHO
GO-ID-11
GO-ID-16
INFERNO CONE, IDAHO
INFERNO CONE, IDAHO
GO-ID-16
CHAMPAGNE CREEK, IDAHO
GO-ID-15
CHAMPAGNE CR
GO-ID-
CAREY, IDAHO
GO-ID-20
GO-ID-19
PADDLEFORD FLAT, IDAHO
FISH CREEK RESERVOIR, IDAHO
GO-ID-18
GO-ID-19
PADDLEFORD FLAT, IDAHO
BELLEVUE, IDAHO
GO-ID-24
SEAMANS CREEK
GO-ID-23
GO-ID-25
MAGIC RESERVOIR EAST, IDAHO
SMOKY DOME, IDAHO
PHILLIPS, IDAHO
PHILLIPS, IDAHO
GO-ID-31
CORRAL, IDAHO
GO-ID-30
FAIRFIELD, IDAHO
GO-ID-28
SPRING CREEK RESERVOI
ANDERSON RANCH DAM, IDAHO
GO-ID-35
GO-ID-34
CAT CREEK SUMMIT, IDAHO
GO-ID-33
HIGH PRAIRIE, IDAHO
MAYFIELD SE, IDAHO
GO-ID-40
GO-ID-39
THE ROOST, IDAHO
DANSKIN PEAK, IDAHO
GO-ID-38
SYRUP CI
GO-


THE ORIGINAL ROUTE OF THE JEFFREY/GOODALE CUTOF
©1995 F. W. Dykes
MILES 0 1/2 1 2
NORTH
OCTA Map Codes GO-ID-01
General Land Office Map Notes ..... Road to Montana
General Land Office Map Dates ..... GLO(1871)
Original Route with Status Code
Later Routes
Adjacent Map Boundaries
Key to Trail Status Codes
1 = Pristine Ruts or Swale
2 = Some vehicle use; trail & terrain original
3 = No visible trail, location known, terrain original
4 = No visible trail or terrain, location known
5 = Approximate trail location
FORT HALL, IDAHO
GO-ID-01
ROSS FORK STAGE STATION
FORT HALL
FT. HALL CENTENNIAL MONUMENT
SPRINGFIELD NW, IDAHO
GO-ID-05
SPRINGFIELD, IDAHO
GO-ID-04
JOHNSON SPRINGS & CREEK
SPRINGFIELD LAKE
IDAHO HIGHWAY 39
SPRINGFIELD
TRAIL TO RICHARD & MASSA'S FERRY
BIG SOUTHERN BUTTE, IDAHO
GO-ID-10
BIG BUTTE STAGE STATION
McTUCKER'S ROAD
LAVA
BIG SOUTHERN BUTTE
EMIGRANT SPRING
SCOVILLE, IDAHO
GO-ID-09
ROCK BUTTE, IDAHO
GO-ID-08
NICHOLS RESERVOIR, IDAHO
GO-ID-14
U.S. HIGHWAY 20-26-93
ROAD TO ARCO
ARCO SOUTH, IDAHO
GO-ID-13
GO-ID-14
NICHOLS RESERVOIR, IDAHO
BLIZZARD MOUNTAIN SOUTH, IDAHO
GO-ID-17
MOUNTAIN SPRINGS STAGE STATION
LATHRUM POST OFFICE
SCOFFIN (LAVA) CREEK
Blackfoot and Big Lost River Road
U.S. HIGHWAY 20-26-93
COAL OIL FLAT
GO-ID-16
INFERNO CONE, IDAHO
GANNETT, IDAHO
GO-ID-22
GANNETT ROAD
Base Line
PICABO, IDAHO
GO-ID-21
LOVING STAGE STATION & HOTEL
BRADLEY SUMMIT & GRAVE
POINT OF ROCKS
SILVER CREEK
NBALL MOUNTAIN, IDAHO
GO-ID-29
BEAVER CREEK, IDAHO
GO-ID-28
Emigrant Road
Road to Montana
GLO(1871) Base Line
MACON, IDAHO
GO-ID-27
WILLOW CREEK
SHIPLEY SPRINGS
CAMP CREEK
MAGIC RESERVOIR W
GO-ID-26
NEGRO CREEK
WILD HORSE CREEK
HANNER CREEK
GO-ID-33
HIGH PRAIRIE, IDAHO
STAGE STATION SITE (RAZED 1890)
ARNOLD SPRING
GO-ID-32
HILL CITY, IDAHO
GO-ID-31
CORRAL, IDAHO
REEK, IDAHO
ID-37
COTTONWOOD CREEK
McGUIRE SPRING
LONG TOM RESERVOIR, IDAHO
GO-ID-36
WEST FORK, LONG TOM CREEK
EAST FORK, LONG TOM CREEK
SYRUP CREEK STAGE STATION
COTTONWOOD SPRINGS
EMIGRANT COVE
GO-ID-37
SYRUP CREEK, IDAHO

that Ebey took the Snake River route of the Oregon Trail through Idaho.[20]

Three female members of the Ebey Train recorded details of the journey. Anna Marie Goodell was traveling with her husband and infant child and other family members. Her friend, Elizabeth Austin, was going to join her future husband, Captain Roeder. These young women had been members of what has been called the Vermilion Wagon Train from its start at Vermilion, Ohio. *Covered Wagon Women* states that the Ebey Train traveled near the Vermilion Train and that sometimes individuals in each train exchanged visits. The editor, however, was unaware that the two trains joined on June 19 near Fort Laramie and that the men of the Vermilion Train were among those who elected Winfield Scott Ebey captain on July 5. Sarah J. Cannon was traveling with her brothers and widowed father. A very brief account of her journey is included in her husband's autobiography.[21]

No emigrant records have been found that record travel over the cutoff from 1855 to 1861. It is possible that word of the difficult road got around and that Jeffrey and company were unable to persuade trains to take the route. One source says that the cutoff had become the main route of the Oregon Trail by 1858, but no documentation was given to support that statement.[22]

Documented travel resumed in 1862, most likely because of the emigrants' eagerness to reach the Boise-area mines and difficulties with Native Americans along the Snake River route. For this year, there are the diaries of Nellie Slater, her brother Oliver, William Ritchey, and Dunham Wright. The first three were members of a large party guided by Tim Goodale. *Platte River Road Narratives* states that the Slaters took the Snake River route and buried their father near that river.[23] Instead, their father was buried near Big Lost River. Although the William Ritchey account is very sketchy, he seems to indicate that the Goodale Train had broken up into smaller groups acting on their own at the Snake River crossing at Brownlee. He referred to Goodale as Tim Goodwin and recorded that Tim lost a man at the Brownlee crossing.

Nine reports of travel over the cutoff in 1864 have been located. Arabella Clemens Fulton is perhaps the most unique since she made three trips over the route, going westward in 1864 and 1883, and eastward in 1872. George Forman traveled from Montana to Boise, following the cutoff westward from Arco. He identified the route as the main road from Fort Hall to the west and described it as well traveled. Julius Merrill's diary is the most informative, having been published by his grandson with extensive annotation. This party crossed the Snake River at a ferry one mile upstream from Fort Hall. There is a small problem with footnotes 5 and 6 for this section of Merrill's travel; the reference to Frenchman's Spring should be Webb Spring, as Frenchman's Spring did not exist until it was dug out about 1915. Merrill took the established cutoff route, as no alternatives were available in 1864. Other reports of travel that year were given by Clarissa Elvira Shipley, Mrs. W. A. Loughary, Elizabeth Lee Porter, Hester Davis, Murdock McPherson, and Brice Shipley. On 5 September 1864, the South Boise Wagon Road Company completed a toll road from the cutoff near Dixie to the Rocky Bar mines. Thus, freight and passenger traffic began to move eastward from the western end of the cutoff.[24]

Only one report of travel over the cutoff in 1865 has been found, that of David Walker McDannald. For 1866, five accounts have surfaced. Three were by family members of the Eakin Train. The Eakin Train was unique in that it missed the left turn to Fort Hall while north of Chesterfield, Idaho, continued on to Eagle Rock (now Idaho Falls), and crossed the Snake River on Taylor's Bridge, built the year before. The train then journeyed down the west bank of the Snake River and joined the cutoff route at the Snake River ferry (by then known as Gibson's Ferry). *Platte River Road Narratives* states that the Eakin Train crossed the Snake River on Gibson's Ferry, but it was only Eakin's son, Stewart, Jr., who crossed from west to east to check for mail at the Gibson ranch. Sarah A. Wisner, a member of the Eakin Train, stated in her brief account that they followed the Lander Road, but there is ample evidence that this is in error. Sarah reported crossing the Green River by ferry and traveling through Soda Springs, neither of which were possible on the Lander Road. She evidently confused the Sublette Cutoff with the Lander Road. Delila B. Saunders also described travel over the cutoff in 1866.[25]

In 1872, Arabella Fulton retraced her path across the cutoff, as she and her husband moved from Boise to Texas. Carrie Adell Strahorn began her travels within Idaho in 1880 by taking the Toponce stage to the mining district around Custer, Idaho. Her descriptions of the Root Hog and Big Butte stage stops, as well as travel in general by stagecoach, are vivid. In 1881, Emily Fletcher Towell became the first emigrant to record travel over the McTucker's Road alternate. Subsequent emigrants probably took this route. In 1882, Strahorn, her husband, and an elderly couple crossed the cutoff from Blackfoot to Boise in a buggy. They made an intermediate stop at Hailey, Idaho.[26]

Arabella Fulton made her third trip over the cutoff in 1883, as she and her husband moved from Texas to the Yakima, Washington, area. Sarah J. Collins also took the cutoff that year. In 1895, Mrs. Katherine Forbes (previously mentioned) followed the route with her husband and five boys. Also, there was Annie Jane Foster Biggers Elliot and her party that stopped at Blackfoot for a time in the fall of 1904 so that the men could earn some money working at the new Blackfoot sugar factory.[27]

The cutoff has a long history of use. It is probably the only emigrant route with someone still living who traveled the route in a covered wagon. Mrs. Ada Savage, as a child, traveled from the Big Southern Butte area to Boise in 1920.[28] Her mother, Ollie Connor, had homesteaded near the Butte. She and all others in the area eventually gave up their claims when farming proved impossible because of insufficient rainfall. Ada's grandfather rigged a covered wagon for the journey to Boise.

In 1994, the Broadie Wagon Train reenacted the crossing of

Jeffrey's Cutoff by covered wagons drawn by horses and mules. This reenactment was as authentic as possible without willfully endangering the health of stock and personnel. The train was organized by Les Broadie, a rancher near Craters of the Moon National Monument, and Burt Silcock of Boise. Broadie's grandmother had made several trips over the cutoff, and his ranch includes the site of the village of Martin, an emigrant camping spot. There is also the grave of an emigrant girl there.

UPDATES

THERE ARE SEVERAL PUBLICATIONS that omit any reference to Jeffrey's Cutoff. In some cases, the cutoff lies outside the scope of the material, but not always. For example, *The Plains Across* is a widely acclaimed book about emigrant trails. Evidently, none of the reviewers checked the maps, for the omission of Jeffrey's Cutoff is one of the minor errors for the Idaho area. As noted earlier, in the ongoing study of emigrant routes, it is important to add to the body of knowledge. Therefore, as a future reference for researchers, it is essential to note when Jeffrey's Cutoff was overlooked. *The Oregon Trail Revisited,* for example, states that it covers the trail as it existed in 1845. However, the map on the front flyleaf of the book does not show the South Alternate route in Idaho which existed in 1845, and it includes Hudspeth's Cutoff which was not opened until 1849. It might have been better to show all alternate routes in Idaho, rather than to pick and choose certain ones. *Historic Sites Along the Oregon Trail* deals with the trail in the years 1841-1848. However, the map on page 233 shows both Hudspeth's Cutoff and the Lander Road, neither of which existed in 1848; Jeffrey's Cutoff was in no way inferior to the Lander Road, and it deserves equal attention. Also, the Oregon Trail did not follow the Portneuf River from Soda Springs to Fort Hall, as the map shows. In *Maps of the Oregon Trail,* the author states that from Fort Hall, " . . . the route along the Snake [River] was the only way to go, so there they went." This statement is valid only if the discussion is limited to the 1840s. Such a limitation is not obvious in the text.[29]

The Oregon-California Trails Association (OCTA) is involved in a program with the National Park Service called "Census of Overland Emigrant Documents," or COED.[30] The goal is to survey all known emigrant diaries and enter pertinent data into a computer program. Various trail routes are assigned letter codes to use as identification. However, no trail code is provided for Jeffrey's Cutoff; instructions state that the cutoff was to be entered as a footnote. Because there is no trail code for a trail segment that ends at Fort Hall, it is impossible to correctly enter trail data for those emigrants who used the cutoff. Lest it be thought that cutoffs were not intended to be listed independently, half a dozen are listed for California.

Emigrant Trails of Southern Idaho covers most of the emigrant trails in southern Idaho. It was published in an "Advance Copy" edition in 1989 and a final edition in 1993. Jeffrey's Cutoff is listed as Goodale's Cutoff. Goodale's route after leaving Boise is not included. Most, if not all, publications mentioned subsequently in this section use *Emigrant Trails* as their chief reference. Some Goodale maps were added to the 1993 edition, but not all references to adjacent maps were changed accordingly. Therefore, in order to eliminate confusion when using the 1993 edition, some map references to adjacent maps in the Goodale section should be changed. On Map 93, page 131, change Map 94 to 99. On Map 97, page 136, change Map 100 to 103. On Map 100, page 139, change Map 92 to 102.[31]

A firm of consulting achaeologists was given a U. S. Government subcontract by SRI International in 1990 to perform the required achaeological and historical reconnaissance of six candidate sites for a ground wave emergency network node. This was in the Rockford, Idaho, area about halfway between Blackfoot and Danilson Springs. Using the Advance Copy edition of *Emigrant Trails*, an archaeologist was able to easily locate McTucker's Road as the route shown on Map 100. However, he was unable to find any evidence for the routes shown on Map 101.[32] Both ground reconnaissance and study of aerial maps were employed in the search. Based on the survey's official report, these two routes should not be considered valid until evidence is presented for their existence. The original cutoff route was south of the study area.

An Idaho highway information sign about Goodale's Cutoff stands near milepost 218 on U. S. Highway 20-26-93. This area is shown on Map 108 of the *Emigrant Trails*.[33] There is a lava lake here, adjacent to a mountain spur, and an old road running along the lake next to the mountain. This road is identified by the sign as Goodale's Cutoff and could have been a later variation. However, the Broadie Wagon Train of 1994 followed the original route north of the mountain spur along Payne Creek. This route is confirmed by the first G. L. O. map of the area and explains why Winfield Scott Ebey did not record in his diary the passing of this lake.

On Map 111, the emigrant campground, Point of Rocks, is identified.[34] Ebey's journal indicated that his group turned north at that point and passed to the north of the hill in Section 17, rather than following a section line as the map shows. Neither route is confirmed by the earliest G. L. O. map.

Map 112 shows a fairly straight route from Poverty Flat to Rock Creek. However, both Winfield Scott Ebey and Julius Merrill stated that the distance from Big Wood River to Rock Creek was eight miles.[35] Therefore, the route that circles southwest of Maybelle Hill must be the correct one.

Two articles about Goodale's Cutoff that deal with the Jeffrey portion have appeared in the *Overland Journal.* The first, "Goodale's Cutoff," was published in 1985, and it is the only publication to cover the entire cutoff. However, the article omitted the original route from the Snake River ferry to Danilson Springs to Webb Spring to the Big Lost River. Instead, it showed the ques-

tionable route running due north from the Snake River ferry. It also showed McTucker's Road. The route shown from Emmett to Cambridge, Idaho, is very different from that indicated by the most recent publication about that section of the trail.[36]

The second article, "Tim Goodale and His Cutoff: A Major Trail Segment During and After the Fourth Emigration Wave," was published in 1990. Although this article briefly discussed the entire Goodale route, the map only showed the Fort Hall to Boise segment and indicated that Goodale headed in a due north direction from the Snake River ferry to the Tabor, Idaho, area. The consulting archaeologist's report discredits this route. The Goodale Train followed the original route from Danilson Springs to Big Southern Butte. The article reported that the exact route of the cutoff east of Boise has been determined, and that the route is traced on thirty-two annotated maps. In view of the professional archaeologist's findings and comments, and other research, it appears that the exact route is not shown on the annotated maps.[37] The report also contained a description of three approaches to Big Southern Butte joining together in the Tabor, Idaho, area. The only cutoff route that passed near the Tabor area was McTucker's Road which did not exist until eighteen years after Goodale's journey. In light of this, one can conclude that the description stated in the article is incorrect.

The Oregon-California Trails Association has published a map entitled *Western Emigrant Trails 1830-1870*. The second edition handles the definition of the cutoff very well, giving the common name, Goodale's, to the route, but also listing Jeffrey as the originator. There is a small problem in that McTucker's Road is shown, even though it was not opened until ten years after the cutoff date for the map. The latest government brochure on the Oregon Trail shows essentially the same cutoff routes as the OCTA map.[38] Since no cutoff date is given, McTucker's Road is a valid route for the map. The only problem is that the map in the eastern part of the cutoff is quite distorted. Big Southern Butte is shown about eighteen miles east of its true position. However, this is a quibble when one considers that it is better for the cutoff to be shown, despite the distortion, than to not be shown at all.

CONCLUSION

JEFFREY'S CUTOFF HAS SEVERAL distinguishing characteristics. The most unique feature is likely the role of private enterprise in establishing the cutoff as a for-profit venture. Documented use of the trail by Native Americans, trappers, fur traders, and explorers is also unusual. Too, the route continued to be used into the twentieth century. While the emigrants that followed the route probably did not think so, it is fortunate for today's historians that sections of the cutoff crossed through deserts and lava flows and over mountains. Today, these sections have not been used for agriculture, and highways do not overlay them. Thus, the original Jeffrey's route has been less disturbed than other trail routes. McTucker's Road, for instance, has not fared as well. Since 1955, about twelve miles of the original road have been plowed under as agriculture has expanded into the area. Even a short stretch of swale remaining in a rocky area near Blackfoot has been filled with lava rocks removed from the new farms.[39]

While physical evidence has remained, researchers also may look to the writings of those emigrants who traveled the cutoff. Their descriptions are useful tools. Lastly, even present-day controversy over correct names and routes has had a beneficial effect by prompting more thorough research.

NOTES

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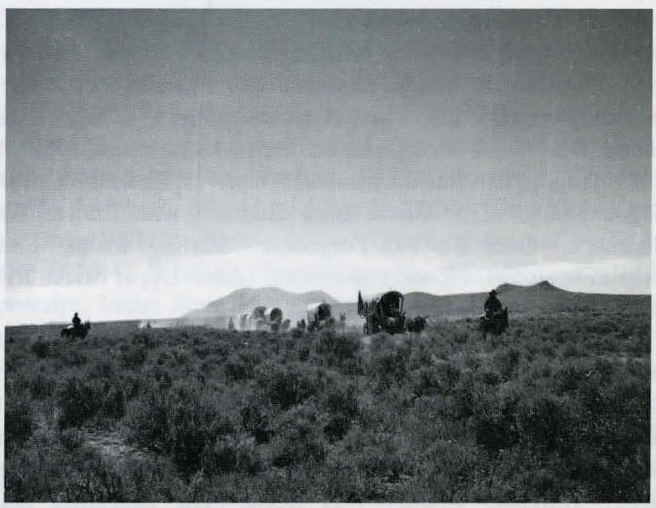
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Fred W. Dykes, *a member of OCTA since 1985, is active in the Idaho-Montana Chapter. A contributor to OCTA's COED and* Western Emigrant Trails Map *programs, his main interest is the Jacob Ebey family's 1854 journey from Kirksville, Missouri, to Coupeville, Washington. He has retraced their route and assisted in preparing the Ebey journals for publication by OCTA.*



The Broadie Wagon Train traveled Toponce's Stage Road between Big Southern Butte and Arco, Idaho, on June 17, 1994. Emigrants used this route beginning in 1880. (The author)

"Had I remained with the company . . ."

—James F. Reed, 2 July 1847

by Daniel D. Holt

AT THE SOUTHWEST CORNER of the Old State Capitol Square in Springfield, Illinois, are a number of historical markers. One is to the Donner Party that left from the square in 1846. Of course, not everyone later identified with the Donner tragedy left from Springfield. In Independence, Missouri, the Springfield contingent joined a large wagon train led by W. H. Russell. In the ebb and flow of grouping and regrouping, the Donner company was not alone. Some emigrants in the large train were headed to California, but most were intent on reaching the Northwest.

Certainly, the Donner group was not the only one to depart from central Illinois. Hundreds of emigrants had and later would leave the state. The Donners were a few among many. However, the party is remembered today for its fate. Thus, the group that left from the square of the state capitol in Springfield is commemorated with the historical marker.

Books, articles, and documentaries often make casual mention of the Donners leaving from Springfield, Illinois. Generally, however, writers and researchers—with few exceptions[1]—have overlooked the place these individuals left and ignored glances of the party's experiences as provided by Illinois newspapers. One such Springfield newspaper was the *Sangamo Journal*, which in 1847 became the *Illinois Journal*.[2] Notices and letters appearing in that newspaper are edited here: misspellings were kept, if the word was readable and easily understood; brackets around a question mark indicate that the word was illegible and could not be deciphered.

It should be noted that this Springfield newspaper also offers a sense of the times in Illinois. During the 1830s, the state embarked on a program of "internal improvements"—the Illinois and Michigan Canal, new railroads, bridges, and plank roads. The immediate result of these well-meaning building programs was near financial ruin for the state. There was loss of credit. Foreign and eastern investors withdrew their support. Although the state began to pull itself out of debt by the early 1840s, ordinary citizens were not immune to the fiscal tangle into which the state had plunged.

Preceding the economic ills, Illinois had been embroiled in war, famine, and fear. The Indian "scares" of the War of 1812, the Winnebago War (1827), and the Black Hawk War (1831-1832) created an atmosphere of doubt. Disease, Indian problems (founded or unfounded) and poverty led one Warren County, Illinois, man to reminisce about early nineteenth-century Illinois. He remembered that "violent diseases" were so alarming that he, his family, and neighbors might as well move into the wilds and die "by the tomahawk" or "pestilance" as stay home.[3] In other words, if they were going to die anyway, they might as well take the chance and move farther out onto the frontier.

In the 1840s came the Mormon War—the driving out of Mormons from western Illinois—and by 1846, the state was in a frenzy over the Mexican War. Illinois supplied more troops for the duration of the war than any state except Texas. The fight with Mexico also involved the entire Southwest and California. The *Sangamo Journal* was not alone when it published war news under banner headlines that carried such messages as "Glory for Texas."

Within the same time frame, Illinois was the scene of numerous "Oregon support meetings"– all linked to economics (and its

potential failure in Illinois) and the Mexican War. In settings across the state, ordinary citizens and politicians rubbed shoulders as they expressed support for westward expansion. Wrote the editor of the *Ottawa Free Trader* in November 1845: " It [Oregon] is ours. . . . we have got it and mean to keep it. . . . Forward march."[4] By 1846 the Oregon issue overlapped with that of annexing Texas. For many, the locale was different, but the issue was the same—expansion. It should be remembered that the people of Illinois, and the whole middle Mississisippi Valley, had received a steady diet for several years of Manifest Destiny, cries of expansion, and cheers for annexation. Typical of the rhetoric was the opinion of a farmer quoted in the *Ottawa Free Trader*: "Let the hardy pioneers of the West and all its vigorous population comprehend their calling. . . ."[5] Manifest Destiny, to the people of Illinois in 1844-1846, was a religious calling that promised deliverance.

This was the world in which members of the Donner Party lived. It was not static, nor necessarily idyllic. A member of the Donner group, James F. Reed, for example, looked for ways to gain economic success. In doing so, he appeared in the Springfield press on numerous occasions. In 1832, he announced the opening of a store in the state capital; in 1833, he established a company making starch; and in 1841, he was mentioned as a subscription agent for an internal improvements speculative venture called the Sangamon Coal Bank Bridge Company.[6] Without doubt, Reed was open to ways in which he could further his—and his family's—financial well being.

On the other hand, George Donner appeared to be a man well established. At sixty-two years of age, he had a prosperous farm, as well as children and grandchildren around him. Yet, he and his third wife, Tamsen, along with others in the extended Donner family decided to relocate. The first public indication of this intention appeared in the 25 September 1845 *Sangamo Journal* with this sale notice:

A Good Farm for Sale

The subscriber offers for sale his farm lying two and a half miles east of Springfield, on the state road leading to Mechanicsburgh, containing two hundred and forty acres of land—about eighty acres under good improvement—an orchard bearing trees. There is on said farm a good house with two brick chimneys—a first rate well of water. There is also an 80 acre lot of good timber embraced in the above land. Any one wishing to buy will call on the subscriber, living on the premises or to Jas. L. Hill or Benj. Talbott. George Donner.

Almost seven months later, a notice appeared in the 19 March 1846 newspaper issue. This announcement sheds light on the group's preparations and its recognition for the need for extra hands, but it also suggests how Oregon and California often were linked in the public mind.

WESTWARD HO FOR OREGON AND CALIFORNIA

Who wants to go to California without costing them anything? As many as eight young men, of good character, who can drive an ox team, will be accommodated by gentlemen who will leave this vicinity about the first of April. Come, boys! You can have as much land as you want without costing you any thing. The government of California gives large tracts of land to persons who have to move there.[7]—The first suitable persons who apply will be engaged.

The emigrants who intend moving to Oregon or California this spring from the adjoining counties would do well to be in this place about the first of next month. Are there not a number from Decatur, Macon county, going?

G. Donner and others.

Evidently, the notice brought results. Hired drivers and one domestic helper were included in the Donner Party that left Springfield. Working for George and Jacob Donner were Noah James, Samuel Shoemaker, and John Denton. Working for James F. Reed were Milford Elliott, Walter Herron, James Smith, Baylis Williams, and the latter's sister hired for domestic work, Eliza.

Once the journey began, members of the party wrote letters "home." These communications sometimes found their way into the local press. This was not unusual. Newspapers were the mass media of the times. Occasionally, someone receiving letters turned them over for publication. At other times, emigrants wrote directly to their hometown newspapers. There are many examples of the press serving as a communication link between travelers and their home communities. For example, when Lewis Bissell Dougherty wrote his firsthand accounts of the Grattan Massacre at Fort Laramie in 1854, his father immediately had the letters published in the *Liberty* [Missouri] *Tribune*, and between 1850 and 1856, Dr. James Delavan recounted his gold-seeking adventures in the *Adrian* [Michigan] *Expositor*.[8] Members of the Donner Party were no different.

As the group traveled westward, letters found their way into the Springfield, Illinois, press. One 23 July 1846 publication was a letter by Tamsen Donner.

FROM THE CALIFORNIA-COMPANY

The following letter is from Mrs. George Donner, (one of the emigrants from this county now on the way to California), to a friend in this city: It is dated—

Near the Junction of the
North and South Platte,
June 16th, 1846

My Old Friend:—We are now on the Platte 200 miles north of Fort Laramie. Our journey so far, has been pleasant. The roads

have been good, and food plentiful. The water for a part of the way has been indifferent—but at no time have our cattle suffered for it. Wood is now very scarce, but "*Buffalo chips*" are excellent—they kindle quick and retain heat surprisingly. We had this evening Buffalo steaks broiled on them that had the same flavor they would have had on hickory coals.

We feel no fear of Indians. Our cattle graze quietly around our encampment unmolested. Two or three men will go hunting twenty miles from camp;—last night two of the men went out in the wilderness rather than ride their horses after a hard chase. Indeed it [?] experience something far worse than I yet have seen done. I shall say the trouble is all for getting started.

Our waggons have not needed much repair but I cannot yet tell what respect they can be improved. Certain it is they cannot be too strong. Our preparation for the journey in some respects, might have been bettered. Bread had been the principal article of food in our cargo. We laid in 159 lbs. of flour and 75 lbs. of [?] for each individual, and I fear bread will be scarce. Meat is abundant. Rice and beans are good articles on the road—corn meal, too, is acceptable. Linsey dresses are the most suitable for children. Indeed if I had one it would be comfortable. There is no cooling breeze at times in the prairie that the sun does not feel hot as one would suppose.

We are now 450 miles from Independence. Our route at first was rough and through a timbered country which appeared to be feeble. Striking the prairie we found a first rate road and the only difficulty we had has been crossing creeks. In that, however, there has been no danger. I never could have believed we have travelled so with so little difficulty. The prairie between the Blue and Platte rivers is beautiful beyond description. Never have I seen so varied a country—so suitable for cultivation. Every thing was new and pleasing. The Indians frequently come to see us, and the chief of a tribe breakfasted at our tent this morning. All are so friendly that I cannot help feel sympathy and friendship for them. But we [?] what can I say?

Since we have been on the Platte we have seen the river on one side, and the ever varying mounds on the other—and have travelled through the Bottom land from one to two miles where we found little or no timber. The soil is sandy, and this year, on account of the dry season, the emigrants found grass here scarce. Our cattle appear in good order, and where proper care has been given none have been lost. Our milch cows have been of great service—indeed, they have been more advantage than our meat. We have plenty of butter and milk.

We are commanded by Capt. Russel—an amiable man. George Donner is himself yet. He crows in the morning, and shouts out, "chain up, boys! chain up" with as much authority as though he was "something in particular." John Denton is still with us—we find him a useful man in camp. Hiram Miller and Noah James are in good health and doing well. We have the best of people in our company, and some too, that are not so good.

Buffalo show themselves frequently. We have found wild tulip, the primrose, and [?], the larkspur, and [?] a beautiful flower resembling bloom of the peach tree, but in bunches as on a small sugar-loaf, and of every variety of shade of red and green. I botanized and read some but cook a "heap" more.

There are 420 waggons, so far as we have heard, on the road between here and Oregon and California.

Give our love to all enquiring friends—God bless them.

Yours truly,

Mrs. George Donner[9]

A week after this letter, the *Sangamo Journal* published another. Printed on 30 July 1846, a letter by James R. Reed appeared under the heading "Sports of the West." Written to Jas. W. Keyes, Reed's brother-in-law, the letter was dated 16 June 1846 and written about ten miles from "the Crossings."

Reed began with a general description of the emigration:

"To-day, at morning, there passed going to the States, seven men from Oregon, who went out last year. One of them was well acquainted with Messrs. Ide and Caden Keys,—the latter with whom he says went to California. They met an advance Oregon caravan about 150 miles west of Fort Laramie, and counted in all for California and Oregon (excepting ours), four hundred and seventy-eight waggons. There is [?] forty waggons, which make 518 in all; and there is said to be yet twenty behind. . . . The Oregon people tell me that they have made their claims at the head of Puget Sound, and say that the late exploration has made the northeast, or British side of the Columbia [State of Washington], far superior to the Willamette Valley, in quality and extent of territory. . . ."

Reed also noted that "Our teams are getting on fine so far," but he worried about the wagons. Nearly all of the wheels were loose. Reed hoped that the group would be able to find a "good suitable ointment" to grease the wheels. Most of the letter, however, was devoted to hunting:

". . . . yesterday I thought to try my luck, as old buffalo hunters and many others, as they would permit to be in their company, have left the camp for a hunt, Hiram Miller, myself and two others, after due preparation, took a line of march. Before we left, every thing in camp was talking that Mr so and so had gone hunting, and we would have some choice buffalo steaks. No one thought or spoke of the two frontier hunters, and none but the two asked to go with us. Going one or two miles west of the hunters on the bluffs, and after riding about three miles, we saw a large herd of buffalo bulls, and choice young game, which is the hardest to get being fleeter and better wind—we went towards them as coolly and calmly—as nature of the case would permit. . . . Closing upon a gang of ten or twelve bulls, the word was given and I was soon in their midst, but among them, there was noise made enough for my taste to shoot, and upon seeing a drove to my right I dashed among them, a Craddock's pistol in hand—(a fine instrument for Buffalo hunters on the plains)—detected my victim

and brought him tumbling to the ground, leaving my companions far behind, advancing a little further, the plains appeared to be one living, moving mass of bulls, cows and calves. The latter caught my eye, . . . When I would rein to the left where the calf was, the bull would immediately put himself between us. . . ."

In the end, Reed managed to fell the calf. It, along with the bull he had killed already, allowed him to return triumphantly to camp with fresh meat for the group.

Later, in the *Sangamo Journal* issue dated 13 August 1846, a letter by George Donner appeared. As his wife had done, he also mentioned encounters with Native Americans. His comments were matter-of-fact statements that voiced no fear or reaction, other than describing items of ornaments and dress.

FROM THE EMIGRANTS

The following letter from an old neighbor has been politely communicated to us for publication:

Fort Laramie
June 27, 1846

My Friend—We arrived here on [?] without meeting any serious accident, our company are in good health. Our road has been through a [?] country, but we have yet had plenty of grass for our cattle and [?] Our fires have been kept up, but they have burned feebly sometimes, though we have enough to cook every meal. Our journey has been as solitary as [?], and we have met several on their return to the States. Several companies are just a head. Two hundred six lodges of Sioux are expected at the Fort any day on the way to join the warriors on the way against the Crows. The Indians all appeared friendly to us. Two braves breakfasted with us. Their ornaments were tastefully arranged, consisting of beads, feathers, and a fine shell, got from California, bark variously collored and arranged, and the hair from the scalps they had taken in battle.

I can say nothing except bear testimony to correctness of those who have gone before. Please show this letter to our Springfield neighbors and friends and to our children. Our provisions are in good order, and we feel satisfied with our preparations for the trip. Our waggon sheets had shed the rain as yet.

Yours, George Donner

On 5 November 1846, a letter by James F. Reed, written on July 31st, was published. Historians who are quick to blame Langsford Hastings[10] for misleading the emigrants might find it interesting to note the part played by Jim Bridger, as implied in Reed's correspondence:

FROM A CALIFORNIA EMIGRANT

We have lying before us a letter from James F. Reed, late of Springfield, Ill., dated at Fort Bridger, one hundred miles from the [?] or Great Salt Lake, July 31, 1846.

We have arrived here safe, with the loss of my good oxen. They were poisoned by drinking water in a little creek called Dry Sandy, situated between the Green Spring in the Pass of the Mountains and Little Sandy. The water was standing in puddles—Jacob Donner also lost two yoke, and George Donner a yoke and a half, all surmised from the same cause. I have replenished my stock by purchasing from Messrs. Vasquez and Bridger,[11] two very excellent and accommodating gentlemen, who are the proprietors of this trading post.—The new road, or Hastings Cut-off [*newspaper note*: this is manifestly Capt. Freemont's newly discovered route to California,] leaves Fort Hall road here, and is said to be a saving of 350 or 400 miles to going to California, and a better route. There is, however, thought to be one stretch of 40 miles without water; but Hastings and his party, are out a head examining for water, or for a route to avoid this stretch. I think that they cannot avoid it, for it crosses an arm of the [?] Lake, now dry. Mr. Bridger, and other gentlemen here, who have trapped that country, say that the Lake has receded from the country in question. There is plenty of grass which we can cut and put into the waggons, for our cattle while crossing it.

We are now only 100 miles from the Great Salt Lake by the new route,—in all 250 miles from California; while by way of Fort Hall it is 650 or 700 miles—making a great saving in the favor of jaded oxen and dust. On the new route we will not have dust, as there are but 6 waggons ahead of us. The rest of the Californians went the long route—feeling afraid of Hasting's Cut-off. Mr. Bridger informs me that the route we design to take, is a fine level road, with plenty of water and grass, with the exception before stated. It is estimated that 700 miles will take us to Capt. Suter's Fort, which we hope to make in seven weeks from this day.

I want you to inform the emigration that they can be supplied with fresh cattle by Messrs. Vasquez and Bridger. They have now about 200 head of oxen, cows and young cattle with a great many horses and mules; and they can be relied on for doing business honorably and fairly. Mr. Bridger will go to St. Louis this fall and return with the emigration in the spring, he [is] very useful as a pilot. He will be found during winter in St. Louis, at Mr. Robert Campbell's (merchant).[12] I must put you on your guard against two or three persons who have left California and Oregon for horse stealing and other crimes. Of course they dislike those countries. They are perfect vagabonds.

I have fine times in hunting grouse, antelope or mountain game, which are plenty. Milford Elliott, James Smith and W. Herron, the young men who drive for me are careful, firstrate drivers.—which gives me time for hunting. We are beyond the range of buffalo.

The independent trappers, who swarm here during the passing of the emigrants, are as great a set of sharks as ever disgraced humanity, with few exceptions. [?] the emigrants avoid trading with them. Vasquez & Bridger are the only fair traders in these parts.

There are two gentlemen here—one of them an Englishman of

the name of Walls and the other a yankee named Miles—who will leave here in a few days to settle at some favorable point on the Salt Lake, which in a short time will be a fine place for emigrants to recruit their teams, by exchanging broken down oxen for good teams.

Of course, the fate of the group became well known, and it was not until after the winter rescue that further news of the emigrants appeared in the Springfield newspaper. The group's experience, however, did not receive the press one might expect. State news dominated in Illinois at the time since the state was in the process of rewriting its constitution; the arguments and speeches given on behalf of specific proposals dominated the press.

There was some word, however, on the Donner Party. Noted the *Illinois Journal* (former *Sangamo Journal*) on 2 September 1847: "All the papers referred to [St. Louis and California newspapers], give painful details of the sufferings of the emigrants in the mountains. We shall give a journal of one of the sufferers—containing a most awful narrative of events—in our next paper. We annex a statement of the survivors of the company, as well as of those who perished in the mountains."

On 16 September 1847, the Springfield newspaper carried two items related to the Donner Party; both appeared on the front page. This fact alone deserves comment. Many newspapers purchased front page type already set. Routinely, this carried news of national events, advertisements for mail order merchandise, or serials of an ongoing piece of fiction. Local news usually was reserved for the second and third pages of a newspaper, along with editorials, local advertisements, news of social events, and sale notices. That news of the former Illinois residents rated front page consideration was a departure from the usual. The first was a letter written from California by William L. Todd to his father. Todd had been in California for two years and had traveled the region a great deal: "I spent all of this winter in the southern portion of California, and prefer it to the northern part. The climate is much better, and there is not so much rain." Todd's news and descriptions were highlighted, however, by references to members of the Donner Party.

"The emigration from the States last year, has been quite large; and I am sorry to say, many of them were very unfortunate. Some twenty or thirty wagons which came by Hasting's cut off never reached the country; and many men and women perished in the California mountains.—James F. Reed lost most of his cattle crossing the desert, (75 miles) without water or grass; and he left two wagons at the Salt Lake. The other he got to the California Mountains, and left it there. His wife and children had to walk from thence in to Sutter's—they, with Eliza Williams, and four or five others, got in safe. But Baylis Williams, M. Elliot, George and Jacob Donner, and some of their families, died in the mountains, and others that neither you nor I know. Mrs. Reed and her family had to walk 60 to 80 miles without any thing to eat, and the snow about fifteen feet deep. I saw her the other day;—she is now well."

In a column adjoining Todd's letter were portions of the emigrant journal promised by the newspaper. Headlined "Thrilling Journal," the piece opened with a short introduction: "Copy of a Journal kept by a Suffering Emigrant, on the California Mountains, from October 31st, 1846, to March 1st, 1847." The journal entries ended with "Yours, and c., George McKinstry, Jr., Fort Sacramento, April 27, 1847."

The operative word for this publication is "copy." After all, the journal of Patrick Breen is believed to be the only existing document to recount the hardships experienced by someone who underwent the winter ordeal. McKinstry was, in fact, a sheriff at Sutter's Fort. It was he who used Breen's diary to make his own report, and McKinstry's transcription was published in May 1847 in the *California Star*.[13] After that newspaper publication, the McKinstry transcription was printed in the *Illinois Journal*—without Breen's name attached. For comparison, below are samplings from the Breen diary and portions appearing in the Springfield newspaper.

Breen: "Mond. 15th Morning cloudy untill 9 o clock then cleared off wam & sunshine wind W. Mrs. Graves[14] refusd. to give Mrs. Reid any hides put Suitors pack hides on her shanty would not let her have them says if I say it will thaw it then will not, she is a case."

Newspaper journal: "Feb. 15—Morning cloudy until 9 then cleared off warm. Mrs.___ refused to give Mrs.___ hides. Put Sutter's pack-hides on her shanty and will not let her have them."

Breen: "Frid. 19th Froze hard last night 7 men arrived from Colifornia yesterday evening with som provisions but left the greater part on the way to day clear & warm for this region some of the men are gone to day to Donnos Camp will start back on Monday."

Newspaper journal: "Feb. 19th—Froze hard last night. Seven men arrived from California yesterday evening with provisions, but left the greater part on the way. To day it is clear and warm for this region; the men have gone to Donners' camp; they start back on Monday."

Breen: "Mond. 22nd The Californians started this morning 24 in number some in a very weak state fine morning wind S. W. for the last 3 days. Mrs. Keyburg started & left Keysburg here unable to go I burried Pikes child this morning in the snow it died 2 days ago, Paddy Reid & Thos.[15] came back Messrs Graves & Mutry."

Newspaper journal: "Feb. 22—The Californians started this morning with twenty-four in number, some in a very weak state. Mrs. Kiesburg started with them, and left Mr. Kiesburg here, unable to

go. Buried Pike's child this morning in the snow; it died two days ago."

Given the similarity between the two journals, George McKinstry, Jr., was probably the first to edit the Breen diary, correcting spelling, adding punctuation, and omitting certain words or descriptions.

Of note too is a letter by Virginia [Backenstoe] Reed to Mary Keyes of Springfield. It was published in the Springfield newspaper almost four months after the emigrant diary appeared in the *Illinois Journal*. Published in the 16 December 1847 issue, the letter appeared on the front page. When compared to the same letter printed in George R. Stewart's *Ordeal by Hunger: The Story of the Donner Party*,[16] it is again suggestive that an editorial hand (however light) changed small elements of punctuation or capitalization.

Deeply Interesting Letter

The following letter is from a little girl, aged about twelve years, step-daughter of Mr. James F. Reed, and she was one of the unfortunate company of emigrants, of whose suffering last winter, we gave an account in our last week's paper. The artless manner in which this child details the sufferings of the party, and especially of her own family—the joyful meeting of her father after his absence of five months—can scarcely be read without a tear,—while her notice of the country, which she had reached with untold tribulation, will cause a smile. "It is a great country to marry. Eliza [the hired girl] is to be married; and this is no joke!"

California, May 16, 1847

My Dear Cousin: I take this opportunity to write, to let you know that we are all well at present, and hope this letter may find you well.—I am going, my dear cousin, to write to you about our troubles in getting to California. We had good luck till we came to Big Sandy. There we lost our best yoke of oxen, named Riley and George, and when we came to Bridger's Fort we lost two other oxen. We then sold some of our provisions and bought a yoke of cows and a yoke of oxen. The people at Bridger's Fort persuaded us to take "Hasting's Cut-off, " over the salt plain. They said it saved three hundred miles. We went that road, and we had to go through a long drive, as they said, of forty miles, without water or grass. Hastings said it was forty miles; but I think it was eighty miles. We traveled a day and night, and at noon the next day father went on a-head to see if he could find water. He had not gone long before some of the cattle gave out, and we had to leave the wagons and take the cattle to water. Herron and Baylis stayed with us, and the other boys, Milt. Elliot and James Smith, went on with the cattle to water. Father was coming back to us with water, and met the men. They were then about ten miles from water, and father said they would get to water at night, and told the boys the next day to bring the cattle back for the wagons and to bring some water. Father got to us about day-light the next morning. Walter took the horse and went on to water. We waited there till night, thinking that the boys would come, and we then thought we could start and walk to Mr. Donner's wagons at night, a distance of ten miles. We took what little water we had, and some bread, and started. Father carried Thomas, and the rest of us walked. We got to Donner's, and they were all asleep. So we laid down on the ground: we spread a shawl down; we laid on it, and spread another over us and then put the dogs on top—Tyler, Barney, Trailer, Tracker and little Cash. It was the coldest night you ever saw for the season. The wind blew very hard, and if it had not been for the dogs, we would have froze. As soon as it was day, we went to Mr. Donner's. He said we could not walk to the water, and if we staid we could ride in the wagons to the water. So father left us and went on to the water, to see why the boys did not bring back the cattle. When he got to the water he found but one ox and one cow, and that none of the rest had got there. Mr. Donner came up that night to the water, with his cattle and brought his wagons and all of us. We staid there a week and hunted for our cattle, but could not find them. The Indians had taken them. So some of the company took oxen and went out and brought in one wagon and cache the other and a great many other things, all but what we could put in one wagon. We had to divide our provisions with the company to get them to carry it. We got three yoke of cattle from the company, including our ox and cow; and we went on that way awhile, when we got out of provisions, and father had to go on to California for provisions.

We could not get on in the way we were fixed, and in two or three days after father left us we had to cash our wagon, and take Mr. Grave's wagon, and cash some more of our things. Well, we went on that way sometime, and then we had to get into Mr. Eddy's wagon. We went on that way awhile, and then we had to cache some of our clothes, except a change or two, and put them in Mr. Brien's wagon. Thomas and James rode the two horses; and the rest of us had to walk. We went on that way awhile and came to another long drive of forty miles, between Mary's river and Truckey's river, and then we went with Mr. Donner. We had to walk all the time we were travelling. Up the Truckey river we met a man, Mr. T. C. Stanton, (and two Indians), that we had sent on for provisions to capt. Suter's Fort before father started. He had met father not far from Suter's Fort. He looked very bad. He had not ate but three times in seven days, and the last three days without any thing. His horse was not able to carry him. Mr. Stanton gave him a horse, and he went on. We now cashed some more of our things all but what we could pack on one mule and we started. Martha and James rode behind the two Indians. It was raining then in the vallies and snowing on the mountains so we went on that way three or four days till we came to the big mountain or the California Mountain. The snow then was three feet deep. There were some wagons there. They said they had attempted to cross and could not. Well we thought we would try it so we started and they started again with those wagons. The snow was then up to the mules hide. The higher we went up, the deeper the snow got—so that the wagons could not go on. They then packed their oxen, and

went on with us, carrying a child a-piece, and driving the oxen in the snow up to their waists.—The mule that Martha and the Indians was on was the best one;—so they went and broke the road and that Indian was the pilot. We went on that way two or three miles, and the mules kept falling down in the snow, heads foremost, and the Indian said he could not find the road. We stopped and let the Indian and Mr. Stanton go on and hunt the road. They went on and found it to the top of the mountain, and came back and said they thought we could get over if it did not snow any more. But the people were all so tired by carrying their children, that they could not go over that night. So we made a fire and got something to eat, and mother spread down a buffalo robe, and we all laid down upon it, and spread something over us, and mother set up by the fire, and it snowed one foot deep on the top of the bed that night. When we got up in the morning, the snow was so deep we could not go over the mountain, and we had to go back to the cabins that were built by the emigrants three years ago, and build more cabins, and stay there all winter, as late as the 20th February, and without father.

We had not the first thing to eat. Mother made an arrangement for some cattle—giving two for one in California. The cattle were so poor that they could hardly get up when they laid down. We stopped there the 4th of November and staid till the 20th of February, and what we had to eat I can't hardly tell you, and we had Mr. Stanton and the Indians to feed. But they soon left to go over the mountains on foot, and had to come back. They then made snow shoes and started again, and a storm came, and they had again to return. It would sometimes snow ten days before it would stop. They waited till it stopped snowing and then started again. I was going with them, but took sick and could not go. There were fifteen persons left in this company, and but seven got through—five women and two men. A storm came on, and they lost the road, and got out of provisions, and those that got through, had to eat them who died. Not long after they left we had eat all our provisions, and we had to put Martha at one cabin, James at another, Thomas at another, and mother and Eliza and Milt. and I, dried up what little meat we could get, and started to see if we could cross over the mountain—and we had to leave the children. O, Mary! you will think that hard—to leave them with strangers, and did not know whether we ever would see them again. We could hardly get away from them. We told them we would bring them back bread, and then they were willing to stay.—We went and were out five days in the mountains. Eliza gave out and had to go back. We went on that day, and the next day we had to lay by and make snow shoes. We went on another day, and could not find the road and had to go back. I could get along very well while I thought we were going ahead, but as soon as we had to turn back I could hardly walk. We reached the cabins, and that night there was the worst snow storm that we had the whole winter, and if we had not come back, we could not have lived through it. We had now nothing to eat but hides. O! Mary, I would cry and wish I had what you all wasted. Eliza had to go to Mr. Graves; we staid at Mr. Brien's. They had meat all the time. We had to kill little Cash, and eat him. We eat his entrails, and feet, and hide, and every thing about him. My dear cousin, you often say you can't do this and you can't do that; but never say you can't do any thing—you don't know what you can do until you try. Many a time had we the last thing on cooking, and did not know where the next meal would come from; but there was always something provided for us.

There were fifteen in the cabin that we were in, and one half of us had to lay in bed all the time.—There were ten died while [we] were at the cabins. We were hardly able to walk. We lived on little Cash a week; and after Mrs. Brien would cook her meat and boil the bones two or three times, we would take them and boil them three or four days at a time. Mother went down to the other cabin and got half a hide, bringing it in snow up to her waist. It kept on snowing and would cover the cabins do all we could to prevent it, so that we could not get out for two or three days at a time. We would have to cut pieces of the logs on the inside to make a fire with. The snow was five feet deep on the top of the cabin. I could hardly eat the hides. Father, as we afterwards learnt, started out for us with provisions, but could not reach us, for the dreadful storms and deep snow, and after he had come into the mountains eighty miles, had to cache his provisions and go back on the other side to get a company of men to assist him. Hearing this they made up a company at Suter's Fort, and sent out to our relief. We had not eaten any thing for three days; we were out on the top of the cabin, and saw a party coming. Oh, my dear cousin, you don't know how glad we were! One of the men we knew. We had traveled with him on the road.—They staid with us three days to recruit us a little, so that we could go back with them. There were twenty-one of us who left with them, but after going a piece, Martha and Thomas gave out, and the men had to take them back. Mother and Eliza and I came on. One of the party said he was a Mason,[17] and pledged his honor that if he did not meet father he would go back and save his children. O! Mary, that was the hardest thing yet—to leave the children in those cabins—not knowing but they would starve to death. Martha said, well Mother, if you never see me again, do the best you can.—The men said they could hardly stand it: it made them cry. But the men said it was best for us to go on and the children to be taken back. The men did so, and left for them at the cabin a little meat and flour. Mother agreed to leave them upon the pledge of Mr. Glover that he would return for them if we did not meet father,—which we did in five days. We went on over a high mountain as steep as stair steps in snow which was up to our waists. Little James walked all the way. He said every step he took he was getting nearer father and nearer something to eat. The Martens took the provisions the men had cached, and we had very little to eat. When we had traveled five days we met father with fifteen men on their way to the cabins. O, Mary! you don't know how glad we were to see him. We had not seen him for five months. We thought we should never see him again. He heard we were coming and he made some sweet-cakes the night before at his camp to give us and the other children with us. He said he would see Martha and Thomas the next day. He

went there in two days. They found some of the company eating those who had died but Thomas and Martha had not ate any. Father and the men started with seventeen people. Hiram G. Miller carried Thomas and father carried Martha, and they were caught in storms and they had to stop two days. It stormed so they could not go and the bears took their provisions, and they were four days without any thing. Father carried Martha. Hiram carried Thomas. The snow was up to their waists, and it was snowing so they could hardly see the way. They wrapped the children up and never took them out for four days. They had nothing to eat in all that time. Thomas asked for something to eat once. Father brought Martha and Thomas in to where we were. None of the men he had with him were able to go back to the cabins, their feet was froze so bad. So another company went out and brought all the persons in from there. They are all in now from the mountains but four, who are at a place called the Starved Camp, and a company is gone to their relief. There were, but two families, of the whole number in the mountains, that got out safe. Our family was one of them. Mary, I have not told you one half of our troubles; but I have told you enough to let you know that you don't know what trouble is yet, and I hope never will such as we have seen. Thank God, we have all got in with our lives, and we are the only family that did not have to eat human flesh. We have lost every thing, but I don't care for that. We have got through with our lives. But don't let this letter dishearten any from coming here. Don't take any Cut Offs, and bring nothing but provisions and just enough clothing to last till you get here.

My dear Cousin: We are all very well pleased with the country, particularly with the climate.—Let it be ever so hot a day, the night is always cool. It is a beautiful country. It is mostly in vallies and mountains. It ought to be a beautiful country to pay us for our troubles in getting to it. It is the greatest country for cattle and horses you ever saw. It would just suit Charley; for he could learn to be a bocarro,—that is, one who lassos cattle and horses. The Spaniards and Indians are great riders. They have a Spanish saddle, and wooden stirrups, and great long spurs, with the pricking part five inches in diameter. They could not manage the California horses without the spurs. They won't go on at all without they hear the spurs. They have little bells fastened to them to make a gingle. They blindfold the wild horses, get on to them, and then take off the blindfold, and let them run, and if the riders can't sit on them, they tie themselves on, and let them run as fast as they can. One Indian will ride into a band of bullocks and throw the lasso on a wild one, and it being fastened to the horn of his saddle, he can hold it as long as he wants to do so. Another Indian throws his lasso on the feet of the bullock; and together, they throw him right over. The people here ride from eighty to one hundred miles a day on horseback. This country just suits father and I for riding. Some of the Spaniards have from 6 to 7,000 head of horses, and from 15 to 16,000 head of cattle. Tell the girls that this is the greatest place for marrying they ever saw, and that they must come to California if they want to marry. Tell ___ that___ is engaged to be married. You all think this is a joke, but I tell you 'tis the real truth. Tell Doctor___ that they doctor the funniest in this country that he ever saw. They grease the sick all over with mantajo and kill a bienna and cut it in four pieces, and put a great piece of fat carrim on the wrist, and kill a sheep and wrap the sick up in the skin. Father is now down at St. Francisco. He is going to write when he comes back. Give my love to all.—So no more at present, my dear cousin.

Virginia E. B. Reed

Miss Mary C. Key[e]s, Springfield, Illinois.

On 23 December 1847, the Springfield newspaper printed a letter from James F. Reed. The nightmare behind him and his family, Reed wrote the letter in July, focusing on descriptions of the countryside and general circumstances of life in California. He did, however, note the sufferings of those in his company, and confidently declared that the group's fate would have been different if he had been present and in charge.

California Correspondence

Napa Valley, Cal., 2d July, 1847

Dear Sir:

We have landed in California, at last, after great tribulation. The history of our Journey, as well as some notices of this country, accompany this letter. I will add other notices of incidents and miscellaneous things, which I omitted in that communication.

Wheat sells here for one dollar per bushel. The call for wheat is limited. Large 3 year's old beef sells for $1 per quarter; and when retailed, at two cents per lb. In no country can hogs be raised with less trouble—supporting themselves without expense to the owner. Beef and pork can be put up here to great advantage;—the finest salt in the world is found on the beach of this bay. Lumber for barrels, however, is rather scarce. You can go into a flock of a thousand sheep, and select and kill the best for $2 each. Butter is 50 cts. per lb.; cheese, 25 cents; chickens, 50 cents each; eggs, 50 cents per dozen. Hens lay and hatch the year round without any care. Turkeys are plenty on some farms. Flour is worth from $6 to $8 per 100 lbs.—owing to the scarcity of mills, and the want of machinery for cleaning the wheat. Horses sell from $6 to $30; wild mares, $6 to $10.

Vegetables can be grown here in perfection, but the seed must be put into the ground in the winter, and then they will mature before the dry weather comes on. The finest pumpkins I ever saw were here, and you can enjoy them the year round.—Watermelons can also be kept for a long period. I have eat them in December. Fine cabbage and lettuce are in perfection the first of May. Potatoes are raised in many places. Corn was in roasting ears on the Sacramento on the 6th of June. Beans were then large enough for eating. Onions grow very large and fine. Indeed, all the culinary vegetables can be raised in great abundance and excellence, by planting at the proper season.

Figs and Olives are not a certain crop, being delicate fruits.

Oranges and Lemons have not been tried here; but they do well 3 or 400 miles below.

I can make a living for my little family easier here than in the States; and while I am doing this, I am certain that they are enjoying good health. I do not look to the approach of the warm season with any dread. I have not to labor in summer to procure feed for stock in winter, while I am shaking with the ague or burning with fever. When the rainy season comes on, all I have to do, is now and then see to my stock,—that is, to ride round and bring them together. I can get help without difficulty to plow, sow, reap, and get my wheat cleaned and housed; and if I want to sell any, the same help is at hand to take it to market. If I do not wish to take the oversight of my stock myself, I can employ a native to do it.

Our Sugar, Coffee and Molasses, come from the Sandwich Islands. Cotton and other goods come from home. These last articles are high; but competition will soon regulate business. Iron is worth 10 to 16 cents per lb. Ploughs bear a high price.

The wheat now is within a few days of cutting. It is more forward on the Sacramento. At Capt. Sutter's ranch two weeks past, he had 400 Digger Indians harvesting his wheat. His crop this year is estimated at 80,000 bushels.

Sonoma Valley west of this place about 12 miles, is a fine little valley, about 20 miles long and from 1 to 3 miles wide. At the mouth of this valley on the bay, is the town of Sonoma, which is fast improving by American emigrants, who came in here last fall. It is a pleasant place, but more subject to fogs, from the sea than the Napa. The mountains on the west of Sonoma are low, and the fogs and cold winds have a fuller sweep from the ocean. It is not so with the Napa. On the west side, and between it and the Sonoma, there is a high range of mountains, which prevents sudden changes. The globe cannot present a healthier spot than this valley. Presuming that you have heard of these vallies, and as many of our friends are located in them, I have thought that a slight notice of them would be entertaining to you.

Napa Valley is the place where I am now residing with my family, at the house of Capt. George Yount, formerly from Missouri. Capt. Y. has been here for 15 or 16 years. He is known all over California for his honesty and hospitality. I have often seen a bullock a day consumed at his house, and sometimes two. There are more fat bullocks consumed at his house than at the Planter's House in St. Louis; and they are fatter than any ever seen there. The greatest objection to beef here is, that it is too fat. Napa Valley is about 30 miles long, and from one to three miles wide, and contains some of the finest land I ever saw; it is well watered, Napa Creek running through it. There is now in progress of building upon this creek, three flouring and one saw-mill. I admire this valley. No healthier place can be found—no fever, no ague, no sickness. The days are pretty hot, with cool nights. It is a fine location for fruit—apples, peaches, and grapes.

I do not want by any thing I have said to be understood as encouraging persons to come here.—Far from it. If I like the country, others may and do dislike it. Many are dissatisfied and will leave it; but the country will lose little by their absence—except an outbreak of the Mexicans should take place, and in that case heads count. There is a great deal of difficulty in coming to this country, and particularly the last 300 miles of road.—The worst is in crossing the mountains. For about 80 miles, you never saw a worse road, though 19-20ths of the wagons came through safe. The disasters of the company to which I belonged, should not deter any person from coming who wishes to try his fortune. Our misfortunes were the result of bad management. Had I remained with the company, I would have had the whole of them over the mountains before the snow would have caught them; and those who have got through have admitted this to be true.

I will refer to some of my unfortunate companions. Bayliss Williams began to fail before the company was out of provisions. Milton Elliott was well and hearty when he went to the cabins of the Donners. He helped Mrs. Donner to render as comfortable as possible their miserable abode. He was gone some ten or twelve days, and when he returned, was thin and weak, and in a few days died. He lived longer than Bayliss. James Smith was about the first who died of the boys. He gave up, pined away and died; he did not starve. John Denton left with the first company; he gave out on the way. I found him dead, covered him with a counterpane, and buried him in the snow, in the wildest of the wild portions of the earth. Here, too, C. T. Stanton, of Chicago, resigned his spirit to its Eternal Father, after he had labored and toiled, and finally sacrificed his life, to save his companions in distress. Some ten or eleven other unfortunate beings I was compelled to leave at the head of the Juba, on account of the neglect of Passed Midshipman Woodworth, to perform the part expected of him.

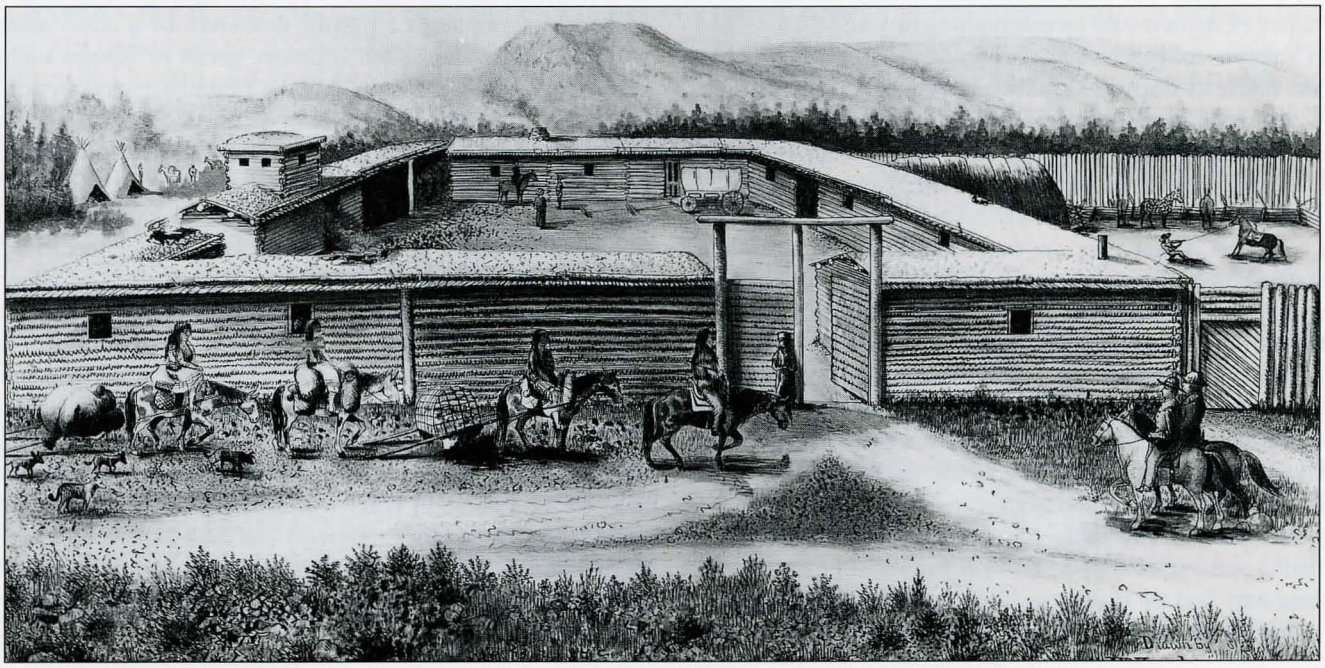
May God bless you and all my old friends about Springfield.

This was not the last letter from James F. Reed. Letters to the newspaper continued. From 1847 through 1850, Reed's correspondence described California, discovery of a silver mine, his work in a gold mine, and a dinner given to Illinois emigrants newly arrived in California.[18] While researchers and writers have focused on material that relates to the Donner Party's winter entrapment, notices for preparation and letters written on the earlier stages of the trail virtually have been ignored. Yet, they have much to tell about the people involved, as does the general tone of the press for that time. Through Illinois newspapers, there is a window to the world in which these people lived. They may have been leaving a more "civilized" area, but it was one that had experienced its own uncertainties. Too, from the early letters on the trail sent to the Springfield paper, it is apparent that the travelers were much like others. They noted and described the places that they saw; they were concerned with provisions and the state of their animals and wagons; when it was possible some took time to hunt on the Plains. In other words, the group was unremarkable from thousands of other emigrants and their experiences. What set them apart and etched their names for posterity was the fateful decision to take a little-tried and risky cutoff when the season for travel grew late.



James F. Reed and his wife, Margaret, who survived with her children the winter entrapment of the Donner Party. (Illinois State Historical Library)

This drawing of Fort Bridger, by Merritt D. Houghton, was based on firsthand descriptions of the fort. Among the emigrants stopping at the site were those of the Donner group. (Wyoming Division of Cultural Resources)



NOTES

1. George R. Stewart, *Ordeal by Hunger: The Story of the Donner Party* (1936; reprinted, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, Bison Books, 1986); Joseph A. King, *Winter of Entrapment: A New Look at the Donner Party* (Toronto: P. D. Meany Co., 1992). Although Emmy E. Werner in *Pioneer Children on the Journey West* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1995) refers to the Virginia Reed letter printed in the *Illinois Journal*, the author evidently saw a copy in the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

2. The original issues of the *Sangamo Journal* and *Illinois Journal* were copied to microfilm and are available at the Illinois State Historical Library, now a branch of the Illinois State Historic Preservation Agency, Springfield, IL.

3. *Spectator*, Quawka, Ill., May 9, 1856.

4. *Ottawa* (Illinois) *Free Trader*, November 28, 1845.

5. Ibid., April 30, 1847.

6. *Sangamo Journal*, August 11, 1832, August 3, 1833, February 11, 1841.

7. Donner probably did not intend to misstate the prospects of California farms. In all probability, he was only repeating information read in newspapers or magazines. Already there was stiff competition between Oregon and California boosters who sought settlers to increase America's claims on the areas.

8. Lewis Dougherty to John Dougherty, August 20 and August 29, 1854, reprinted in *Liberty* (Missouri) *Tribune*, September 15 and October 6, 1854, Lewis Bissell Dougherty file, Clay County, Missouri, Archives, Liberty, MO; Delavan Collection, National Frontier Trails Center, Independence, MO.

9. Both Tamsen Donner and her husband perished in the mountains.

10. For an overview of Hastings *see* Will Bagley, "Lansford Warren Hastings, Scoundrel or Visionary?" *Overland Journal* 12 (Spring 1994): 13-26.

11. Louis Vasquez and Jim Bridger were traders who plied their enterprises at Fort Bridger and sometimes went out to meet emigrants on the trail to sell merchandise, particularly livestock. The two later were tried in a Salt Lake City court for selling emigrants horses without guarantees that they had not been stolen.

12. Robert Campbell and William Sublette founded a trading post that later became the government-owned military base of Fort Laramie. By the time Reed wrote this letter, Campbell was in St. Louis running a business that supplied traders and post sutleries.

13. Breen's diary, or portions of it, has seen several publications. For two examples, *see* Frederick J. Teggart, ed., "Diary of Patrick Breen," *Publications of the Academy of Pacific Coast History* 1 (July 1910): 281-84; Martin Ridge and Ray A. Billington, eds., *America's Frontier Story: A Documentary History of Westward Expansion* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1969), 484-86. Breen and his wife, Margaret, survived.

14. The Graves family was from Illinois. The *Illinois Journal*, September 2, 1847, listed those who "Arrived in California" and those who "Perished in the Mountains." Among those noted in California were William, Ellen, and Elizabeth Graves. Listed as "perished" were Franklin Graves, Mr. and Mrs. Graves.

15. Of the Keseberg family, the couple survived; their two young children perished. Pike's child was one-year-old Catherine. "Paddy" was eight-year-old Martha "Patty" Reed; Thomas was three-year-old Thomas Reed. Both survived.

16. Stewart, *Ordeal by Hunger*, 282-88.

17. James Reed was a member of the Freemasons. Evidently, this member of the rescue party was also, pledging to help the Reed family because of his fraternal fellowship with James Reed.

18. For examples of Reed correspondence, *see Illinois Journal*, August 16, 1848, December 20, 1848, September 26, 1849, February 19, 1850. Virginia Reed's marriage was announced in the April 16, 1850, issue.

***Daniel D. Holt**, currently director of the Eisenhower Library, was the first director of the National Frontier Trails Center, Independence, Missouri. For over twenty years, he was with the Illinois State Historical Library as Field Services Director and in charge of collections management. He first encountered the Donner-related material in newspapers when researching his master's thesis on the Mexican War and Illinois' role in that conflict.*

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REVIEWS

Wagons to Soquel

Sid Freshour (Modesto, Calif.: Glenhaven Press, 1995) 524 pages, index, maps, appendices, bibliography; paperback.

Reviewed by Harmon Mothershead, Professor of History, Northwest Missouri State University.

Nearly a half century before the American Revolution, the first Freshours arrived in Quaker Philadelphia seeking asylum. For the next two hundred years they were in the mainstream of westward expansion. By the time of the Revolution they had followed the frontier to New Jersey, Maryland, and western Virginia. With the opening of the Ohio country, they moved to the next frontier, and by the time of the Mexican War and the Gold Rush, they like much of mobile America, were at the banks of the Missouri River. The Freshours were among the first to migrate to the Pacific Coast in the 1840s, to participate in the conquest of California and to stay on and settle the state in the next one hundred years.

Wagons to Soquel is not properly a family history but rather a family's role in the history of the westward movement. It would be difficult to say that any of the family was "famous" or "important" as we typically know those terms; on the contrary, they were ordinary people, the archetype of the westwarding frontiers people. There are no family diaries, and a minimum of family letters, records, correspondence, and photographs. The author has relied on census records, wills, marriage records, Bible entries, genealogy, and obituaries to place the Freshours in a given location at a specific time. Knowing that the Freshours were present, he then relies on general history, local history, and later on trail accounts to portray the Freshours' participation in the westward movement of America.

The book is well written and well researched. It may include some irrelevant materials, and it may stretch to make a connection in a few places. However, it is a model of what can be accomplished with the minimum of official records, and it exhibits a marvelous use of primary-documentary sources.

Gold Rush Desert Trails to San Diego and Los Angeles in 1849

George M. Ellis, ed. (San Diego: San Diego Corral of The Westerners, 1995) foreword by J. S. Holliday, 243 pages. Brand Book Number Nine.

Reviewed by Michael L. Tate, Professor of History and Director of Native American Studies, University of Nebraska at Omaha.

Unlike most of the occasional publications by various corrals of The Westerners during the recent decades, this special issue of the San Diego Corral is devoted to a single topic. Editor George M. Ellis and his associates accurately contend that the southern trails to the California gold fields have not received as much academic attention as the more northerly route which followed the Platte River, through South Pass, and along the Humboldt River to the Sacramento area. Furthermore, the contributors focus most attention on the segment of the larger Gila Trail known as the Colorado Desert Crossing that stretched from Yuma, Arizona, to San Diego and Los Angeles. Citing evidence for 1849 that fully forty percent of the total overlanders

traversed the various southern routes, they make a convincing case for greater public attention to this saga in the nation's westward expansion.

Readers should begin their examination of this book with Ellis' general introduction which explains how the various southern trails developed in 1849 and how they converged at the Yuma Crossing. The introduction also explores the demographic debate about numbers of travelers in this region, unique problems encountered along the way, and options for argonauts who crossed farther south through Mexico and Central America. Readers should then consult J. S. Holliday's lengthy foreword which assesses the veracity of the diaries and journals that have been selected for inclusion in this book. Holliday, author of the highly acclaimed *The World Rushed In: The California Gold Rush Experience* (1981), places the trail writings into a larger perspective by highlighting their geographical, social, and literary importance.

The heart of *Gold Rush Desert Trails to San Diego and Los Angeles in 1849* encompasses the dozen journals and diaries which have been extracted partially for publication. Although these sources originally included daily entries for the entire overland trips, Ellis has reproduced only those entries relevant to the passage along the Gila River, to the Colorado River, and westward through southern California. He has likewise included numerous and detailed endnotes to further elucidate matters contained in the original journal passages. The scholarship revealed in these endnotes is impeccable, and they serve as proper models for other scholars interested in editing original narratives.

The first ten diaries edited by Ellis feature a diverse group of civilian chroniclers including William H. Chamberlain, L. N. Weed, Lorenzo D. Aldrich, John W. Audubon, Jacob H. Bachman, J. E. Durivage, H. M. T. Powell, and D. D. Demarest. Also included are reports of Lt. Cave J. Couts and Andrew B. Gray who participated in the Mexican boundary survey rather than seeking their fortunes in California gold. The journals of W. C. S. Smith, Daniel D. Woods, and C. M. Blake capture the special difficulties of overland travel up the length of Mexico's Baja Peninsula. Rounding out the collection are six essays, by as many authors, on geographic locations between San Felipe and San Diego.

Academic and armchair historians alike will enjoy this valuable collection of trail materials which have been edited and indexed in a scholarly fashion. They also will be rewarded by numerous historical and modern photographs, detailed cartographic work by Richard Kent Smith, and the portfolio of full-color paintings by Dennis Torzeski. The San Diego Corral of The Westerners deserves high praise for drawing our attention to this important topic and for producing such a quality publication.

The Mormon Trail: Yesterday and Today

William E. Hill (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1996) 294 pages, illustrations, maps, bibliography, index; $19.95, paperback.

Reviewed by Merle Wells, a founding member of the Oregon-California Trails Association and member of the staff at the Idaho State Historical Society.

Unlike most pioneers headed to places like Oregon and California, Mormon emigrants had to respond to exceptionally bitter opposition from their neighbors. Large numbers of Mormon converts had been driven away from New York, Ohio, Missouri, and Illinois in less than two decades after the church was founded in 1830. More than a few of their religious, economic, political, and social practices incited violent reactions practically everywhere they went. Some of them who accepted a tradition espoused by Emma Smith formed a reorganized church that remained in Missouri. However, Brigham Young's followers finally sought seclusion in Utah. Although it required considerable travel, their trip involved far less distance than was needed for Pacific Coast destinations. Nevertheless, especially for those who had to walk all the way, Mormon emigrants had to overcome more than a few extra difficulties.

When they came west to establish their new Zion by Salt Lake in 1846, Mormon pioneers established a new tradition in emigrant travel that has commanded attention ever since. West of their camps near Council Bluffs, the emigrants followed a set of existing roads, rather than establish new geographic routes. Their Mormon Trail, however, was complete with a group of variants typical of that kind of travel. Yet, their distinctive reasons, organization, and operating procedures identified their venture as a movement on their own emigrant trail.

William E. Hill already has published historical guides to Oregon, California, and along the Santa Fe routes that explain their development and present condition. Now he meets an additional need—and an important one—by issuing a fourth volume to deal with Mormon Trail history. In doing so, he selects appropriate items from a massive historical literature, all of which he utilizes to provide a brief yet clear context for his guide. A carefully chosen set of illustrations, old and new, of trail features comprises his major presentation in each volume. All of those pictures help identify and describe that unusual feature of western history. His concise treatment has exceptional merit for countless travelers interested in Mormon Trail subjects, but who would be terribly burdened by thousands of pages of relevant published material. Controversial aspects of Mormon Trail history are mentioned with restraint appropriate for an historical presentation.

Although an 108-page picture section of prominent natural features and visible trail remnants still currently found are the pri-

mary mary presentation, this volume also includes extensive guidebook and diary extracts along with old maps and modern site lists and descriptions. Interpretative museums and historical agencies are identified, and an extensive Mormon historical summary places all of those features in an appropriate context.

Because of their powerful religious organization, Mormon emigrants had a very distinctive travel experience. Their initial movement came in detachments with a standard size and management that avoided disorder and leadership upheavals often characteristic of other emigrant groups. As time went on, parties of new Mormon converts, many of them from Britain and Europe, followed. Church authorities arranged to support that immigration financially, and provided other travel help for those who encountered difficulty. Some groups that simply pushed handcarts to haul supplies and baggage, rather than employ emigrant wagons, clearly had special needs in order to complete a successful trip. In any case, their church culture affected just about every aspect of their overland journey. So, they moved west on their own Mormon Trail, while other parties, driving oxen down those same tracks, were following an Oregon or California Trail route.

Sketch of the Oregon Territory or Emigrant's Guide

Philip L. Edwards (reprint; Fairfield, Wash.: Ye Galleon Press, 1992) 20 pages; paperback.

Overland to Oregon

Edward Henry Lenox (reprint; Fairfield, Wash.: Ye Galleon Press, 1993) 90 pages, illustrations, index; $9.95, paperback.

Left by the Indians and Massacre on the Oregon Trail in the Year 1860; A Tale of Horror, Cannibalism & Three Remarkable Children

Emeline L. Fuller and Carl Schlicke (reprint; Fairfield, Wash.: Ye Galleon Press, 1988) 75 pages, map, illustrations, index; $9.95, paperback.

Reviewed by M. Ann Reinert, Reference Librarian, Mid-Continent Public Library, Independence, Missouri.

The epic story of the migration of thousands of families along the Oregon-California Trail is best told by personal accounts in diaries, reminiscences, and reports. Often manuscripts or rare, privately published books are difficult to peruse unless one is able to travel to a repository where they are held. This is especially true of brief accounts written many years ago but not considered of sufficient length or importance to be published or reprinted. Yet, the impact of numerous stories or reports, including those of few pages, create a vivid image of life along the trail. Ye Galleon Press is performing a valuable service by reprinting several of these shorter accounts relating to the Oregon Trail.

Philip Edwards' *Sketch of the Oregon Territory or Emigrant's Guide* is remarkable for being the first published guide to Oregon by a United States citizen who had lived there. Printed in Liberty, Missouri, in 1842, the only known copy of this edition is in the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Yale University. In 1951, H. C. Revercomb, a bookdealer in Kansas City, Kansas, published an edition of five hundred copies. Republished as an enlarged facsimile of the Revercomb edition by Ye Galleon Press in 1971 and again in 1992, it provides a detailed description of Oregon Territory as seen through the eyes of a schoolteacher and one of the first American settlers in that region. Having resided in Oregon Territory from 1834 to 1837, Philip Edwards discussed a wide variety of issues important to those contemplating emigration, such as the moderate climate, beautiful scenery, quality of the soil, and the variety of timber. At the same time, he provided advice to travelers to this land of opportunity.

Edward Henry Lenox wrote his reminiscence about traveling to Oregon in 1843 as a boy of sixteen and published it in 1904 under the title, *Overland to Oregon in the Tracks of Lewis and Clark*. In 1993, Ye Galleon Press reprinted it with the title, *Overland to Oregon*. As recounted by the author in a narrative, complete with dialogue, it is filled with daily experiences which hold the reader's attention. Edward Lenox particularly wanted to remember those who made up his father's wagon train. David Lenox led thirty-three wagons to Oregon after these wagons separated from a larger group that would become known as Jesse Applegate's wagon train. This book is especially important for it lists 353 men and women who made up the first emigration party to the Columbia River.

The third publication is an explanation of one of the worse massacres in the history of the Oregon Trail. Emeline Fuller's chilling reminiscence, *Left by the Indians*,

originally published in 1892, tells of the forty-five-day travail of the thirty-three men, women, and children who escaped the massacre of the Bannock Indians fifty miles below Salmon Falls, Idaho, on 9 September 1860. Only fifteen individuals survived to be rescued by Capt. Frederick Dent and a party of soldiers on October 24. In the second part of this small book is Dr. Carl Schlicke's paper, "Massacre on the Oregon Trail in the Year 1860: A Tale of Horror, Cannibalism & Three Remarkable Children," which complements Emeline Fuller's story with additional facts probably gleaned from army reports. Captain Dent's official army reports are reprinted in the book's final section, providing a very rounded account of the massacre.

Journal of William Fowler Pritchard: Indiana to California 1850, Return via Nicaragua 1852

Earl H. Pritchard and Phil Pritchard, eds. (Fairfield, Wash.: Ye Galleon Press, 1995) xxiv, 148 pages, photos, illustrations, maps, indexes, bibliography: $24.95, cloth; $14.95, paperback.

Reviewed by Bob Knecht, curator of maps and assistant curator of manuscripts, Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka.

William Fowler Pritchard was one of a party of ultimately sixty-three in eighteen wagons that left New Harmony, Indiana, on 1 April 1850, to go to the California gold fields to seek fortunes. Nearly thirty-two years old in 1850, Pritchard seemingly felt incapable of earning enough in New Harmony to properly set himself up in business there. So, he joined other argonauts traveling to Sacramento.

The New Harmony group journeyed across Illinois and Missouri to St. Joseph. From there, they took the St. Joseph Cutoff to the Oregon-California Trail, followed the trail through South Pass, took Sublette's Cutoff, then followed Hudspeth's Cutoff to the Humboldt River and the Carson River route. Pritchard arrived in Sacramento on September 27th. He remained there for two years, then returned to New Harmony via San Francisco, Nicaragua, and New Orleans. He remained in the New Harmony area working as a cabinetmaker and undertaker and died in 1875.

The book consists of the text of Pritchard's journal from New Harmony to Sacramento, a letter from Sacramento to his wife probably written in the fall of 1851, and a much shorter diary of his return, with notes. The editors, Phil Pritchard and his father Earl Pritchard, are descendants of William Fowler Pritchard.

William Pritchard's journals describe his experiences in some detail. Although he lacks the lengthy explanations of Francis Parkman, he does comment fairly extensively about the people, places, conditions, animals, and vegetation he encountered en route. Interestingly, the editors include indexes of plants and animals mentioned, as well as a general index.

To their credit, the editors also include comparisons to the journal of James Bennett, a traveler in the same group. (Bennett's journal was published as *Overland Journey to California. . .* by Ye Galleon Press in 1987.) Bennett's account provides a useful parallel; it also provides a narrative of the segment from New Harmony to St. Joseph, which Pritchard's journal omits.

A comprehensive introduction summarizes Pritchard's life, discusses Bennett's journal, names others in the group, gives a brief historical context, describes the six booklets comprising the diary, and outlines the editors' conventions. Each state, for example, constitutes a separate chapter. A map of the state, showing significant points of interest and Pritchard's route, introduces each chapter.

The major fault in this most interesting volume is its uneven editing. The painstaking research from sources in New Harmony and New York in which individuals, animals, and plants are meticulously described contrasts with some glaring faults. For example, both the Missouri map and text (p. 6) describe Independence, Missouri, as a community that later became Kansas City, though note 81 (p. 85) correctly identifies Independence as a separate city that continues to exist. The Kansas map names the Kansas River the *Nebraska*, a particularly conspicuous mistake since the text in the next chapter talks of the Nebraska being an alternate name for the Platte River. These faults detract from an otherwise careful editing, albeit one that emphasizes biography and description at the expense of historical context.

It would have been helpful if the maps were larger, more detailed, and showed all documented camping places instead of selected ones. The volume uses consecutive note numbering throughout which prove a boon in locating a particular note. As is the usual practice, notes follow the text; it would be nice if they were on facing pages for easier reference, but the economics of book publishing seemingly prohibit this. The quadrangle maps used by the editors provide much detail that was helpful in their editing, but the editors could have checked place names against 1850s-era maps and gazetteers to provide details about place names no longer current.

This is another valuable firstperson account of the Oregon-California Trail in 1850 with helpful notes, but the reader should be cautioned that the editing is weak in trail-oriented historical context.

Books of Interest

The following were not reviewed for the journal, but readers may find them of personal interest.

Backus, Anna Jean. *Mountain Meadows Witness: The Life and Time of Bishop Philip Klingensmith*. Spokane: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1995. Western Frontiersmen Series XXV. Cloth, $32.50. Paper, $15.00.

Bagley, Pat, and Will Bagley. *This is the Place! A Crossroads of Utah's Past*. Carson City, Nev.: Buckaroo Books, 1996. No price given.

Clark, Thomas L. *Western Lore and Language: A Dictionary for Enthusiasts of the American West*. Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1996. No price given.

Fremont, John Charles. *Geographical Memoir Upon Upper California, An Illustration of His Map of Oregon and California*. Reprint; Fairfield, Wash.: Ye Galleon Press, 1995. Cloth, $14.95.

Hedren, Paul L. *Traveler's Guide to the Great Sioux War: The Battlefields, Forts, and Related Sites of America's Greatest Indian War*. Helena: Montana Historical Society Press, 1996. Cloth, $75.00. Paper, $10.95.

Hines, Donald M. *Celilo Tales: Wasco Myths, Legends, Tales of Magic and the Marvelous*. Issaquah, Wash.: Great Eagle Publishing, 1996. Paper, $21.95.

Kulp, Naomi Stanley. *Wagon Wheels & Wild Roses: Heirloom Recipes and Oregon Trail Stories from the McCaw Family, 1847-1995*. Federal Way, Wash.: Wild Rose Press, 1996. No price given.

Moberg, Vilhelm. *The Emigrants*. The Emigrant Novels, Book I. St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1995. Paper, no price given.

_____. *Unto A Good Land*. The Emigrant Novels, Book II. St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1995. Paper, no price given.

_____. *The Settlers*. The Emigrant Novels, Book III. St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1995. Paper, no price given.

_____. *The Last Letter Home*. The Emigrant Novels, Book IV. St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1995. Paper, no price given.

Richards, Mary Haskin Parker. *Winter Quarters: The 1846-1848 Life Writings of Mary Haskin Parker Richards*. ed. Maurine Carr Ward. Logan: Utah State University Press, 1996. Cloth, $29.95.

Rose, James J. *Sierra Trailblazers: First Pioneers Wagons Over the Sierra Nevada*. So. Lake Tahoe, Calif.: Lake Tahoe Historical Society, 1995. No price given.

Schwantes, Carlos A. *In Mountain Shadows: A History of Idaho*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, Bison Books, 1996. Cloth, $35.00. Paper, $20.00.

_____. *The Pacific Northwest: An Interpretive History*. Revised and enlarged edition. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996. Paper, no price given.

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Protecting emigrant graves.

Initiating legislation designating the California and Santa Fe trails as National Historic Trails.

Persuading government and industry to relocate roads and pipelines to preserve miles of pristine ruts.

Working with the Bureau of Land Management to protect the trail through Nevada's High Rock Canyon.

Conventions and Field Trips. . .

Exploring nearby trails on field trips during each National Convention.

Exploring Wyoming's Sublette's Cutoff, Nevada's High Rock Canyon and Black Rock Desert, and Oregon's Barlow Road on post-convention field trips.

Exploring trails on field trips local chapters sponsor between Conventions.

Publications. . .

Overland Journal—"Scott's Bluff, Giant Landmark of the Oregon-California Trail," "What the Covered Wagons Covered," "The California Trail—A Survey," "Women on the Overland Trail," "Geology and the Emigrant," "The Barlow Road," "Interaction Between Women and Indians," "The Trail of the First Wagons Over the Sierra."

News From the Plains—News about members and the organization, convention reports, legislative action, genealogy, trail preservation, and special activities.

Research and Education. . .

Developing instructional materials to help students understand the western migration.

Marking the trails and maintaining weathered and damaged markers.

Developing a computer-based census of emigrant diaries, newspaper accounts, letters, and other documents.

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