

TRAILS HEAD HISTORY PART #4 - 1988 THROUGH 1990

Starting December 12, 1987

GENERAL MEETING HELD

A general meeting was held at 10:00 a.m. Saturday, December 12, 1987 at Loose Park Garden Center, 53rd & Wornall Road, KCMO. 24 members and guests were present, according to **Ross Marshall's** copy of **Secretary Barbara Bernauer's** minutes.

Treasurer Elaine McNabney presented a written report as follows

January 1, 1987 balance = \$377.76

March 21, 1987 balance = \$636.12

June 18, 1987 balance = \$851.12

December 10, 1987 bal. = \$345.32

President Barbara Magerl presented Certificates of Appreciation to:

Audrey Langworthy, Kansas State Senator

Barbara Burgess, OCTA member, in absentia

Larry Jochims, Kansas State Historical Society

Jean Wise, former Mayor of Leawood, in absentia

Carole Roper Park, Missouri State Legislator, 52nd District

Millie Nesbitt, Independence City Council member, in absentia

Bill Bullard, City Manager of Independence, MO

Jerry Darter, Director of Kansas City Parks Department

After reviewing 1987 chapter activities, **Barbara** turned the meeting over to **Elaine McNabney**, Nominating Committee Chair, who presented the following 1988 nominees, who were elected:

President	Ross Marshall
Vice President	John Leamon
Secretary	Mary Conrad
Treasurer	Jim Budde

BOARD MEETING

Immediately after the general meeting was adjourned, new **President Ross Marshall** called a brief "board meeting" with **John Leamon, Mary Conrad, Jim Budde, Barbara Magerl, Elaine McNabney, Polly Fowler and Ross and Jana Marshall** in attendance, per **Ross's** copy of new **Secretary Mary Conrad's** minutes.

Trails Head planners discussed having an enlarged meeting for planning, not just officers, but including appropriate committee chairs, etc.

Since the chapter needed to have bylaws, **Ross** appointed **John Leamon** chair of that committee and **Barbara** and **Polly** as members, with **Ross** as ex officio.

He also appointed **Jim Budde** to chair the chapter Missouri Signage Committee

He appointed **Mary Conrad** as editor of the chapter newsletter, since **Barbara Magerl** resigned from publishing the chapter newsletter, which she had begun in 1987 and named it "Tidings".

He also planned to appoint **Henry Boppert** as Membership Chair.

New **Preservation Chair John Leamon** said he would invite **Polly Fowler, Mary Conrad and Ross Marshall** to a first meeting.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN 1987

In addition to the many comments above, the following additional accomplishments were achieved in 1987:

Facilitated selection of Independence as OCTA National Headquarters and the chapter provided volunteer help.

Printed and distributed 12,500 children's bookmarks on the trails.

Contributed funds to the Pioneer statues and engraved floor map.

Improved chapter treasury.

Arranged placement of the first two Oregon National Historic Trail signs in Missouri

Staffed information table at October Shawnee Indian Mission Festival

Barbara Magerl produced Trails Head first two *Tidings* newsletters in July and December.

Polly Fowler offered to present the next program on how to research local records. Trails Head planners set the date of February 11, 1988 at 7:30 p.m. Elaine was to check on availability of the Mag Center.

The next "board meeting" was set for Saturday, January 9 at 10:00 a.m. at Elaine's house.

1988

BOARD MEETING HELD

The **January 9, 1988** meeting was held, but no minutes can be located, just **Ross Marshall's** notes. The only important notes were about the urgency on composing bylaws, planning for the chapter **February 11, 1988** general meeting, and the upcoming OCTA Board of Directors meeting in Independence in March.

TIDINGS NEWSLETTER

Mary Conrad published her first Tidings newsletter – a total of five issues done in 1988.

MEMBERSHIP MEETING

A membership meeting was held at **7:30 p.m. February 11, 1988** at the 2nd Presbyterian Church at 55th and Oak, KCMO. Fourteen were present as recorded by **Secretary Mary Conrad**.

Ross Marshall distributed copies of newsletters from other OCTA Chapters.

Jim Budde reported 29 members have paid dues for 1988.

Polly Fowler, a Trails Head member from Independence, spoke on how to research local records. She also presented lots of comments about the Santa Fe Trail in and about Kansas City.

OCTA MID-YEAR BOARD MTG. IN INDEPENDENCE

OCTA-Mid-year Board Meeting was held in Independence on the weekend of **March 18-20** at the Ramada Inn at I-70 and Noland Road. All of the officers of Trails Head Chapter attended.

Other Trails Head members that attended were **Elaine McNabney, Barbara Magerl, Pauline (Polly) Fowler and Peggy Smith**.

OCTA has only existed four and a half years, yet membership has reached 1300.

GENERAL MEETING

On **April 22, at 7:30 p.m.** at Whitefield Hall on the Avila College campus at 87th and Wornall Road in Kansas City, **Charlie Martin, Sr.** of Omaha, an OCTA Board Member and one of the 1982 founders of OCTA, spoke on the Pony Express. Also, some Trails Head members took **Martin and wife** to dinner since Martins had driven from Nebraska.

President Ross Marshall recently appointed **Tom Rockwood** as Trails Head Chair of Kansas Signage.

NEW OCTA NATIONAL OFFICE IN INDEPENDENCE

A new national office space for OCTA has opened in Independence at 12th and Noland Road. The former location was at OCTA first President **Greg Franzwa's** Patrice Press office in St. Louis. He resigned this past spring. Many Trails Head chapter members have volunteered time. **Elaine McNabney** has been volunteering as office manager.

A library for OCTA National Headquarters has begun. **Ross Marshall** has donated a number of books.

SANTA FE TRAIL ADVISORY COUNCIL

A Santa Fe Trail Advisory Council has been created by the National Park Service as a result of Congress designating the trail as the Santa Fe National Historic Trail last year. Trails Head member **Pauline Fowler** has been appointed to the Council. Last fall at the second Santa Fe Trail Symposium, she received an award for her work to preserve, protect, and promote the Santa Fe Trail.

TRAIL SURVEY

John Leamon and **Ross Marshall** recently spent a Saturday running the Oregon - California Trail in Pottawatomie County. Accompanied by **Barbara Burgess**, they looked at some trail sites which may be in jeopardy due to change in ownership of property. A general meeting in the fall may be planned for trail running in Pottawatomie County.

JOHNSON COUNTY HISTORICAL MUSEUM

During the **month of May**, Trails Head Chapter and Johnson County Historical Museum co-sponsored an exhibit of photographs prepared by a professor of architecture in Illinois, which shows examples of architecture currently situated along the route of the Oregon Trail. **John Leamon** of Trails Head Chapter prepared a map of the routes of the Santa Fe-Oregon-California Trails across Johnson County, KS. On **May 8**, the opening day of the exhibit, **Bob Richmond** of Kansas State Historical Society, lectured on the trails in Kansas.

TRAILS HEAD TREK I – June 18, 1988 – State Line to Lawrence

On **June 18**, Trails Head conducted its first “Trail Trek”, which was a car caravan leading to Lawrence on the Oregon-California Trail. The caravan, which we named Trail Trek I, was jointly led by **Barbara Magerl, John Leamon** and **Ross Marshall**. **Barbara Magerl** had served as OCTA Vice-President from August, 1985 to August, 1986.

Trek participants gathered at the parking lot on the west side of State Line at 122nd in Leawood and **Ross** began the day with some history of Kansas City area trails. Trail travelers basically left from Independence or Westport. On the Independence Route travelers would cross the Blue

River just north of the Red Bridge and climb up the swale in Minor Park. Then they would pass through New Santa Fe and by its cemetery and cross the State Line at about where participants had parked.

Shortly after **9:00 a.m.**, the caravan proceeded west on 123rd Street, south on Mission Road, west on 135th Street, south on Nall and west on 143rd, basically following the trail. These first trekkers stopped just west of Antioch at Blue Valley Baptist Church in Overland Park. Trails Head helped dedicate an upright sign on a post there—entitled “Santa Fe and Oregon Trails”. **Barbara Magerl** was the emcee. She introduced **Overland Park Mayor Ed Eilert**, as well as a representative of each of the Blue Valley entities that had contributed to the \$800 cost of the marker: Blue Valley Optimists, Blue Valley Community Council and Blue Valley Historical Society. One of the representatives read the text of the marker.

Inside the church, **Barbara** introduced a number of guests including **Overland Park Mayor Ed Eilert**. **Ross** then presented a certificate of appreciation to the Blue Valley Community Council, accepted by **Council member Cindy Campbell**.

The car caravan then went on west to the community of Morse, stopping at 15495 Quivira Road at a building just south of Morse Feed and Garden Center. **Barbara** introduced **Evelyn McQuitty**, president of the Blue Valley Historical Society. **Ross** presented a certificate of appreciation to the community of Morse. **John Fifield**, who owns the building at which the award was presented and who lives across the street from it, accepted the award on behalf of the community. **John’s sister is Jane Flynn**, a prominent Kansas City leader.

They proceeded on west and south into Olathe to 167th and Lone Elm Road to view the 1906 DAR stone monument marker placed at the site of Lone Elm Campground on the trail. **Ross** presented a certificate of appreciation to Johnson County in appreciation of Johnson County recently erecting the National Park Service Oregon Trail signs in Johnson County. **Phil Yaeger**, supervisor of roads for Johnson County, and originally from Lane County in Oregon, accepted the award on behalf of the county.

200 yards to the east is a driveway that leads south into a property with a house, a barn and a large shed owned by **Don Willsey**. 500 yards south on the driveway leads to Cedar Creek, which is the camping area called Lone Elm used by many wagon trains. It was probably one of the most used campsites on the Independence Route. **Ross** read some excerpts from trail diaries.

The site earlier had many trees and was called Round Grove. But gradually the stripping of the trees for firewood took its toll. When only one tree remained the name Lone Elm was used for the campsite. After 1849, the first year of the Gold Rush to California, the tree was gone. But the campsite was used for a few more years.

The caravan then stopped at a school in Gardner where **Ross** presented a certificate of appreciation to the city of Gardner. **Gardner Mayor Phyllis Thoman** accepted the award and reminded us that the logo of Gardner is “Where the Trails Divide”.

Some of the caravan took a ten-minute drive through residential Gardner to see the numerous trail signs while others began their lunch break. The group met for lunch at Highway 56 and 183rd Street at a State Highway Park that has a KDOT/KSHS upright marker on a post. It describes the trail history of the site, which is that the Independence and Westport Routes of the Santa Fe-Oregon-California Trails converged about ¼ mile north of the park and the Oregon and California Trails split away from the earlier Santa Fe Trail about a mile farther west out of necessity, so that they could head northwest.

After lunch, the caravan proceeded on west and north ending up at the Hesper Friends Church just west of 127th Street and County Line Road. On the north of the road, **Elizabeth Neis**, an

OCTA member, unveiled an Oregon Trail sign similar to the NPS Oregon Trail sign the participants had seen this morning at the departing point at 122nd and State Line Road. On the south side of the road, **Glenn and Marion Freeman**, representing Douglas County, unveiled a matching sign. These ceremonies were photographed by a reporter from the Lawrence Journal.

The final stop for the day was near the Oregon Trail plaque on a boulder at the KU campus in Lawrence at Lindley Hall on Jayhawk Boulevard. **David Dary**, professor of journalism at KU, spoke to Trails Head participants on the Oregon Trail in Lawrence.

OCTA 1988 CONVENTION

The **1988** OCTA Convention was held at the Ramada Inn in St. Joseph the second week of **August**. A good showing of Trails Head members attended the convention. **Jim Budde, Jana and Ross Marshall, Darlene and Francis Peniston, and Penny Kolling** served as bus tour guides. **Judy Budde** and **Penny Kolling** served as registration assistants. Thanks to all of them!

CHAPTER MEETING

On **August 13** Trails Head Chapter held a chapter meeting at the 1988 OCTA convention and **Bill Bullard** provided details of the progress on the planning for the National Frontier Trails Museum to be located in Independence.

TRAILS HEAD TRAIL TREK II – Sept. 10, 1988 – Topeka to Red Vermillion Crossing

The group met at the Museum of History in Topeka. 37 individuals in 15 cars participated in the trek. 10 of the travelers were from the Gateway Chapter in St. Joseph. **Tom Rockwood** was wagon master with **John Leamon** in assistance. **Jim Budde** drove the last car.

The assistant director of the museum spoke at both the museum and the Potawatomi Indian School Museum next door.

Upon leaving Topeka, the trekkers traveled close to the route of the Union Ferry Branch of the Oregon-California Trail. The branch intercepts the main trail at the east edge of Rossville. Along the way, the trail followers stopped at Uniontown, now a ghost town, where **Barbara Burgess** spoke. At Rossville, a certificate of appreciation was presented to the City of Rossville.

At St. Marys, **Judy Bork** of the St. Marys Museum spoke to the group while they lunched in Riverside Park. A certificate of appreciation was also presented to the City of St. Marys. Many also took time to browse in the St. Marys Museum and to visit nearby trail markers.

Finally, the trek moved to sites near the trail crossing of the Red Vermillion River. These points of interest included the Vieux Cemetery, the cholera cemetery and the Big Elm. **Barbara Burgess** spoke again at the Big Elm.

From that point on, the trekkers were on their own for the return trip.

PARTNERSHIP FOR THE NATIONAL TRAILS SYSTEM

On **September 28-29**, **Vice President John Leamon** attended the first meeting in Hartland, WI of what later became the Partnership for the National Trails System. It was sponsored by the National Park Service and the agenda was to discuss problems and solutions for the management of the National Scenic and National Historic Trails of the National Trails System.

ANNUAL MEETING

Trails Head's Annual Meeting was held **Thursday, November 10, 1988 at 7:00 p.m.** at the Second Presbyterian Church at 315 East 55th in Kansas City, MO.

Election of Officers: **President - Ross Marshall** (2nd year)
 Vice President - John Leamon (2nd year)
 Secretary - Elaine McNabney
 Treasurer - Jim Budde (2nd year)

Pauline Fowler and **Jane Mallinson** have been appointed to the Santa Fe Trail Advisory Council, confirmed by the U.S. Department of Interior.

1989

NATIONAL FRONTIER TRAILS CENTER

In **February**, the construction contract for the National Frontier Trails Center has been officially awarded to the Ed Moore Construction Co. of Lenexa, KS for \$1,521,400. Construction will start right away. The schedule is very tight and the **March 1, 1990** opening date must be considered tentative.

Gifts of artifacts will be essential to NFTC, but perhaps should be delayed until this fall so that donations can be examined by the museum staff.

Ross Marshall has been the official coordinator for OCTA concerning the new Center.

A central exhibit will be a 20-minute orientation movie. The movie will be a major expense and liberal foundation support will be essential.

A local production company has been interviewed that has made films of the Santa Fe, Oregon and California trails and also Plains films. Hopefully, the film can be made quickly and inexpensively.

The new address for the Center will be 318 West Pacific.

MAPPING WORKSHOP

On **Saturday March 4, 1989** **John Leamon** conducted a workshop on the specifics of trail mapping at the South Branch of the Kansas City Missouri Public Libraries. **John** has promised a second workshop for those that were unable to attend.

MAHAFFIE FARMSTEAD DIG

This past summer **1988**, the Kansas State Historical Society and the City of Olathe worked together to excavate two areas behind the Mahaffie Farmstead, which was a stagecoach stop on the Santa Fe Trail from 1865 to 1869. Trails Head member **Mary Conrad** dug throughout the 20-day project, and Trails Head member **Peggy Smith** participated for a couple days.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

At the last Trails Head Executive Committee meeting, **Henry Boppart**, chair of the membership committee, reported the committee (**Penny Kolling, Donna Bullard and Henry Boppart**) met **January 21** at the Antioch Library. The membership committee is becoming more active and will accept any volunteer help.

Treasurer Jim Budde reports that Trails Head has 47 paid memberships, some single and some double.

GATEWAY JOINT MEETING

April 8 marked the combined outing of Trails Head and Gateway Chapters when members of the two chapters met at Bell Hall and toured Fort Leavenworth. **John Reichly** led the tour which began at the Fort Museum. Then Bell Hall was visited, followed by the post chapel. Santa Fe Trail ruts were visited as were quarters of many officers who later became prominently known, plus the disciplinary barracks, ending with the cemetery. **Joan and John Kennedy** from Garden Plain participated, from west of Wichita, who also were with Trails Head Trek II, and **Carol and Vern Osborne** also came from St. George, Kansas.

MET MAPPING WORKSHOP

John Leamon on **March 4** conducted a MET (Mapping Emigrant Trails) workshop with Trails Head and on **March 7** did the same with Gateway Chapter.

A hearty THANK YOU was extended to **Morris Werner**, a long-distance Trails Head member who lives in Nashville, Tennessee. **Morris** has given Trails Head all the “working” copies of 7.5 minute topographical maps needed for the OCTA mapping program. Not only that, but he has plotted on them the locations of the trails as the routes were recorded during the early GLO surveys of Kansas. He has done the same for Gateway to assist Gateway’s work on the St. Joe Road, thereby giving both chapters a big boost.

NATIONAL FRONTIER TRAILS CENTER

Excavation and grading for the new building is 90% complete. Unforeseen mill rubble, unmapped footings, tunnels and plumbing systems were exposed as well as two empty 35,000 gallon fuel oil tanks had to be dealt with.

Masonry is about 75% done. **March 1, 1990** opening still appears possible.

MAPPING COMMITTEE WORK

On **March 11**, **Ross Marshall, Henry Boppert and John Leamon** decided to “run trail”. They met at **Ross’s** and headed west for Lawrence. Their objective was to give MET (Mapping of Emigrant Trails) Program a dry run, as well as to have a “fun day”.

They followed the Oregon Trail through Lawrence, Kansas and points west with the objective of tracing it to Topeka. But just before the day’s end, they came upon the highlight of their trip – RUTS!!!! - located 1.3 miles west of the Douglas/Shawnee County line on the south side of U.S. 40 and just north of I-70. It was all by accident, too.

The three guys were trying to locate a farmer who claimed to have trail ruts on his farm. In doing so, they stopped to ask two men along the highway. They turned and said “If you want to see some Oregon Trail ruts just look back up there”. And sure enough, there were three of the most beautiful pristine ruts one could hope to see east of California Hill! They are only about a hundred yards or so long, but they are a magnificent sight for trail trampers in eastern Kansas!

Written by John Leamon

TRAILS HEAD TREK III - June 10, 1989 –Ft. Osage to Independence to New Santa Fe

13 cars containing 27 participants met at William Chrisman High School on Noland Road and Highway 24 in Independence. At **9:00 a.m.**, attendees departed and trekked through Jackson County. **Wagonmaster John Leamon** had prepared a trek itinerary so each vehicle in the caravan would have directions along the way. Even so, three or four vehicles became separated from the group about midday. **Polly Fowler** provided a history of sites at many of the stops.

The trekkers traveled east on Highway 24 and went north from Buckner. After about a mile, the cars stopped at the top of the hill. 100 yards or so to the east was where George Sibley began his 1825 Survey of the Santa Fe Trail. The caravan proceeded on north a couple of miles to Fort Osage and toured the visitor center and restored fort buildings.

Participants then went back to Independence and north to Sugar Creek to the Independence Landing. A plaque on a boulder there had been placed in 1983 when OCTA held its first convention in Independence.

The trekkers then went south on River Boulevard (which was the trail), past the Truman Home and then east to downtown Independence, ending up at the site of the National Frontier Trails Center under construction.

Lunch break was at Santa Fe Trail Park at about 30th and Santa Fe Trail Street.

The caravan then continued on south along the trail to 66th and Blue Ridge at the Rice-Tremonti Home and Aunt Sophie's cabin. The vehicles continued on south to Cave Spring Park on Gregory Blvd., past the Schumacher house on 93rd Street, past Bannister Mall and into Minor Park on Red Bridge Road to walk in the large trail swale there.

The final stop was at New Santa Fe near 122nd and State Line Road. Everyone then departed separately at about 3:30.

OTTAWA UNIVERSITY TEACHERS TOUR

In **June**, a course "The Issues and Challenges of the Built Environment" was offered by Ottawa University for teachers. **June 22** was devoted to an awareness of the historic trails in the Kansas City area. **Mary Conrad** had planned the day and filled in for **John Leamon**, who was called out of town to give an overview of the Kansas City historic trail network.

The teachers boarded buses for a local tour. At Minor Park, they began at the bottom of the swale and walked to the top. This was the hit of the day! They were amazed that swales could still be seen more than a century later. Then the buses drove slowly by the Watts Mill site. A tour of the Alexander Majors home and its blacksmith shop completed the morning.

After lunch, the teachers took a walking tour of Westport. **Doran Cart**, museum consultant for Missouri Town 1855, put on a one-man show as a Westport trader of the mid-1800s at Pioneer Park, with typical gear and belongings of trail trekkers.

Upon their return to Bishop Miege High School, **Elaine McNabney** performed a teaching drama of a 12-year-old girl traveling westward with her family. Those 120 teachers now have a more personal perspective about the historic trails in the Kansas City area.

PIONEER WOMAN STATUE

OCTA and the Cal-NV-Hawaii Chapter of OCTA both have decided to make donations to the fund for the Pioneer Woman statue to be placed at the National Frontier Trails Center. In addition, the executive committee of Trails Head voted to donate \$50.00 to the fund. The statue is nearly completed and will be stored until it is installed.

NATIONAL FRONTIER TRAILS CENTER

Construction at the National Frontier Trails Center is looking good. Brickwork on the warehouses is 90% complete. The projected completion date is early March. The Center is targeted for occupancy on **March 17, 1990**. OCTA has heard that the State of Oregon is planning to build four new Oregon Trail centers!

TRUMAN LIBRARY EXHIBITS

Dr. Ben Zobrist has re-assembled his committee on exhibits which also includes **Dr. Niel Johnson** of the Truman Library, **Dr. Larsen** of UMKC and **Polly Fowler**. The NFTC film to be shown continuously in the theater will be produced by Kaw Valley Films, Inc. of Shawnee. The \$35,000 budget is fairly small but archived films are already available on the Santa Fe Trail, the Oregon-California Trail, the Pony Express and the Flint Hills.

OCTA 1989 COVENTION

In the second week of August, the 7th OCTA National Convention was held in Boise, Idaho. **Jim Budde** was elected treasurer and **Ross Marshall** was elected vice-president. **President Tom Hunt** complimented **John Leamon** on the MET mapping work that has been done in the greater Kansas City area.

NATIONAL FRONTIER TRAILS CENTER

Dan Holt was named the first Director of the National Frontier Trails Center on **October 1**. He recently had been Director of Liberty Memorial Museum and Archives in Kansas City.

Dan graduated from Hoyt, Kansas Rural High School in 1955. He earned a B.A. in history and political science from Washburn University in Topeka in 1963 and an M.A. in history from Emporia State University in 1970.

CHAPTER MAPS

Trails Head plans to reprint the Johnson County folding map of the Trails which was printed originally about a year and a half ago. A Jackson County folding map of the trails is being prepared by **John Leamon** and **Polly Fowler**. **Dr. Oscar** and **Dr. Eleanor Eggers** have donated \$100 toward the Johnson County reprinting project.

TRAILS HEAD TREK IV - September 16, 1989 to Arrow Rock

Unlike previous chapter trail treks, Trails Head decided to use rented vans to transport the participants. The chapter used 15 and a 12-passenger vans plus a private car to accommodate the 29 attendees. A free-will donation was solicited to defray the costs.

Participants met at the Sermon Center parking lot at Truman and Noland Roads in Independence and departed at **9:45 a.m.**

Ross Marshall brought three walkie-talkies which were a big help in keeping everyone informed among the three vehicles. This was the first time Trails Head trek planners used them and would continue.

Most of the history and commentary along the way was led by **John Leamon** and **Ross**.

On the way to Arrow Rock, the trek stopped at Sappington Cemetery which is located about six miles southwest of Arrow Rock on County Road TT. After that, the vehicles stopped at the house built by Dr. Sappington in 1849, now owned by **Dr. John R. and Mariana Lawrence**.

The modern trekkers arrived in Arrow Rock at **12:30** and had Lunch at the J. Huston Tavern.

The diners left Arrow Rock at **2:15**, somewhat later than planned, because lunch took a long time. The trekkers followed the trail to the northwest, going by the Neff Tavern and stopping at Marshall. The vehicles picked up the trail and headed back toward home along Highway 24.

The trekkers stopped briefly at the Civil War battlefield and Anderson House in Lexington.

HARMON PARK

A swale, documented by **Craig Crease** and **John Leamon** at Harmon Park in Prairie Village, was preserved by a vote of the City Council to purchase the land as additional city parkland and named the new land Santa Fe Trail Park.

NATIONAL FRONTIER TRAILS CENTER

The National Frontier Trails Center construction continues well and should be essentially on schedule **next March, 1990**. The Opening Week Ceremonies are being planned and will be special. Aside from the opening of the Center, dedicating the location of OCTA national headquarters will also take place. **Millie Nesbitt** is chair of the planning committee.

At the Trails Head Annual Meeting at Second Presbyterian Church on 55th in Kansas City on **November 16, 1989**, the two-year terms of officers expired and the following were elected as nominated by the nominating committee consisting of **Chair Barbara Magerl, Peggy Smith and Polly Fowler**:

President - Dr. James Lee
Vice President – Ona Gieschen
Secretary – Sylvia Mooney
Treasurer – Henry Boppart

Ross Marshall presented a slide show of the activities at the Boise Convention in August.

Then **Dan Holt**, Director of the new Trails Center, gave a review of the progress of the construction. A week of grand opening events will occur the last week of March. One day each will be devoted to the Oregon Trail, California Trail and Santa Fe Trail. The grand opening of the Center will be on **March 23, 1990**.

1990

RICE-TREMONTI HOUSE

Sylvia Mooney, founder of the Cave Spring Association, now is promoting restoration of the Rice Home on 66th and Blue Ridge Boulevard in Raytown. The Rice-Tremonti Association needs to raise \$300,000 to pay off the mortgage before restoration can begin.

MET MAPPING EVENT

John Leamon, on **February 26**, presented a lecture about MET to the Shawnee Chapter of the Kansas Anthropological Association in Topeka. Mapping the Emigrant Trails (MET) is a continuing program of OCTA and chapters have the primary responsibility because they are on the trails. **John** has been directing the MET efforts of Trails Head Chapter.

NATIONAL FRONTIER TRAILS CENTER OPENS

The National Frontier Trails Center and OCTA Headquarters Grand Opening was held **Saturday, March 24**. Some of the highlights were as follows.

9:30 am - The Trails Center ribbon cutting.
10:30 am - A Recognition Brunch at Chiefs Arrowhead Club
3:30 pm – OCTA Headquarters Dedication
7:00 pm – Beginning of Ceremony for Dedication of Pioneer Woman statue

8:00 pm – Unveiling of the Pioneer Woman statue.
Reception followed the unveiling ceremony

Sunday, March 25

9:00 am to 4:30 pm – OCTA mid-year board meeting at OCTA headquarters.

Monday, March 26 - Oregon Trail Day

9:00 am – Raising of flags

9:30 am – Slide presentation “Oregon Trail”

1:30 pm – Presentation on “Westport and the Western Trails” and
“Trail Blazer Jim Bridger”

2:45 pm – Presentation of the history of the Rice-Tremonti Home

3:30 pm – Presentation on Cave Spring and the Trails

All day – Exhibit of Oregon City historical items

At Harry S Truman Library:

7:00 pm - Remarks by Merrill Mattes

- Stage play “Oregon or Bust”

- Reception follows

All Day – Exhibit of items belonging to Harry Truman’s grandfather Solomon Young
when he carried freight on the trails

At Snickerdoodles Store on Independence Square

All day – Periodic showings of video “Historic Oregon City”

Tuesday, March 27 - California Trail Day

At Trails Center:

9:00 am – Flag ceremony

10:00 am – Presentation “Women and Westward Journey” by Jean Watson

2:00 am – “The California Trail” by Tom Hunt

Reception follows hosted by California-Nevada Chapter of OCTA

At Truman High School

7:00 pm – Flag Ceremony

“California Ho” – one-hour musical

Reception follows, hosted by Cal-NV and Trails Head Chapters of OCTA

Wednesday – March 28, 1990 - Santa Fe Trail Day

At Trails Center

9:00 am – Flag raising

10:00 am – Pageant “Letters sent from the Santa Fe Trail”

At William Chrisman High School Auditorium

7:30 pm – Mexican flag ceremony

Blue and Gold Singers

Presentation of “Susan McGoffin”

Reception follows, hosted by Independence Young Matrons

WATTS MILL EVENT

On **Saturday, May 19** at noon, about 25 Trails Head members and other guests gathered at Watts Mill on 103rd Street just east of the state line to hear three speakers about the Watts Mill site history.

The first speaker was Trails Head **Vice President Ona Gieschen**. The mill was built in 1832 as the Fitzhugh Mill. Anthony B. Watts purchased the mill in 1850 and it was dismantled in 1942 to salvage metal for the war effort. It was finally demolished in 1949.

Jim O'Shea, a landscape architect for the Kansas City Parks and Recreation, spoke about the plans to develop the site as a historical park, maybe with a visitor center. (which did not happen)

William Crotty, a longtime resident of the area, spoke about his family having worked at the mill in 1917 and 1918. He mentioned the Watts house was located on the west side of Indian Creek near the mill and the modern shopping center. Jim Bridger's house was located on the east side of Indian Creek.

Note: Some mention was made of this mill being a key site on the western trails particularly in the 1843 Great Migration to Oregon – which it was not!

At about **2:00**, the Watts Mill attendees car caravanned and met at the DAR marker at 80th and Santa Fe Drive in downtown Overland Park. Also on the agenda was the 30th anniversary of Overland Park and the dedication of the new plaza just north of the marker.

Barbara Magerl introduced **Overland Park Mayor Ed Eilert**, as well as several DAR and trail leaders.

Jane Mallinson, member of DAR and OCTA, spoke on the history of DAR for the marking of the trails. The first Santa Fe Trail DAR marker was placed in Kansas in 1906 and finally a total of 97 were placed in Kansas.

Trails Head **Secretary Sylvia Mooney** spoke about the history of the Cave Spring site and the 1846 Santa Fe Trail diary account of Susan Shelby McGoffin that mentioned the site. She also discussed the Jesse Barnes house just east of the site. Jesse owned Cave Spring in trail days.

OCTA 1990 CONVENTION

The **1990** OCTA Convention was held in Omaha **August 8-11**. Trails Head members who attended were **Bill and Donna Bullard, Jim and Judy Budde, Mary Conrad, Lois Daniel, Charlene and Paul Duncan, Ona Gieschen, Bob Hamilton, James and Jean Lee, Barbara Magerl, Jana and Ross Marshall, Elaine McNabney, Jeanne Miller, Sylvia Mooney, Darlene and Francis Peniston, Carolyn and Harold Smith, Peggy Smith and Dorothy and Ken Tompkins.**

At that convention, Trails Head Chapter asked if it also could serve as a chapter of the Santa Fe Trail Association, since there was not a Santa Fe Trail chapter in the Kansas City area. The request was turned down because OCTA chapter members must also be a national OCTA member. The OCTA Board considered it carefully, and first voted "yes", but finally voted it down because they felt this precedence could hurt OCTA memberships in western state chapters.

JIM LEE'S WIFE PASSES

Jean Lee, wife of **Trails Head President Jim Lee**, passed away of heart problems on **September 10** at Shawnee Mission Medical Center. **Jean**, a former president of a chapter of P.E.O., was very active in a variety of community associations and has been a very gracious hostess to Trails Head executive committee meetings numerous times.

NATIONAL FRONTIER TRAILS CENTER FRIENDS

The Friends of the National Frontier Trails Center was established to provide support for the Trails Center. The Friends will meet the third Thursday every other month at the Trails Center.

TRAILS HEAD TREK V – Saturday, October 13, 1990 – Lawrence to Topeka

21 people began the trek in two vans and two more people joined the excursion at midday. While most left from Indian Springs Shopping Center in Kansas City, Kansas, the trek officially began in Lawrence at Capitol Federal Savings, located at Iowa and Harvard Streets.

Wagonmaster John Leamon provided commentary for all through the use of radios in each vehicle. The caravan followed the trail west through town and onto Highway 40, which is essentially the historic trail route to Topeka.

The caravan turned north to Lecompton to visit the Lane Museum. On the way, **John** pointed out the site of Ft. Titus, a small battle site in 1856 between pro and anti-slavers. The trek returned south and then west on Highway 40 to Big Springs where the trail split, with a branch going around the south side of Topeka to the Kansas River ford west of Topeka at Rossville. The main trail went into Topeka and crossed the Kanas River at Pappan's Ferry.

The modern trekkers stopped southeast of Tecumseh at **Leo Pellant's** house that has large ruts in his front yard.

In Tecumseh, the caravan stopped at a stone marker placed in the 1920s at 4th and Tecumseh Road.

The trek entered Topeka from the east on 2nd Street near the Kansas River, passed several Oregon Trail markers, and stopped at the site of Pappan's Ferry at Crane and Harrison Streets.

The caravan continued west on I-70 to the Pottawatomie Baptist Mission, completed in 1848, which is located beside the Kansas Museum of History.

The trekkers returned to Kansas City via I-70.

TRAILS HEAD MEMBERSHIP

Trails Head members in 1990 were **Wilbur Zink, Harry B. Robinson, Stephen and Deshay Rust, Francis and Darlene Peniston, Ona Gieschen, Jim and Judy Budde, Marie Blackburn, Bill and Donna Bullard, Eric Fowler, Pauline Fowler, Neil and Verna Johnson, Jeanne Miller, Dr. Don and Barbara Potts, Robert and Fern Svehla, Ben Weir, Pearl Wilcox, Evelyn Barlow, Mildred Beach, Barbara Bernauer, Lois Daniel, Michael Fickel, Bob and Betty Hamilton, Frederick Hann, Anne May Hodge, Albert and Esther Kreek, John and Jean Leamon, Kendall and Elaine McNabney, Sylvia Mooney, Charles Smith, Kenneth and Dorothy Tompkins, Harold and Carolyn Smith, Keith Smith, Jane Mallinson, Morris Werner, Elizabeth Neis, John and Joan Kennedy, John Means, Mary Conrad, Rodney Staab, Gary and Nancy Bjorge, James Merchant and Loyola Caron, Priscilla Marsh, Larry and Alice Phister, Chuck and Diane Taylor, Naomi Johnson, John and Phyllis Mann, Lee and Dorothy Kroh, Dr. Joe Kyner, Ross and Jana Marshall, Dr. G. C. Michel, Penny Kolling, Henry Boppart, Charlene Duncan, Diane Hinshaw, Barbara and Howard Magerl, Dr. James Lee, Asher and Audrey Langworthy, Peggy Smith, Vern & Carol Osborne, Mildred Beach, Roy and Laberta Pasley, and Robert Ripley. Total of 63 memberships representing about 87 people.**

ANNUAL MEETING

On **November 8 at 7:30 p.m.**, the Trails Head Annual Meeting was held at the new National Frontier Trails Center in Independence.

At that meeting, **Ross Marshall**, chair of the nominating committee, including members **Jim Budde**, **Harold Smith**, **Pauline Fowler**, presented a slate of officers for 1991. Elected were:

President - Bob Hamilton

Vice President - John Leamon

Secretary - Judy Budde.

Treasurer - Henry Boppert

John Leamon reviewed Trails Head **October 13** Trek V to Lawrence and Topeka.

Jane Mallinson, president of the new Friends of the National Frontier Trails Center, reviewed the opening of the Trails Center and the founding of the Friends, which has about 400 members.

The NFTC new movie was then watched, which presents a national view of the trails similar to what the displays and exhibits also do in the Center. The film includes the Lewis and Clark 1803-06 expedition, the Pike expedition and the 1821 opening of the Santa Fe Trail, missionaries and trappers that went west, and also the Oregon and California Trails.

Jerry Roy, a planning coordinator with the Johnson County Public Library, spoke on the history of Lone Elm Campground at 167th and Lone Elm Road. The site contained groves of trees and a creek which made it a natural choice for a campground, first by the Santa Fe Trail, then the Oregon and California Trails. The last tree was cut by campers about 1850. The site was part of a farm settled by **Newton Ainsworth** after Kansas Territory was opened in 1854. The campsite was still used during the Civil War in the early 1860s. Roy voiced the need for an archaeological investigation at this site (which would happen in 2002 and 2003).

In **December**, **Bob Hamilton** submitted his resignation as president. The bylaws provide for the vice president to assume the duties, but **John Leamon** requested that he remain vice president and that we elect **Bill Bullard** as our new president, which is also allowed by Trails Head bylaws. Trails Head elected **Bill** as new chapter president after John Leamon was temporarily president just to conduct the election.

End of Part 2 of Trails Head History - 1988 thru 1990