

## TRAILS HEAD HISTORY PART #3 - 1991 THROUGH 1995

### 1991

#### **JOINT MEETING WITH FRIENDS OF NTFC**

On **April 18, 1991** Trails Head Chapter and Friends of the National Frontier Trails Center (that now has about 425 members since their founding last year), held a joint meeting at the Center.

Following a business meeting by the Friends, **Kathleen Tuohey** gave a presentation about the restoration of the Pitcher Cemetery at 33<sup>rd</sup> and Blue Ridge Boulevard in Independence.

Then Trails Head had a business meeting. **President Bill Bullard** asked for a report from the committee he established about how to increase membership and event attendance and the issue of electing a board of directors. He had appointed **Henry Boppert** as chair and **Jim Lee, Polly Fowler** and **Ross Marshall** as members. Their conclusions were not to have a board of directors for the small chapter, expand committees, have meetings at different locations, have at least five meetings a year, maybe have more joint meetings and publish the meeting plans at least a month ahead of the meeting time.

Trails Head **Vice President John Leamon** is recovering well from a recent mild stroke.

#### **NATIONAL FRONTIER TRAILS CENTER**

When the National Frontier Trails Center opened a year ago, **Dan Holt** was Director and **Jerry Motsinger** was the archivist. When **Dan** left to become director of the Eisenhower Presidential Library in Abilene, Jerry became acting Director of the Trails Center. **Motsinger** left recently, which left both positions open. Trails Head **President Bill Bullard** has been hired by the City of Independence to fill both positions and to oversee the Center until the directorship is filled.

The Friends of the National Frontier Trails Center is sponsoring the publication of a book which will be a complete history of the Center, beginning with the history of the structure, which was the Waggoner-Gates Milling Company in the 1800s. The hardback book probably will cost around \$40 when published.

#### **MRO CHAPTER ORGANIZING**

A third planning meeting for the organization of a local chapter of the Santa Fe Trail Association will be held **May 16**. Officers will be elected and work on bylaws will continue.

#### **MERRILL MATTES COLLECTION**

Author and historian Merrill Mattes donated to OCTA his personal collection of 1400 books on western history and historic trails. The collection is now archived at NFTC as a permanent loan from OCTA. 175 attended the private opening of the collection on **Friday evening, April 5**. Then the next morning another 147 attended the official dedication. Merrill Mattes was present for these opening ceremonies and was interviewed on channel 19.

#### **TRAIL TREK VI – May 18, 1991, Independence to Bartleson Grave at 151<sup>st</sup> Street**

Trails Head Trek VI was planned by **Eric Fowler** and **Joanne Eakin** as a commemoration of the Bidwell-Bartleson Party's trip to California.

Trek participants met at **10:00 a.m.** at the site of the former Nebraska House Hotel at Maple Avenue and Liberty Street in Independence. It was also called the Jones House, owned by Lewis Jones, built in 1841 at that location because the Independence Route of the Oregon-California-Santa Fe Trail went north to south on Liberty Street and right by the Courthouse.

The Washington House hotel was one block east on the northwest corner of Maple Avenue and Main Street. The car caravan left from there and went to the old home site of Smallwood Noland, the proprietor of the Washington House, near 23<sup>rd</sup> and Forest. It currently is still a private residence and the landowners have leased the surrounding acreage for farming.

Smallwood Noland had extensive landholdings surrounding his house. A large pond was on his property. In the 1849 or 1850, Noland built a large addition to the house as he became more prosperous. Smallwood was a slaveholder. He did not appreciate Mormons and actively pursued driving Mormons out of Missouri.

There were two individuals with the name of Smallwood Noland. They were of distant relation. Smallwood V. Noland was a politician who went to Oregon and then returned to Holt County, Missouri.

From the Noland residence, the trek then followed the general route of the Santa Fe and Oregon Trail from 33<sup>rd</sup> and Chrysler, to the Rice-Tremonti Home at 66<sup>th</sup> and Blue Ridge in Raytown. This historic home was the home of **Archibald Rice**, the great-grandfather of **Joanne Eakin**, one of the trek leaders that day.

**Barbara Tatham**, the membership chair of the Rice-Tremonti Home Association, provided a tour of the home. After the tour, attendees had a picnic in the yard while listening to further information about the Rices and the house. The house was the home of Archibald and his second wife Sally. They bought the site and built a log house in 1836. Archibald had left his oldest son in charge of the orchards at another location when he moved to this property. The Rice couple built this house in 1844.

The architectural style of the Home can be termed carpenter gothic. In the 1920s or 1930s, the dormers were added to the front and rear of the house by **Louis and Lois Tremonti**. The house originally had two parlors, one of which was the company parlor and the other the family parlor.

The Rice farm became a popular camping site for trail emigrants. The trail turned alongside the property. Between 1906 and 1922, the house and land was owned by **Judge Joseph M. Lowe**. He was the first President of the National Old Trails Association and was instrumental in supporting the DAR in marking the Santa Fe Trail across Missouri.

Then in 1930, **Dr. Tremonti** and his wife bought the home and two adjoining lots.

In 1979, the city of Raytown wanted to buy the property, but **Mrs. Tremonti** was doubtful that she could continue to live in the house so she declined a sale to the city. Now the property has been appraised at \$370,000, as the area is zoned for commercial use on Blue Ridge. The Friends of the Rice-Tremonti Home Association has been raising funds for acquisition. (*this acquisition was completed soon after*) Restoration will occur in stages.

Upon finishing lunch, the trekkers crossed into Kansas. The third stop was at Santa Fe Commons at a block and a half south of 79<sup>th</sup> Street on Santa Fe Drive in downtown Overland Park. The trekkers were told that this was probably the location of Sapling Grove, a campsite on the early trails. (*it was not – Sapling Grove is at 82<sup>nd</sup> and Grant, a mile west of here and was the campsite for the 1841 Bidwell-Bartleson Party, the first wagon train to California*)

When **William Strang** was looking for a route for the construction of his interurban rail line, he followed the Westport Route of the Santa Fe-Oregon-California Trail southwest from the

1903 flood disaster site in the west bottoms area, following the higher ground to what is now downtown Overland Park. He bought this land area and built his Strang Line out to it.

The fourth and final stop of the trek was at **John Bartleson's** homestead and gravesite, which is 0.2 mile west of Holmes Road on 151<sup>st</sup> Street. There are several family graves there, one of which is John Bartleson who died in 1848 at 61 years of age.

At the gravesite, **Joanne Eakin** gave the history of the **1841 Bidwell-Bartleson party**.

After the Kemper family purchased several hundred acres here, the original log cabin stood in disrepair until the 1930s. Then the overseer of the property removed the logs but left the chimney standing. At one point, workers planned to clear the rubble of a pile of rocks. When someone noticed that tombstones were lying flat under the pile of rocks, Mr. Kemper asked the workers to restore this small family cemetery.

**Ted Chester**, owner of the property, was a very informative host.

The car caravan headed back to Independence from here.

In the **July 18, 1991** issue of the Kansas City Star on page 11, a story was published about OCTA having created a four-man committee to join the current efforts to pressure Congress to grant National Historic Trail status to the California and the Pony Express Trails. OCTA Board member **Charles Martin Jr.** of Richmond, Indiana and OCTA **Vice President Ross Marshall** of Merriam, Kansas were the two mentioned. **Ross** was quoted as saying "We are not trying to form a kingdom. Our interest is very basic and very local in nature. We want to preserve historic trails, the documents and anything associated with western emigration".

In **President Bill Bullard's** Trails Head annual report for the **1991** Sacramento OCTA Convention in **August**, he said the chapter has 64 members, a bank account of \$775, 40% of chapter members are members of Friends of the National Frontier Trails Center and 36% are members of the new Missouri River Outfitters Chapter of SFTA.

### **SFTA-MISSOURI RIVER OUTFITTERS CHAPTER FORMED**

The new chapter of SFTA for northwestern Missouri and northeastern Kansas has been formed after several months of planning and meetings, led by **Jane Mallinson**. The group has passed a set of bylaws and elected a slate of officers. The name will be *Missouri River Outfitters Chapter*.

### **TRAIL TREK VII – June 8, 1991 – Pony Express (joint with Gateway Chapter)**

On **Saturday, June 8** several Trails Head members joined with members of the Gateway Chapter and St. Joseph Archaeological Society **at 9:30 a.m.** to travel the Pony Express Trail in Kansas.

**Mike Fisher**, director of the St. Joseph Pony Express dig, gave a brief history of the Pony Express site and showed the dig site outside.

The car caravan left the Pony Express Museum in St. Joseph **at 9:30 a.m.** and then proceeded west to Marysville.

In 1837 the land where St. Joseph is located became a part of Missouri through the Platte Purchase. In 1843, a man by the name of **John Lemon** became the first owner of the property where the Pony Express Museum is. In 1844, **John Patee** became the owner. Buildings were built on the site by various owners. In 1946, the St. Joseph Chamber of Commerce bought the building and site. In 1959 St. Joseph Museum bought the building.

12 of the 18 people that had gathered, joined in a car caravan and departed for Marysville on Highway 36, called the “Pony Express Highway”. The modern trekkers stopped at the Pony Express Barn in Marysville at 106 South 8<sup>th</sup> Street, which may be the only Pony Express home station still existing. **Mary Conrad** spoke about the history of the Museum, using information from the Kansas Historical Quarterly.

The caravan proceeded northwest to the Hollenberg Pony Express Station east of Hanover. **Duane Durst**, curator of this state-owned site, addressed the group as participants had lunch.

Past this site ran the Oregon-California Trail. The farm was owned by **Gerat Hollenberg**, who built a two-story house in 1857 or 1858, which became the Pony Express station in 1860. It is said to be the only unaltered Pony Express station which remains in its original location.

After lunch, attendees took a walking tour of the site and saw a dig that had just started a couple of weeks before by the Kansas State Historical Society and the Kansas Anthropological Association. **Bill Lees**, the archaeologist in charge of the dig, gave a tour and said that the station foundation would be restored also.

The group then went to the Hanover High School where archaeologist **Virginia Wulfkuhle** showed the lab to process the recovered items from the dig.

Trek participants then returned to St. Joseph and Kansas City.

#### **TRAILS HEAD JOINT MEETING WITH MRO**

On **June 27, 1991** at the National Frontier Trails Center, Trails Head had a joint meeting with the new Santa Fe Trail Association chapter which will be called Missouri River Outfitters Chapter. The entire meeting was devoted to working on MRO bylaws. MRO did not record this as a joint meeting, but the Trails Head newsletter did report this June meeting as a joint gathering, likely to encourage attendance. Trails Head had explored the possibility of becoming a dual SFTA-OCTA chapter, but that idea had been rejected by the OCTA Board. Trails Head wanted MRO to become a successful SFTA chapter. Numerous Trails Head members were attending the early MRO meetings and were becoming members. The following is a list of attendees at the June 27 meeting: Independence Mayor **Bill Carpenter**, **Mean Shirley**, **Victor Callahan**, **Jim Lee**, **Dorothy Wahren Brock**, **Rory Wahren Brock**, **Florence Tait**, **Neal Tait**, **Glenna Sours**, **Sandra Slusher**, **Roger Slusher**, **Bill Bullard**, **Pauline Fowler**, **Mary Conrad**, **Jim Burruss**, **Ona Gieschen**, **Eric Fowler**, **Mike Duncan**, **Jane Mallinson**, **Ann Carter Mallinson**, and **Lou Schumacher**. All except the first four in this listing became charter members of MRO. Of these MRO charter members, at least 10 were Trails Head members. **Bill Bullard** was the 1991 Trails Head president, and **Jim Lee** had been the 1990 Trails Head president.

#### **TRAIL TREK VIII – October 19, 1991 – River Crossings in Kansas City**

On **Saturday, October 19**, twenty-plus trekkers gathered at the National Frontier Trails Center in Independence. **Ross Marshall** provided an overview of plans for the day, plus commentary about the significance of the sites to be visited. The tour would follow the Independence-Westport Road, which is not a national historic trail, but has local importance in Kansas City area history. The group would also follow the road to Byram’s Ford as well.

The first stop of the car caravan was at the small Hill Cemetery in Hill Park near 20<sup>th</sup> and Willow, which is adjacent to the Independence-Westport Road. **Polly Fowler** spoke about the

cemetery and that Frank James, Jesse's older brother, and his wife Ann Ralston James are buried there.

The caravan then went two blocks south to the nearby Rock Creek Crossing in Rotary Park at 24<sup>th</sup> and Westport Road, where **Ross Marshall** and **Eric Fowler** spoke about the Independence-Westport Road crossing there. Battle of Westport soldiers in 1864 also crossed there on their way to Byram's Ford on the Big Blue River just north of 63<sup>rd</sup> Street.

The caravan made its way south to Pitcher Cemetery at Blue Ridge Cut-off at about 33<sup>rd</sup> Street in Phil Roberts Park. **Ross Marshall** spoke about early local wagon traffic between Westport and Independence. And **Kathleen Touhey** presented the history of the cemetery. Until a couple of years ago, the cemetery had been abandoned and forgotten. She had been the main organizer and laborer among the volunteers involved in the extensive project to clean it up.

The half-acre cemetery was the Pitcher family burial ground set aside in 1834, or before, by Thomas Pitcher who had a two-story mansion nearby. The clean-up also involved up-righting some grave markers, digging up some that were partly or completely buried and clearing weeds, vines, trees and garbage.

Next stop was at 27<sup>th</sup> and Topping where we hiked southeast down to the Blue River Crossing in Blue Valley Park on the Independence to Westport Road, which had been opened right after Westport's founding in the mid-1830s. There were stone remains of an early bridge at the crossing. Back at 27<sup>th</sup> and Topping was a Santa Fe Trail 1821-1872 marker, which is not really accurate because this was not a branch of the Santa Fe Trail. Across the street is the Askew School that has a plaque that says "*Westport and Independence Road. This marks the connecting link in the Santa Fe Trail 1837-1856 - marked by Askew School students and faculty 1962-1968*".

**The modern trekkers** then traveled south, partly on where the old Byram's Ford road was, ending up at 63<sup>rd</sup> and Manchester, where a sign reads "*Byram's Ford Historic District has been placed on the National Register of Historic Places by the United States Department of the Interior – Site of the Battle of the Big Blue October 22 and 23, 1864*". At the Ford, **Ross Marshall** provided the commentary. A rock bed has been confirmed at the river where the crossing probably was. The area of the ford is being purchased through funds raised by the Civil War Roundtable and Association for Preservation of Civil War Sites" for maintenance by Kansas City Parks and Recreation.

At this point, the trek was over and the car caravan dispersed.

On **November 7 at 10:00 a.m.**, representatives from the National Park Service will dedicate the site at 6601 93<sup>rd</sup> Street which owner **Lou Schumacher** has given to the Kansas City Parks and Recreation. It will be recognized as the first site in Missouri to become an official site on the Santa Fe National Historic Trail.

On **November 8 at 9 a.m.**, NPS will certify the National Frontier Trails Center as a complementary interpretive facility of the Santa Fe National Historic Trail.

On **November 8 at 11:00 a.m.**, NPS will certify Harmon Park at 78<sup>th</sup> and Delmar Streets in Prairie Village as part of the Santa Fe National Historic Trail.

The Trails Head Chapter Annual Meeting was held on **Saturday, November 9 at 10:00 a.m.** at Grinter House, located at 1420 S. 78<sup>th</sup> Street in Kansas City, Kansas.

Election of Officers

**President - Bill Bullard** was re-elected for a second year

**Vice President - John Leamon** “ “  
**Secretary - Judy Budde** “ “  
**Treasurer - Jim Lee** was elected for his first year

**Membership Chair Jim Budde** announced membership has reached a new high of 70 members.

**Rodney Staab**, curator of Grinter Place Museum, was the featured speaker about the history of Grinter House built in 1857, the Grinter Ferry, plus a history of the Delaware Indians who owned the surrounding property.

OCTA is cooperating with the National Park Service in a project to identify interpretive markers along the Oregon Trail that have text on them. Color slides of the text and the marker site are needed, plus a written record of the text. **John Leamon** has offered to be coordinator for the efforts of Trails Head.

John said he would survey from Kansas City to the Nebraska border and also include Santa Fe Trail markers in the Kansas City area since the trails coincide.

**OCTA President Ross Marshall** suggested that Trails Head organize a trails symposium similar to the one organized by Southwest Chapter.

**President Bill Bullard** appointed a committee consisting of **Eric Fowler, Elaine McNabney, Barbara Magerl, Jim Lee, Judy Budde and Pauline Fowler** with **John Leamon** as chairperson to complete trail maps for the Kansas City area, one in Johnson County and one in Jackson County.

## 1992

On **January 23 at 6:45 p.m.** Trails Head Chapter met at Arabia Steamboat Museum at 400 Grand Avenue in the River Market area for a tour of the new Museum, opened two months earlier.

Prior to the Museum meeting time, about 80 Trails Head members and friends met for dinner and visiting at a nearby restaurant, Grandma's Pie Pantry at 5<sup>th</sup> and Grand, at a discounted rate.

When the tour began, the gathered group had people there from Mt. Pleasant and Harrisonville, about 130 people altogether! Before the tour, **Ross Marshall** gave a brief description of OCTA and Trails Head Chapter for the visitors. And the museum attendees visited with the **Hawley family** that excavated the Arabia Steamboat and assembled, cleaned and displayed the artifacts.

After the tour, at **7:30**, **Dr. James Pope** of St. Louis, retired from the U.S. Army Map Service, presented the program "To the Trailheads by Water", emphasizing the role steamboats played along the Missouri River in the pioneer era of the 1800s.

The event was planned by **Barbara Magerl** and **Jim and Judy Budde**.

## **DONALD WILLSEY PASSES**

**Donald Willsey**, a real estate investor, died **May 13, 1992**, at his home in Mission Hills. He was named Rancher of the Year by OCTA in 1988, nominated by Trails Head, at the Omaha Convention which he attended. He owned the Lone Elm property. *(about a decade later, his wife sold the property to the City of Olathe and Lone Elm Park was subsequently developed)*

## **CHAPTER MEETING**

A Trails Head Chapter meeting was held on **Saturday, May 16**, at the National Frontier Trails Center at 318 West Pacific in Independence. There were two major items on the agenda.

The first was to get moving, at the request of OCTA, on a survey of the trail markers in Trails Head Chapter area, including their location, nature, condition, etc. as discussed last November. **John Leamon** has volunteered to lead the effort.

The second item was to decide if the chapter should propose to host an OCTA National Convention in Kansas City. Maybe 1997? No specific decision was decided just yet.

**Barbara Magerl** was appointed chair of a committee to host an OCTA Symposium in the Kansas City area.

**John Leamon** invited Trails Head members to join Gateway's tour on **June 13** to Topeka and points west on the trail to Red Vermillion River Crossing. Similar to Trails Head Trek II in 1988.

### **TRAIL TREK IX – June 13, 1992 – to Red Vermillion River (led by Gateway Chapter)**

On **Saturday, June 13**, several Trails Head members joined a Gateway Chapter tour of the Kansas Museum of History in Topeka before traveling the Oregon-California Trail to the Red Vermillion River crossing and the "Big Elm".

It was organized by **Darlene Peniston's** Gateway Chapter's trip committee aided by **Robert Keckeisen**, Director of the Museum, **Dr. Barbara Burgess**, an authority on the Oregon Trail in Kansas, and **Julia Bork**, a leader in the Historical Society in St. Marys, KS.

The event began with **Keckeisen** leading participants through the building which had been built by the Baptists as a Mission in 1849 for the Indian Reservation in the area. He highlighted the construction of the mission and spoke of future plans for the building.

From Topeka, the trek we went west to the former site of Uniontown. From 1840s and 1850s trail diaries, **Barbara** told of the trail passing through the town and then on to the ferry crossing.

From Uniontown, the group followed the trail through Willard, crossed the Kansas River and on to Rossville. At Rossville, **Julia Bork** led the group to various sites in the town.

After passing through St. Marys, the group followed Oregon Trail Road, seeing markers.

At Vieux Cemetery, Big Elm, Red Vermillion Crossing and the Cholera/T.S. Prather grave, **Barbara Burgess** told of the history of the area and the Vieux family.

It was a good field trip and a lot was learned about that stretch of the trail.

### **HARMON PARK**

The Santa Fe Trail Pavilion in Harmon Park at 7727 Delmar in Prairie Village, Kansas was dedicated **September 13, 1992**. The new Pavilion commemorates the certified trail swale segment on the North Branch of the Westport Route of the Santa Fe-Oregon-California Trail which runs through the Park.

The ceremony was hosted by **Mayor Roe Taliaferro** and the City Council. After the Mayor introduced various dignitaries, **Pauline Fowler** and **Jane Mallinson** as representatives of the Santa Fe Trail Advisory Council, spoke briefly. Then local trail historian **Craig Crease** spoke about the various trail branches in Johnson County and the Westport Route in particular. He also read excerpts from several trail diaries to give a flavor of the trails era. All three of the speakers thanked the city for obtaining the additional 3.7 acres of land in the Park in 1989 where the trail swale segment exists.

Council member **Benton Munday** spoke of two groups of pioneers, the emigrants of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the recent Save-the-Park Committee, especially **Eleanor and Oscar Eggers**, who live adjacent to the Park. The Save-the-Park Committee successfully averted three different proposed developments, i.e. an apartment complex, a nursing home and cluster housing.

Local Girl Scouts served popcorn and Lost Trail Root Beer.

### TRAIL TREK X – September 26, 1992 – to Gardner, KS and west to Johnson Co. line

Trails Head members and guests gathered at Elm Street between Shawnee and Washington Streets, downtown Gardner, KS.

Participants saw the two monument signs; a large 1906 Old Settlers of Gardner Monument with a SFT 1905 plaque on it, which represents the Independence Route, which is a mile south.

The second one a block north – a smaller engraved monument (1830 Oregon Trail) erected by DAR in 1930, pointing north ¼ mile to the Westport Route.

The caravan continued west-southwest on Highway 56 for about 1½ miles to a highway park with an upright sign in it entitled “Overland Trails”. The two routes came together about ¼ mile north of the park and headed straight west for a half mile. At Four Corners Road, the Santa Fe Trail veers to the southwest and the Oregon-California Trail continues on west for a mile, before turning north.

Another mile west and a mile south is Lanesfield School Museum which has a 1906 DAR SFT monument.

The cars continued on past the highway park on Highway 56, which turns west through Edgerton. After another three miles, the trek came to Black Jack Park, which has a log cabin. Large ruts go through the park 100 yards south of Highway 56. Black Jack Cemetery is ½ mile south.

The modern trekkers stopped at the cabin for a slide presentation by **Katharine Kelley**, a former teacher and historian. Then proceeded south to the Cemetery site at Robert Pearson Park, which was the center of the Battle of Black Jack in 1856. A large granite monument is to the east where the ruts are.

The trekkers then proceeded on west on Highway 56 to Baldwin City, which contains the old village of Palmyra, to the railroad depot, had lunch and toured the depot. Then they continued to drive around town to see Baker University and the Old Castle building.

The caravan went north a mile to the Trail Park, which has a stone marker and a metal marker. Then the trek headed northwest on country roads, then west following the Santa Fe Trail, passing by a village site of Hickory Point, which is gone. Soon, the vehicles passed a “Brooklyn” sign. That village was burned by Quantrill in his retreat from his Lawrence Raid in 1863.

The caravan came to Willow Springs that has a sign and a DAR stone monument. At that point, the trail begins to slant slightly to the southwest. A water tower is nearby, which is near where a village called Globe was. The caravan headed south a mile to the current village of Globe and turned west on 56.

A mile west is a radio tower at a stone house on Simmons Hill that is falling down. A couple of miles on west is a DAR SFT monument marker.

That was the end of the tour.

### **NATIONAL FRONTIER TRAILS CENTER**



**John Mark Lambertson** had joined the National Frontier Trails Center staff last November as an archivist. Now 36, **John** was born in Kansas City and is the son of a Baptist minister and grandson of a longtime Kansas Congressman. He grew up in Kansas and Iowa and received his undergraduate degree in American political history from his family alma mater, Ottawa University in Ottawa, Kansas. **John** completed his master's degree in American history last spring at Kansas University and is now preparing his thesis for publication.

**John's** work experience includes two years as manuscripts specialist for the KU libraries and six years as director of the Franklin County, Kansas Historical Society which operates two museums. Most recently, **John** spent over five years conducting research and reference work as an archivist at the Kansas State Historical Society. He also does genealogical research for himself and professionally for others.

### ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Our 1992 Annual Membership Meeting was held on **Tuesday, November 24, at 7:30 p.m.** at the National Frontier Trails Center in Independence.

**Treasurer James Lee** submitted the following report for 1992. Beginning balance for 1992 was \$737.22. Total income including donations was \$1480, expenditures were \$1672.48, leaving a total balance of \$544.74.

**John Leamon**, chair of the nominating committee that included members **Jim Budde, Ross Marshall** nominated the following officer candidates, which were elected.

**President - James Lee** (2<sup>nd</sup> time – 1<sup>st</sup> year)

**Vice President – Eric Fowler** (first year)

**Secretary - Donna Bullard** (first year)

**Treasurer - Judy Budde** (first year)

**John Leamon** reported that the Mapping Committee which he chairs, and that included **Jim Lee, Ross Marshall, Henry Boppert and Tom McCutcheon**, completed the marker identification program which was designed by OCTA. The identification and documentation was completed during five long treks and some short ones. 92 markers were scrutinized. Of these, 28 were considered to not be applicable, so 64 markers were documented.

**Tom Hunt**, OCTA-preservation officer, agreed with the decision to document Santa Fe Trail markers west to Gardner. Six photographic slides, including overall shots as well as close shots of texts, were taken of each marker, so that the National Park Service, OCTA and Trails Head each could receive a close-up shot and an overall shot of each marker. The committee completed three reports, which reported 27 markers in Missouri, 28 in Kansas plus 9 markers identified in the Gateway Chapter area.

### WATTS (FITZHUGH) MILL

Fitzhugh Mill has been a topic locally and nationally in the last few months as planning is beginning that would update and expand this site. **President Bill Bullard** urged Trails Head members to share background information, since the site's connection to the trails is probably not significant.

**Jim Budde** led a discussion on how Trails Head could increase attendance at meetings and trails events, both in-town and out-of-town visitors. **Bill** noted that increasing members' attendance at business meetings is also important.

## 1993

### SIX MONTHS CALENDAR

An unusual number of Trail-related events are planned in the next six months at various locations in the Kansas area as follows.

January 29 - 30 - “*Overland*” – a premier production of a musical at Johnson County Community College (JCCC) in Overland Park. It is sponsored by Two Trails West, JCCC, Blue Valley Community Theater and Theater in the Park.

April 3 - 4 - #1849 *Faces of the Westward Trails*” at Shawnee Indian Mission in Fairway, sponsored by Kansas Museum of History.

April 16 - 18 - “*Daughters of Courage: Stories of the Overland Trail*”, at Kansas Museum of History in Topeka, sponsored by the Museum.

April 30, May 1,2,6,7,8,9 - “*Going To See The Elephant*”, a drama at the Lawrence Community Theatre in Lawrence, sponsored by the Theatre.

June 5,6,8,10,12 - Oregon Trail Festival in St. Marys northwest of Topeka.

June 26 - 27 - Bullwhacker Days at the Mahaffie House Farmstead in Olathe.

### WATTS MILL MEETING

On **February 11**, over forty individuals met at the St. Joseph’s Hospital Community Center at I-435 and State Line Road to listen to quite an impressive panel of dignitaries talk about the preservation of Watts Mill. The event was organized by Trails Head leader **Barbara Magerl**.

**Tom Leathers**, publisher and editor of Squire Publications, was the moderator. **Dr. James Lee, President of Trails Head**, began with a brief history of the mill site. **Ross Marshall, OCTA President**, added details of the history. **Bob Malloy**, President of the Historical Society of New Santa Fe, read a letter from the office of the National Register of Historic Places which encouraged all to continue in their efforts.

Additional speakers included **Bob Lewellen**, board member of the Historical Society of New Santa Fe, **6th District Councilwoman Judy Swope**, and a half-dozen other City and State leaders, who spoke positively about the effort.

### HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF NEW SANTA FE

On **February 27**, a meeting was held by Historical Society of New Santa Fe. The Society invited a panel of ten speakers from entities local, state and national to join them.

Trails Head **President Jim Lee** was a speaker about Trails Head’s-purpose and work with national trails. **Ross Marshall** spoke about the history of Fitzhugh’s mill and its faint history with trails.

### OCTA MID-YEAR BOARD MEETING

The OCTA Mid-year Board Meeting will, as usual, be held **March 27** in the OCTA Headquarters building next to the Trails Center in Independence.

### WESTPORT MARKER DEDICATED

On **May 1 at 2:00 pm**, in recognition of the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the founding of the Oregon National Historic Trail, the Westport Historical Society re-dedicated the bronze marker at the Old Westport Shopping Center at Southwest Trafficway and Westport Road. The marker was

originally dedicated on March 2, 1963 and much of the text deals with the pioneers who ended up settling in Westport, as opposed to continuing west. **Ross Marshall**, president of the Oregon-California Trails Association, was the speaker at the re-dedication.

### **MORRIS CARTER WAGON TRAIN**

**May 5** saw Wagons Ho! by the Morris Carter Jr. wagon train composed of five covered Conestoga wagons embark from Independence, MO headed for Portland, Oregon to observe the sesquicentennial of the Oregon Trail. As the wagon occupants and accompanying support travel the trail on their six-month journey they will pass through Blue Rapids, Alcove Spring, and many other sites.

### **KANSAS CITY STAR FEATURE**

During the **month of May**, the Kansas City Star published a long series of articles and features about the **150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the “1843 Great Migration”** from the Kansas City area to the Oregon City, Oregon area.

### **MAJORS HOUSE**

(the following is taken from an article in the OCTA-October 1993 *News From the Plains*)

On **June 1**, **OCTA President Ross Marshall** became the first full-time **Executive Director of the Alexander Majors House and Museum** at 8201 State Line Road on the Missouri side.

Alexander Majors and his freighting firm of Russell, Majors and Waddell were responsible for establishing Kansas City’s commercial destiny along with the foundation and principles on which the west was built. Major’s western freighting operation was instrumental in attracting governmental and private shippers to unload goods at Westport Landing and this gave Kansas City its initial thrust toward prosperity.

**Ross** stated “I am excited to be involved with not only preserving the House and site, but the heritage of Alexander Majors. He was involved in not only our local history, but was a leader in the westward expansion of our country on the Santa Fe Trail, Oregon Trail. Pony Express Trail and stagecoach lines”.

The Majors House, built in 1856, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Restored in 1984, the house stands in a five-acre park.

### **KANSAS CITY STAR ARTICLE**

On **June 3, 1993**, the Star published the following letter from **Ross Marshall**, OCTA President. “Congratulations to the *Kansas City Star* for the recent series of articles entitled “The Oregon Trail – 150 Years Later”, written by **James Fisher**. He not only researched many of the trail diaries as recorded by the emigrants, but also did the necessary research “on the ground”; that is, traversing the trail from end to end, visiting the actual ruts and sites and talking to knowledgeable people along the way who know the trail.

In addition, instead of making the series strictly a documentary account, **Mr. Fisher’s** journalism brought the human side of the emigrant experience to life: the joys, sorrows, adventure, hardship and accomplishment.

We at the Oregon-California Trails Association appreciate this kind of authentic journalism about the trail, especially in this 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary year of the opening of the Oregon Trail.

Thank you for your interest in helping to preserve one of the most significant chapters of our nation’s history and heritage.”

## **NATIONAL FRONTIER TRAILS CENTER**

The National Frontier Trails Center has named its former archivist, **John Mark Lambertson**, as the new Director of the Center, succeeding Trails Head Chapter **Past President Bill Bullard**.

The Center reports that the museum attendance has tripled this spring. The Independence Tourism Department received 11,500 trail-related requests in the first six months of this 1993 year.

## **WATTS MILL FESTIVAL**

On **June 5**, a Festival was held at Watts Mill commemorating the Oregon Trail Sesquicentennial. Activities, entertainment, music, dancing, crafts fair, etc. all were included in the all-day Festival. Trails Head Chapter was one of the co-sponsors.

## **JOHN LEAMON'S ACTIVITIES**

**John Leamon**, Trails Head preservation chair, keeps a log of his trail activities. In **1992**, he drove 4916 miles, had \$250 other expenses and spent 385 hours on trail activities. His listing is:

- Speech at Elderhostel, Heartland Presbyterian Camp
- Speech at Retired Propulsion Engineers luncheon
- Trail research on mapping in Doniphan County for Gateway Chapter
- Planning Trail Trek IX from Topeka to Louis Vieux Cemetery for Gateway Chapter
- Planning Trail Trek X along Santa Fe Trail in Douglas County
- Manned OCTA booth at Iowa, Sac and Fox Mission Festival for Gateway Chapter
- Checked John Leermaker's books, films, maps for OCTA Library.
- Searched for swales on Mrs. Zimmerman's property
- Participated in NPS-OCTA trail marker survey from Independence to Nebraska for Trails Head and Gateway Chapters
- Completed Jackson and Johnson County trail maps as a tri-fold handout
- Completed Jackson County trail routing survey guide
- Checked purported swale in Topeka and concluded not a swale
- Checked purported swales on Larry Stowell's property near Big Springs
- Located site of Fish Hotel in southern Eudora with local help
- Located two sites of Blue Jacket's crossings on the Wakarusa River
- Wrote a few letters
- Made scads of phone calls for trail data and advice

John received \$50 for the Elderhostel speech and \$100 rebate for film in the trail marker project. He donated both sums to Trails Head for the Jackson County map project.

## **ROSS MARSHALL'S ACTIVITIES**

Many Trails Head members give talks on the trails. **Ross Marshall, president of OCTA**, is one of these. A list of his lectures for the first six months of 1993 are as follows:

- |         |  |                          |
|---------|--|--------------------------|
| Jan. 26 | Lenexa Historical Society                    | Audience of 60           |
| Feb. 27 | Watts Mill Forum on panel                    | Audience of 70           |
| Mar. 5  | Elderhostel, Heartland Presbyterian Camp     | Audience of 50           |
| Mar. 9  | Voice of America telephone interview         | Audience of 100,000,000? |
| Mar. 16 | Shepherd Center at Asbury Methodist Church   | Audience of 140          |
| May 1   | Westport H/S rededication of Westport marker | Audience of 100          |

June 6	Watts Mill Park Re-dedication	Audience of 50
June 25	Shepherd Center at Central Methodist	Audience of 130
June 26	Mahaffie House Bullwhacker Days –2 groups/day	Audience of 30
June 27	“ “ “ “	Audience of 30

### **KANSAS CITY STAR AND 150<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF OREGON TRAIL**

On **Saturday, September 11 at 2:00 pm**, sponsored by Trails Head Chapter, 66 people gathered at the Kansas City Missouri Plaza Library to hear **James Fisher** speak of his experiences along the Oregon Trail this past spring in preparation for publishing his great series in the May issues of the Kansas City Star on the Oregon Trail Sesquicentennial.

**Fisher** found OCTA Headquarters in Independence to be a valuable resource for his contacts and interviews. In addition, the Oregon promotions of the sesquicentennial has brought in one billion dollars of tourism this year.

OCTA, at our national convention in **August**, presented an award to the Kansas City Star for the Oregon Trail Sesquicentennial articles entitled “The Oregon Trail – 150 Years Later”.

At the conclusion of **Fisher’s** talk, **Barbara Magerl** presented a Trails Head plaque to him.

### **TRAIL TREK XI – October 9, 1993 – Fort Leavenworth to Grinter House**

About 20 met at **11:00** at the Frontier Army Museum, which is on Reynolds Avenue a block east from Grant, the main north-south street at Fort Leavenworth.

Attendees met in the conference room where **Lee Kroh** and **John Leamon** gave a briefing about the history of the Military Road. **Lee** has done considerable work researching the route and its history. The group then took a self-guided tour of the museum.

The trek began with a short tour through the old part of the fort which includes the site of the swale of the Santa Fe and Oregon Trails that comes up from the east side from the former original location of the Missouri River landing. The modern trekkers passed by the Buffalo Soldiers statue on the way out the south entrance.

They then proceeded south to the town of Leavenworth past the Russell, Majors and Waddell outfitting site in the 1850s.

The first landmark of the Military Road in Leavenworth was its crossing at Delaware and Broadway. From there, it ran west of Broadway, crossed Three Mile Creek and crossed the intersection of 9<sup>th</sup> Street and Ohio.

For a brown bag lunch, the tour stopped at Buffalo Bill Cody Park at Five Mile Creek on the way south out of town. **John Leamon** read excerpts from two diaries which had been written by Illinois Volunteers accompanying a military wagon train on its way to Mexico in 1847 during the Mexican War.

As the Military Road continued southeasterly, the group monitored its path by observing hard points which **Lee Kroh** had researched.

When the Military Road reached the present site of Wallula Church, it crossed from the western side of Highway 7 to the eastern side. From there the group again followed the road by observing hard points. At the I-435 entrance from Parallel Road, the guides noted that a nearby place called Gum Springs in 1847 had been an excellent overnight camping place.

A number of hard points were again observed on the way to Grinter House. Two are easily identified. Beside St. Patrick’s Church at 94<sup>th</sup> and State is one. The other is at the intersection of 86<sup>th</sup> and I-70.

Just before reaching Grinter House, the group visited Grinter Chapel Cemetery where Moses Grinter and his wife are buried. Most of the trekking group enjoyed a tour of Grinter House at the conclusion of the trek. The tour of the historic home was given by **Rodney Staab**, the curator of the Grinter property, which is owned by the state of Kansas.

### **PARTNERSHIP FOR THE NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAILS IN KC AREA**

On **October 23-27** the **Third National Conference on National Scenic and Historic Trails** will be held at Camp MoKan Salvation Army Conference Center in Independence. It is co-sponsored by the National Park Service and OCTA. The first conference was held in **1988** in Hartland, Wisconsin. The second was held in **1991** in Menucha, Oregon. On **Sunday, the 24<sup>th</sup>** the group, in some rented vans, had a tour from MoKan through Independence to Gardner, KS along the Independence Route of the Santa Fe-Oregon-California Trails. The tour was led by **Ross Marshall**.

Trails Head Chapter was the designated host of this conference. **Jim Budde** and **Ross Marshall** were co-arrangers. *(Four years later this national trails group would be formally organized as the Partnership for the National Trails System)*

### **ANNUAL MEETING**

On **Tuesday November 9**, the 1993 Trails Head Annual meeting was held at the Alexander Majors Barn at 8201 State Line Road.

At **5:30**, dinner at the Ward Parkway Food Court was available for those that wanted to attend. At **6:30** a tour of the Majors House was led by **Ross Marshall**, immediate past president of OCTA and now the Executive Director of the Majors House.

At **7:30 p.m.** the meeting started in the barn led by **President Jim Lee**. The nominating committee chaired by **Bill Bullard**, with members **Jana Marshall, Barbara Magerl and Mary Conrad**, nominated the following officers, who were elected:

**President - Ross Marshall**  
**Vice President - Jim Budde**  
**Secretary - Ruth Ayres**  
**Treasurer - Judy Budde**

After the election, **Ross** offered a few comments about the plans and hopes for 1994.

Then **Barbara Magerl** showed two trails videos. The first was a segment of Charles Kurault's show for which he had interviewed **Larry Jones** of Boise, Idaho, a very active OCTA member who chaired the 1989 OCTA Convention in Boise. The second was entitled "Beyond Eden's Gate", produced by KPTV in Portland, Oregon.

**Ross** then opened the store in the Majors barn for those that wished to shop.

After the business meeting, a work session was held to make Christmas ornaments to be auctioned at a Christmas celebration sponsored by the Johnson County Museum. **Judy Budde** was chair of the committee.

## **1994**

### **JOINT MEETING WITH FRIENDS OF NFTC**

On **Thursday night, January 20 at 7:00 p.m.**, approximately 75 people gathered at the National Frontier Trails Center in Independence for a joint meeting between Trails Head Chapter and the Friends of the National Frontier Trails Museum.

The meeting was called to order by **Friends President Roy Keeland**. After brief business agendas were covered by both organizations, the program for the evening was introduced.

“The History of the Missouri State Line” was presented by **Ross Marshall, current Trails Head President and immediate past president of OCTA**. The presentation was informal and focused on issues that had national impact.

The western border of Missouri was also the western border of the United States for 30 years. As such, it was the natural “jumping off” place for the Santa Fe, Oregon and California Trails. The “border war” years of the Civil War were also discussed. These years of turmoil had their roots in the Compromise of 1820, the Compromise of 1850 and the 1854 Kansas-Nebraska Act.

The talk was followed by questions and comments from the audience. At **8:30 p.m.**, the Friends served refreshments, including some tasty hors d’oeuvres, cookies and popcorn.

### **TRAIL TREK X11 – March 19, 1994 – Military Road to Fort Scott**

On **Saturday March 19, 1994**, 21 trekkers met at Metcalf Shopping Center to Travel the route of the Military Road south to Fort Scott. Three more from Wichita met the modern trekkers halfway through the route and proceeded along the tour also.

This was the first Trails Head trek that involved renting a bus. Its capacity was 24, so we were able to cover the cost in good shape. From this point on, Trails Head will use a bus for all chapter treks.

Trails Head **President Ross Marshall** provided the narration throughout the trip. **Vice President Jim Budde** and **Preservation Chair John Leamon** also helped with the planning.

The Military Road ran from Ft. Snelling in Minnesota to Ft. Atkinson in Nebraska, Ft. Leavenworth and Ft. Scott in Kansas, Ft. Gibson and Ft. Towson in Oklahoma all the way to Ft. Jesup in Louisiana. It was a military patrol road to provide a barrier between the states and the Indian Tribes who had been removed to Kansas and Oklahoma by the 1830 Indian Removal Act.

Through an 1836 Congressional enabling act, surveys were completed. One of the surveyors was **Nathan Boone**. One of the contractors for the construction of the road from Ft. Leavenworth to Trading Post was **Daniel Morgan Boone**. The entire road was never completed.

After leaving Johnson County, the bus crossed Miami County and Linn County. The road veered slightly into Bates County, Missouri at that point through the former location of the village of West Point.

The trek stopped at the Trading Post Museum where **Alice Wagner** gave a talk on the history of Trading Post. It was established by French traders (the Chouteau family) to trade with the Osage Indians. By 1846, the Potawatomi and Miami Tribes were also included.

The next stop was at the Linn County Museum in Pleasanton, named for General Alfred Pleasonton (spelling is correct), who was the Union commander at the Battle of Linn Creek. **Ola May Ernest** led a tour through the museum.

After leaving the museum, the bus stopped at the beginning of the remaining stretch of the Military Road in Linn County, located east of Pleasanton. That segment can be seen on one side of a paved county road. The tour then returned to Highway 69 and headed south, crossing the Marmaton River just north of the Fort.

The trekkers lunched at the Courtland Tea Room in downtown Ft. Scott. Then they watched a video on the history of the Fort before **Arnold Schofield**, the senior historian at the Fort, appeared and talked to us in full official military dress in a very formal presentation.

The site of Ft. Scott was chosen by the military for its access to the Marmaton River water and building timbers of oak and walnut. The Military Road had already been completed when the Fort construction started in 1843.

After the video, **Schofield** led us on a tour of the site beginning on the deck of the visitors' center. Attendees then went to the dragoon barracks mess hall and Schofield switched from a historian to an actor who convincingly portrayed a first sergeant. He strongly talked to all like we were first-day recruits! Some of Trails Head men said later that he reminded them of their own drill sergeants when they had been in the military decades earlier.

The bus then drove through the town to the national cemetery with **Schofield** describing the sites.

On the return to Overland Park, the tour stopped at the two markers on Highway 69 which commemorate the Battle of Mine Creek, which occurred about a mile west on **October 25, 1964** as the Confederate troops under the command of General Sterling Price retreated south after the conclusion of the three-day Battle of Westport on **October 21-23**.

This was a very successful bus tour.

#### **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING**

An Executive Committee meeting was held at **Elaine McNabney's** on **April 14**. Trails Head treasury balance was \$1129.49 as reported by **Treasurer Judy Budde**. Chapter paid membership for 1994 so far is 51 members. Last year, Trails Head finished with 57 members.

The **March 14** bus tour to Fort Scott sold 24 tickets for \$12 each. The \$270 bus cost, plus stamps and fees at the Fort, Linn Co. Museum and Trading post resulted in a net \$107 cost.

**Vice President Jim Budde** announced he has the bus reserved for the **May 14** Trek XII on the California Road from Shawnee Mission to Lawrence for \$240.

Before adjourning, discussions about contacting members who are behind in dues occurred.

#### **TRAIL TREK XIII – May 14, 1994 – California Road to Lawrence**

On **May 14**, Trail Head sponsored Trek XIII on the California Road to Lawrence, also known as the Westport to Lawrence Road. That Road went along the Northern Branch of the Westport Route of the Santa Fe-Oregon-California Trail until it split off at about 57<sup>th</sup> and Riggs to head west. **Craig Crease** was the guide,

The 20-passenger bus started the tour from the Shawnee Mission and headed north to the location of the Shawnee Baptist Mission near 49<sup>th</sup> and Nall Avenue. Then west along the Westport Route to the 57<sup>th</sup> and Riggs location. From that point the tour went west on Johnson Drive then, jogged south a block to 60<sup>th</sup> and Farley, the basic location of the Shawnee Quaker Mission. All of this was essentially along the California Road.

The bus passed the California Road crossing of Turkey Creek near Johnson Drive and Merriam Drive in Shawnee (which originally was called Gum Springs). We stopped at the Shawnee Cemetery at 59<sup>th</sup> Terrace, two blocks east of Nieman Road, which is basically on the California Road.

The next stop was at the Johnson County Museum at 63<sup>rd</sup> and Lackman Road, which is about a block north of the California Road. (The Museum now is at 88<sup>th</sup> and Metcalf)



The trekkers then continued west to Chillicothe, the site of Zarah, and through Monticello, all on or near the California Road. The first constable at Monticello was James Butler (Wild Bill) Hickok. The bus crossed Cedar Creek.

The trekkers passed by the locations of the “Four Houses” Chouteau Trading Post and the Kill Creek crossing, ending up in the vicinity of De Soto and stopped for lunch at Maria’s.

The tour then crossed into Douglas County to Eudora. The Fish Hotel there was named for a Shawnee, Charles Fish, from the 1840s and 50s. The tour then viewed the Bluejacket Ford, a crossing of the Wakarusa River by the California Road and the Oregon Trail, on land owned by **John and Eleanor Gage**, good friends of Kansas City area trail people.

The last stop was at the Douglas County Historical Museum. **Director Steve Jansen** spoke to the group before the trekkers headed back home.

## CHAPTER MEETING

On **Thursday May 26, 1994 at 7:00 p.m.** Trails Head Chapter had a meeting at the home of **Howard and Barbara Magerl**. Those present were **Jim and Judy Budde, John Leamon, Ross and Jana Marshall, Bill and Donna Bullard, Art and Ruth Ayres, Mary Conrad, Dr. Jim Lee, plus Howard and Barbara Magerl**.

**President Ross Marshall** called the meeting to order. After the usual reports, he gave a summary of the Trek XIII taken a couple of weeks ago on the California Road. He commented on the good job **Craig Crease** did as our guide.

He also discussed the possibility of awarding **John and Eleanor Gage**, through whose land the California Road trek traveled, the OCTA Friends of the Trail Award. **Barbara Magerl** moved and **John Leamon** seconded a motion to do so and it passed. **John** already has the wording written for the award and will send it to OCTA Awards Committee Chair **Karen Rennells** in LaBarge, Wyoming.

The next meeting will be at the home of **Jim and Judy Budde**.

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

The next executive committee meeting was **June 21 at 7:00 p.m.** at **Jim and Judy Budde’s** home. Present were **Ross Marshall, John Leamon, Henry Boppert, Art and Ruth Ayres, and Jim and Judy Budde**.

**Treasurer Judy Budde** reported 66 paid chapter members currently and renewal letters have been sent out. Trails Head bank balance is \$1358.49.

Chapter planners discussed the need to push ahead on getting something definite done at Lone Elm Campground by procuring some part of that land for interpretation purposes. There is already a DAR monument at 167<sup>th</sup> and Lone Elm Road. **Barbara** and **Ross** will set up a talk with **Mrs. Willsey**, owner of the property, now that her husband **Donald** passed away in 1992.

**John Leamon** is planning the September 24 Trek XIV to the Nebraska border. He is planning on a full-size bus that would seat 48 people and would leave from Topeka. More next month.

**John Leamon** has been an officer in Trails Head and has been and continues to be one of the primary planners for most Trails Head treks. He has been and will continue to be preservation chair, plus he will be preservation chair for Gateway Chapter. He is an ever-willing volunteer!

Those present discussed plans for a **symposium on October 29**. It would have four speakers on the Missouri River and the emigrant trails, moderated by **Robert Richmond**.

## MARKER DEDICATION AT NEW SANTA FE

On **July 16, 1994**, the Historical Society of New Santa Fe sponsored the dedication of a bronze marker in recognition of the historic town of New Santa Fe, Missouri. The marker is adjacent to the New Santa Fe Cemetery.

The master of ceremonies **Bob Lewellen** unveiled the recently installed marker during the afternoon ceremonies. **Ross Marshall**, current president of Trails Head and past president of OCTA, and also the Director of the Alexander Majors House, was the guest speaker. **Ross** reviewed the historical significance of the town, plus he read a few emigrant diary excerpts.

The village began in 1833 when John Bartleson built a cabin on his new land. John became a leader in the 1841 Bidwell-Bartleson party which was the first wagon train to California. The village grew and became the last place to buy supplies before wagon trains crossed the Missouri border into Indian Territory, until 1854 when Kansas Territory was opened for settlement.

## OCTA CONVENTION 1994

Notes from the August OCTA Annual Convention (#12) in Salt Lake City, Utah.

The Friend of the Trail Award was awarded to **Mr. and Mrs. David Gage and Mr. and Mrs. John Gage** of Eudora, Kansas. Since the Gages were unable to be there, Trails Head Chapter will present it to them in September.

**Mr. and Mrs. David Gage** operate the farm which contains one of the four Wakarusa river crossings, located about five miles east of Lawrence, Kansas. The ford was used by Oregon-California Trail emigrants who elected to divert from the main arm of the trail and enter Lawrence from the east. If they stayed on the south side of the Wakarusa Trail for a few more miles, they would cross the Wakarusa and enter Lawrence from the south

**David's** parents, **Mr. and Mrs. John Gage**, have owned the property since 1923 and all of them have been very interested in the history and preservation of the ford.

**Jackie Lewin**, curator of history at the St. Joseph Museum and member of OCTA-Gateway Chapter, was elected as OCTA vice president and thus president-elect, at the convention.

**Bill Bullard**, a past president of Trails Head and former director of the National Frontier Trails Center, was elected OCTA Secretary. The current **Trails Head Vice President Jim Budde** received one of the three Meritorious Achievement Awards.

The 1995 convention will be in Grand Island, Nebraska.

## TRAIL TREK XIV – September 24, 1994 – To St. Joseph and on to the Nebraska Border.

On **Saturday, September 24 shortly after 7:30 a.m.**, a minibus of trekkers left from Indian Springs Shopping Center at I-635 and State Avenue in Kansas City, Kansas. Lots of the trek was spent on the bus between stops, so **Ross Marshall** provided commentary about the historic trails spots along the areas that were passed. Copies of maps were handed to all.

The bus first traveled to St. Joseph to follow Highway 36 to Marysville, so that Ross could talk about the Pony Express from St. Joseph to Marysville. At Marysville, the tour stopped at the recently renovated and expanded Pony Express Barn and Museum.

The next stop was the tri-county marker on the Nebraska-Kansas border, where the corners of three counties (Washington County in Kansas, Gage and Jefferson Counties in Nebraska) meet.

**Duane Durst**, the curator of the nearby Hollenberg Pony Express Station, spoke of the history of the marker. **Duane** also talked at the next stop, the Hollenberg Station, about the history of

the Hollenberg family and the area while the modern trekkers had lunch. Then participants toured the building and grounds.

The tour returned to Marysville for a stop at the site of the Shibley Ford, which is now a ploughed field due to a modern man-made straightening of the Big Blue River.

The next stop was at Alcove Springs. **Duane Iles**, a pharmacist in Blue Rapids and one of the leaders in the efforts of the Blue Rapids Chamber of Commerce and the Alcove Spring Preservation Association to preserve Alcove Spring, spoke to the group about the history of the site and about recent efforts toward preservation.

The trekkers then stopped at **Duane's** pharmacy to see a plaster cast of names and initials from the Alcove Spring site and to see the purported tombstone of **Sarah Keyes** which disappeared from the Alcove site decades ago. The stone in question recently appeared.

To return to Kansas City, the bus went south to I-70 west of Topeka and then followed the interstate to Kansas City. Again **Ross Marshall** provided commentary for trail sites along the way. And the bus was back in Kansas City before dark!

## CHAPTER MEETING

On **September 27 at 7:00 p.m.**, the chapter meeting was held at **Jim Lee's** home. **Judy Budde** reported that bus cost for Trek XIV was \$288. A motion was passed to send \$25 to the Alcove Spring Historical Trust and to donate \$25 for the Tri-County marker.

**John Leamon** is now the Gateway Chapter Preservation/Mapping Officer, the same position he holds with Trails Head.

## OCTA AWARD TO GAGE FAMILY

At **4:00 p.m., October 23**, several Trails Head members presented the Friend of the Trail Award from the OCTA Convention to the **Gage family** at the Lawrence Public Library.

## TRAILS HEAD SYMPOSIUM

On **Saturday, October 29**, Trails Head hosted a Symposium at the UMKC Education Building, planned largely by **Barbara Magerl** and **Jim Budde**, about the Missouri Valley and the emigrant trails. **Bob Richmond** was the moderator of the event which started at **9:00 a.m.**

The first speaker was **Professor James Shortridge** from the KU Department of Geography, who spoke about the geography, rivers and tree groves in the Kansas City area entitled "Missouri Valley: Defining the Region".

The second speaker was archaeologist **Mary Adair**, curator of collections at the KU Museum of Anthropology, who spoke and showed slides entitled "Frontier Lifeline: The Town of Kansas", about the excavations made on the south edge of the Missouri River at the foot of Main Street, where the town of Kansas, the forerunner of Kansas City, was formed in 1838.

**Ray Bruen**, from the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial (the Arch) in St. Louis, spoke about the concept of westward expansion, as well as the impact of Euro-American westward expansion on the American Indians, entitled "The Impact of Western Emigration on the Indian Tribes of the Missouri River Region".

The final speaker was **Ray Brubaker** from Cheyenne, Wyoming, the former director of the Wyoming Bureau of Land Management (BLM) before retirement. He spoke about Missouri and Kansas being the beginning of the western trails and showed a 15-minute video entitled "Trails West", which was developed by BLM about 19<sup>th</sup> century trail travel in Wyoming.

**Moderator Bob Richmond** did a wrap-up and closing remarks.

About 65 people were in attendance.

### **ANNUAL MEETING**

On **November 10**, Trails Head held its annual meeting at the Mahaffie Farmstead in Olathe. **Ross and Jana Marshall, Art and Ruth Ayres, Jim Budde, Dr. Jim Lee, Mary Conrad, Tom McCutcheon and Bob Hamilton** were present.

**President Ross** called the meeting to order at **7:00 p.m.** He gave a review of chapter activities during **1994** – it has been a very busy year!

Trails Head bank balance was \$1124. The chapter had 70 paid memberships. Officers for 1995 were elected:

**President – Ross Marshall**  
**Vice President – Mary Conrad**  
**Secretary – Tom McCutcheon**  
**Treasurer – Jim Budde**

**Mary Conrad** gave a slide presentation on the summer, 1988 archaeological excavations at the Mahaffie Farmstead. Attendees then went on a tour of the Mahaffie House and site.

### **HARMON PARK**

On the **evening of December 19**, the city of Prairie Village honored **Eleanor and Oscar Eggers** with the Prairie Village Distinguished Service Award, an award which has been presented only four times in 15 years.

The **Eggers** were leaders in preserving land next to Harmon Park in Prairie Village. **Craig Crease** informed the group that a segment of the North Branch of the Westport Route of the Santa Fe Trail ran through that land just south of the Park. The trail segment had been certified by the National Park Service and finally the 3.7 acres were purchased in 1989 by the city.

The Santa Fe pavilion in Harmon Park was dedicated in **September, 1992**.

### **KROHS FOUNDED KCAHTA**

**Lee and Dorothy Kroh** have founded the Kansas City Area Historic Trails Association as a result of their research on the Military Road. **Craig Crease** has also been helping the **Krohs** with some of the research.

The **Krohs** have now erected 65 signs on the Road, and on **November 10**, those signs were collectively dedicated at four different sites from Leavenworth to Shawnee. They hope to erect as many as 138 more in Leavenworth, Wyandotte and Johnson Counties when funding is donated.

### **TRAILS HEAD TOURS**

Trails Head Chapter has done two tours of the Ft. Leavenworth Military Road on **October 9, 1993** and **March 14, 1994**.

## **1995**

### **JOINT MEETING WITH FRIENDS OF NFTC**

On **January 19, 1995** approximately 170 people attended a joint meeting hosted by the Friends of the Trails Center and Trails Head at the National Frontier Trails Center. Trails Head

**President Ross Marshall** opened the meeting with a review of OCTA goals and the progress being made along the Oregon Trail.

Then attendees were entertained by speaker **Mary Bywater Cross** from Portland, Oregon, author of the book *Treasures of the Trunk: Quilts of the Oregon Trail*. She has been speaking up and down the trail since her book was published in 1993. Her presentation included many great slides. Her fee was \$300, shared by the Friends and Trails Head.

The Santa Fe Trail Association has 12 members on its board. One of the long term members is **Polly Fowler** from Independence and just recently **Ross Marshall** joined the board to replace a vacancy. Western Missouri and northeastern Kansas now have a local SFTA chapter called Missouri River Outfitters.

### **NPS SUPT. JERE KRAKOW HERE TO TOUR CALIFORNIA TRAIL**

On **February 17**, **Jere Krakow**, team manager for the development of the California National Historic Trail Comprehensive Management and Use Plan, was in town. He was also working on the Pony Express Trail, both of which were designated in **1992** by Congress as National Historic Trails. **Jere** and four of his team were from the Denver office of the National Park Service.

**John Leamon** and **Ross Marshall** led the NPS team of five in two vehicles on a very cold and windy day.

The NPS mission was to survey the cultural resources of the trail; the sites, the remaining ruts and traces of the route, and the interpretive markers of the trail from Independence to Nebraska. Trails Head handed them off to **Jackie Lewin (OCTA Vice President)**, **Marilyn Taylor** and **Rich Nolf**, all of St. Joseph, who then led them for two days along the Pony Express Trail and the St. Joe Road, which is part of the California Trail National Historic Trail.

### **CHAPTER MEETING AT NFTC**

Trails Head Chapter on **Thursday night, April 6**, hosted a slide show and talk by **Ross Marshall** at the National Frontier Trails Center. Members of the Friends of NFTC and the SFTA Missouri River Outfitters were also invited. Approximately 20 members were there.

**Ross's** presentation was a survey of the Santa Fe Trail in Osage, Wabaunsee, Lyon and Morris counties in Kansas, which had been taken by **Ross** and **John Leamon** in **June, 1994**. All the wonderful Daughters of the American Revolution monuments set in place in 1906 were highlighted, as well as all other interpretive markers and monuments along the trail in those three counties. Also featured were sites such as the McGee-Harris Stage Station, Havana Stage Station, 142-Mile Crossing, the Council Grove area, Diamond Springs and Six-Mile Ranch.

On exhibit during the meeting was a database printout compiled by **John Leamon** on the location and history of all the monuments and markers all along the Santa Fe Trail.

Trails Head did a tour on **September 26, 1992** on the Santa Fe Trail in Douglas County and these images gave Trails Head members a chance to enjoy and learn about the trail farther west.

### **GATEWAY CHAPTER TOUR**

On **Saturday, May 20**, Gateway Chapter hosted a bus tour, with Trails Head Chapter joining, along the Missouri River crossings between St. Joseph, Missouri and Rulo, Nebraska. **Jackie Lewin** and **Marilyn Taylor**, both curators on the staff of the St. Joseph Museum and Pony Express National Memorial, narrated the tour.

Trails Head members used a couple of vans to go to St. Joseph and join the Gateway members. The tour began at **9:00 a.m.** from the Pony Express Station. The first stop was at Wyeth Hill,

then they went north to downtown St. Joseph at MacArthur Drive at the site of the Black Snake Hills Trading Post which Joseph Robidoux established in 1827. They also stopped at the nearby site of Robidoux's first trading post on Roy's Branch.

The tour stopped at Amazonia on K-Highway, then went past the small town of Nodaway. On T-Highway they saw the Banks house which is about two miles from Iowa Point. They arrived at Rulo by crossing the Missouri River, and then stopped for lunch at Camp Rulo.

They passed by White Cloud, which had a ferry crossing in trail days, and stopped at the Kansas-Nebraska survey marker. Several climbed the steep hill to see the obelisk which was placed on the spot that the GLO surveyors in 1854 marked as the 40<sup>th</sup> parallel north latitude, which is the border between the two states.

They then visited the villages of White Cloud and Iowa Point before returning to St. Joseph on Highway 36. Trails Head people got back to their cars in Platte City about 5:00.

### TRAILS HEAD TREK XV – June 17, 1995 - Westport Route from Westport to Olathe

Trails Head Chapter did a bus tour (Trek XV) on **Saturday, June 17** along the Westport Route in Kansas City, guided by Craig Crease. It left at **9:00 a.m.** from the parking lot at Westport Road and Southwest Trafficway near the old covered wagon.

The first stop was at the Harris-Kearny House on Westport Road and Baltimore Street. **Roy Ranck** gave a tour of the house and stayed with the group for the walk through Westport that followed. Participants walked by Jim Bridger's store, Kelly's Bar (originally built by Albert Gallatin Boone, grandson of Daniel Boone), John McCoy's store, home sites of Tom Fitzpatrick, John McCoy, John Sutter and William Bernard. Lastly, they visited Pioneer Park with the trails map and the three sculptures of John McCoy, Jim Bridger and Alexander Majors, dedicated in **October, 1987**.

The bus then went south on Pennsylvania, stopping briefly at McDonald's on the Plaza, following the South Branch of the Westport Route. They continued south on Wornall Road and stopped at the Wornall House at 61<sup>st</sup> Terrace. The trail began to turn west/southwest near this point and crossed the state line at 69<sup>th</sup> Terrace. The trail DID NOT continue south on Wornall.

The trekkers went by the Alexander Majors House at 82<sup>nd</sup> and State Line and then made their way to Harmon Park at 79<sup>th</sup> and Delmar in Prairie Village, where the North Branch crossed going southwest. A wayside exhibit will soon be placed there.

They went by the Strang Barn at 79<sup>th</sup> and Santa Fe Drive and a block farther south at the center of downtown Overland Park they saw a DAR monument. The North Branch of the Westport Route is about 1½ miles north of here and the South Branch is about ½ mile south. They went by the Sapling Grove site at about 82<sup>nd</sup> and Grant and then to Strang Park where the South Branch crossed before meeting the North Branch a couple of blocks west.

Going south on Nieman, the bus went by 92<sup>nd</sup> and Barton where the Military Road met the Westport Route.

Then the trekkers proceeded southwest on Kansas City Road to Olathe, viewing Mahaffie House, Olathe Courthouse DAR marker, Elm Grove, Gardner Junction and Lanesfield School. They returned to Westport at **5:00**.

An ambitious day, but with **Craig's** help, a lot was seen and learned!

### **OCTA 1995 CONVENTION**

The 1995 OCTA Convention was held in Grand Island, Nebraska. Among Trails Head members in attendance were **Denise and Maurice Ayers, Jim and Judy Budde, Mary Conrad, Kathy Conway, Charlene Duncan, Bob Hamilton, Dave Koontz, John Mark Lambertson, James Lee, Ross and Jana Marshall, Tom McCutcheon, Elaine McNabney, Jeanne Miller, Vern and Carol Osborne, and Harold and Carolyn Smith.**

Busy Trails Head members included **OCTA Treasurer Jim Budde; Jeanne Miller, Kathy Conway and Elaine McNabney** at the sales table; **Judy Budde, Charlene Duncan and Mary Conrad** at the raffle table; and **Ross Marshall** as a tour guide.

**Jackie Lewin**, a member of Gateway Chapter and also Trails Head, is the new OCTA President.

### **TRAILS HEAD TREK XVI – September 16, 1995 – Oregon Trail to Nebraska**

Trail Trek XVI was held on **September 16**, with the bus leaving at **8:00 a.m.** from the Ward's store at the Indian Springs Shopping Center at I-635 and State Street.

Led by **Ross Marshall**, the first stop was at the Kansas Museum of History on the west side of Topeka. Attendees viewed the tombstones of S. M. Marshall and Henry Roushi, both from Pottawatomie County.

The bus headed for the Union Ferry site on the Kansas River, southeast of the town of Willard, then on to Rossville and St. Marys.

The trekkers followed the actual route of the Oregon Trail to the Red Vermillion crossing. Nearby, they viewed the Cholera Cemetery that still has a small stone in it with the name of T. S. Prather.

Participants also walked through the Vieux Cemetery on the high ground east of the crossing.

On the west side of the river is the Big Elm tree, which at one time was the largest tree in Kansas, but now is showing some age and some wind damage.

The bus continued to follow the trail corridor north, passing the site of the Henry Roushi grave, and on to Westmoreland, a distance of about 18 miles from the Red Vermillion crossing. On the south side of town trekkers stopped at Scott Spring Oregon Trail Park and were joined by **Marian Bradley**, a historian of the area, who lives nearby and actually owns the land of the park. **Vern Osborne** also made some remarks.

At the park, an all-metal covered wagon and oxen is displayed. Several swales are visible in the park as well as near the Rock Creek crossing. A couple of markers also explains the history.

After lunch at the Westmoreland Café in nearby Westmoreland, **Elna Moore** joined the tour through the town and discussed the history of the town and the Oregon Trail there. The trekkers also visited the Rock Creek Historical Society Museum. After seeing the large hand-dug well at the northeast end of town which used to supply water for the town, the tour proceeded two miles north and one mile east.

A farmer named **Ed Moore**, who is the banker in Westmoreland, loaded participants on a tractor-drawn wagon with hay bales and took all about ½ mile into the field to the S. M. Marshall grave site. Everyone saw several trail swales on the way and also saw **Rosemary O'Connor's** farm which has excellent trail swales.

The bus proceeded north about seven miles to Blaine. About two miles north are trail swales and the trekkers traveled on Maple Grove Road to see them.

The Black Vermillion crossing of the trail is about eight miles away, but time did not allow a visit.

The bus looped back to Westmoreland and headed home, arriving Indian Springs at 5:30 p.m.

### **SFTA SYMPOSIUM**

The Santa Fe Trail Association Symposium was held September 21-24, 1995 at Larned, KS with the theme “A Study of the Multi-Cultural History of the Santa Fe Trail”. The Friends of the National Frontier Trails Center received a special award in recognition of promotion of the Santa Fe Trail as a result of the development of the Center.

**Ross Marshall**, a member of the Friends, a former president of OCTA and the outgoing president of Trails Head, was elected president of the Santa Fe Trail Association.

### **TRAILS HEAD ANNUAL MEETING**

The Trails Head Chapter Annual Meeting was held on the evening of November 9 at the Raytown Historical Museum. Eighteen were in attendance.

**Nominating Committee Chair Tom McCutcheon** presented the following slate of officers, who were subsequently elected: **President Mary Conrad, Vice President Bill Bullard, Secretary Tom McCutcheon and Treasurer Jim Budde.**

**Roberta Bonnewitz**, the guiding light of the Raytown Historical Society Museum, welcomed Trails Head. She is a historian of Raytown and the Rice-Tremonti home and has been associated with the Raytown Historical Society for over 30 years. **Roberta** spoke briefly about the history of Raytown before introducing **Walter Cook**, the speaker for the evening. **Cook** and **Bonnewitz** both have researched the route of the Independence Route of the trail through the Raytown area.

**Cook** wore a cap with “Blue Prairie Ranger” on it. He explained the Blue Prairie began about five miles south of Independence and extended to Hart Grove Creek, which is at about 98<sup>th</sup> and Elmwood.

He has located over 125 emigrant diaries which mention Independence and he has found 16 which mentioned the Rice farm. Archibald Rice moved to the area in 1836 or 1837. He did not own the land at first due to the “lost township” mapping situation. No private individual could buy land until the area had been surveyed. The Rice farm is about eight miles south of Independence at 66<sup>th</sup> Terrace and Blue Ridge Boulevard in Raytown.

**Cook** feels the Rice farm was an important campsite along the trail. He has found primary accounts of emigrants stopping to camp and to buy corn at the Rice farm, but he is still searching to find even more recorded instances involving the Rice farm as a campground. In diaries written from 1845 to 1849, he has found 16 accounts of the Rice farm.

He has found much less documented evidence regarding Barnes Place, or Cave Spring (which is a name given to the spring in about 1900). The Calvin Graham 1853 diary mentions a large spring which may have been Cave Spring. The Cave Spring Park is located at Gregory Boulevard and Blue Ridge.

Since **Cook** has only been able to locate seven primary accounts dating from trail days which mention stopping at the Jesse Barnes residence and inn, which had a tavern in it, he does not feel he has found strong evidence of usage of Barnes Place as a trail campground. During the late 1840s and early 1850s, the establishment was managed by Col. Grant.

The Barnes house was located at what is now 72<sup>nd</sup> and Blue Ridge about a block east of the present Cave Spring Park. **Cook’s** mother, who is now 84 years young, was living in the Raytown area when the house burned to the ground in late 1923.

Louise Barry, in her classic book “The Beginning of the West”, talks about the first campsite out of Independence as 10 miles out, so **Cook** feels Barry is actually describing the second



campsite out, which would now be at 80<sup>th</sup> Terrace, at about where James Reed Road crosses the Santa Fe Trail Road.

**Cook** stated the second most famous campsite between Independence and State Line was Russell's Encampment (1846), also known as Camp Bryant (1849). This camp was located 12 miles out of Independence and was situated immediately south of the modern Benjamin Ranch, or a half mile northeast of Bannister Mall. **Cook** has found five diaries from 1846, ten from 1849 and one from 1850, camping at a campsite 12 miles out from Independence.

Russell camped at the site in 1846. The name Camp Bryant comes from Edwin Bryant's party which camped at the site from April 26 to May 8 in 1849. In a three-page letter dated May 6, 1849 (obtained from the Bancroft Library), Charles F. Dulany describes Bryant's arrival in Independence and Bryant's campsite 12 miles out from Independence. **Cook** has located 10 accounts of stopping at Camp Bryant in 1849. Charles Goodyear invented the air mattress in 1849, and **Cook** has found the air mattress mentioned in one of the 1849 diaries (Boston-Newton Company).

**Cook** stated that his research is ongoing. He hopes to find still more diaries mentioning Independence, Rice farm, Barnes Place and other trail sites of interest in Jackson County.

**End of Part 3 of Trails Head History - 1991 thru 1995**