Greetings from your President and webmaster
By Berl Meyer

It was certainly a busy summer for your president and family. After putting together a chapter meeting at Fort Vasquez in May and another in Colorado Springs featuring Dr. Michael L. Olsen, Vice President of the Santa Fe Trail Association, we had one more event to prepare for, Fort Garland and the Highway of Legends. Nothing has yet been written about the latter and it was a noteworthy event. Most of the following are photos taken along the tour because, in some cases, a photo is better than a thousand words. On July 18 we began our excursion at La Veta, Colorado at 11:00 am. Others met us at Fort Garland.

We began our tour of Fort Garland:

Great Sand Dunes National Park, paralleling the Old Spanish Trail:
We were going to Pikes Stockade south of Alamosa but because of time restraints and reports of swarms of mosquitoes that time of year, our group postponed this opportunity for another time.

Day Two, July 19 - The Highway of Legends

We had lunch in Cuchara.

In Trinidad we spent the night at the Trail’s End Motel.

I made reservations to eat dinner at Rino's Italian Restaurant and Steakhouse. We ate there when I led the Santa Fe Trail trek some years ago and everybody enjoyed the experience. This restaurant has fine Italian food and casual elegance where servers may break out in songs of love. We were also had a talk given by Bill Shanks on Tom Tobin and the infamous Espinosa Brothers.

Tom Tobin (1823 – 1904) was an American adventurer, tracker, trapper, mountain man, guide, U.S. Army scout, and occasional bounty hunter. Tobin explored much of southern Colorado, including the Pueblo area. He associated with men such as Kit Carson, "Uncle Dick" Wootton, Ceran St. Vrain, Charley Bent, John C. Fremont, "Wild Bill" Hickok, William F. Cody, and the Shoup brothers. Tobin was one of only two men to escape alive from the siege of Turley's Mill during the Taos Revolt. In later years he was sent by the Army to track down and kill the notorious Felipe Espinosa and his brother; Tobin returned to Ft. Garland with their heads in a sack.

On July 20 we had a trolley tour of the sites around Trinidad and then on the way back up I-25 we stopped by the site of the Ludlow Massacre which had its 100th anniversary this year.

Sharon Danhauer gives tour of Oregon Trail sites in Wyoming

Near the end of August, our immediate past president Sharon Danhauer, led a tour for our chapter, the Wyoming Chapter of OCTA and the Loveland Historical Society to visit some of the Oregon/California Trail sites in Wyoming. Sharon wrote a fine article about this venture but the file was a bit too large to include in this newsletter. However, I posted it on the website and you can visit it here by clicking here. Sharon has included some great photos in this article.
Colorado-Cherokee Trail Chapter Meeting in Sterling, Colorado

The Colorado-Cherokee Trail Chapter had an outing October 18, 2014 to the Overland Trail Museum and Summit Springs Battlefield near Sterling, Colorado led by our vice president Bill Shanks. Located on Highway 6, east of the South Platte River, the Overland Trail commemorates the historic westward migration of gold seekers and early pioneers.

The museum was named after the Overland Trail stage route that was a branch of the Oregon Trail in Nebraska. The Overland Trail followed the south bank of the South Platte River through northeastern Colorado. It is said that the Overland Trail was the heaviest traveled road in America, maybe even in the world between 1862 and 1868.

The museum was opened in 1936 in the original building, which was made of native rock and designed after the early trading forts. In the past 65 years much has been added, not only to the structure, but to the collections which have been donated by local citizens. Unfortunately, the gate to visit the Summit Springs Battlefield was locked probably due to some recent vandalism on the site.

Doris Monahan
By Camille Bradford

We were saddened to hear from Susan Monahan that her mother, Doris Monahan, died on August 24 at age 90. Doris Monahan was a well-known historian of Northeastern Colorado. Her book, Destination: Denver City, The South Platte Trail, published in 1985, was acclaimed by Merrill Mattes, a founder of OCTA as “the definitive scholarly work” on the South Platte Trail.

In 2009 she published Julesburg and Fort Sedgwick: Wicked City – Scandalous Fort, which I had the honor of reviewing for Overland Journal. This book was the culmination of ten years of research. She believed that there was a great deal of misinformation published about the history of the area, partly because of a “paucity of available facts” that led to fictionalized accounts. She named various historians whose accounts she disputed. Her research took her to Washington, DC to examine government documents and reports in the National Archives in an effort to shed new light on the area’s history. Her other research interests included the Paleo-Indians of Northeastern Colorado and the history of Sterling, Colorado.

Doris participated in OCTA’s 2009 convention in Loveland and spoke at our chapter meeting in October 2010. She attended this year’s convention in Kearney, Nebraska just a few weeks prior to her death. Doris was beloved by all who knew her and we will miss her. Condolences may be sent to Susan Monahan: smonahan48@charter.net.
OCTA’s national board will be holding its mid-year meeting in Denver March 5-6, 2015. The first day will be devoted to a review of the national organization’s strategic plan. The regular meeting will be held on March 6.

On Saturday, March 7 our chapter will be sponsoring a morning symposium at Four Mile Historic Park. Four Mile House was the last stop coming west to Denver along the Cherokee Trail. There will be a box lunch at Four Mile House after the symposium and, weather permitting, there will be an afternoon tour of the Cherokee Trail south of Denver.

Symposium speakers include:

- Robert Lowdermilk, a member of the Board of Trustees of Four Mile Historic Park.
- Tom Noel, Professor of History at the University of Colorado at Denver.
- Christopher Lane, owner of the Philadelphia Print Shop West in Denver. Chris is also the map appraiser on Antiques Roadshow.
- Wesley Brown, a map collector and founder of the Rocky Mountain Map Society.

On Friday evening, there will be a reception at the Philadelphia Print Shop West.

Charles Preuss: Cartographer of the Oregon Trail Maps
By Stephen C. Schell

Cartography, from the Greek words kartes (map) and graphein (to write) is an activity that dates back more than 12,000 years. Today, cartography is a science and an art that incorporates the latest technology. In the time of John C. Frémont and Charles Preuss, training was also necessary but was based more on the power of observation, use of a sextant, star tables, note taking, and hand drawn art.

The history of mapmaking associated with the western movement is said to have begun with the Lewis and Clark Expedition in 1803. In 1805 they sent President Jefferson the ‘great grandfather’ of all western maps. From then on, government survey and mapmaking expeditions were sent in many directions and for many purposes. German Immigrant George Karl Ludwig Preuss (Charles Preuss) from Hohscheid, Germany got his start in 1834 with the aid of another German immigrant, Ferdinand Hassler who was Superintendent of the United States Coast Survey. Hassler put Preuss to work on surveys along the east coast.

After completing his work with Hassler, he found work with a British mining company. When completed, he applied for more work with Hassler but there was none available. Hassler recommended Charles Preuss to twenty-six year old John C. Frémont, a young officer in the Topographical Corp of Engineers, who was working on map data from his work on the 1839 Nicollet Expedition up the Missouri.
At the age of 39, Preuss began the first of several major expeditions with Frémont. After the 1842 and 1843-44 expeditions, the government commissioned a map called *Map of and Expedition to the Rocky Mountains in the Year 1842 Oregon and Northern California in the Years 1843-44*. From this map, and data from Frémont's 4th expedition, Preuss was commissioned to create what became known as the seven section Oregon Trail maps.

Commentary notes from Professor Donald Jackson* give some insight as to the origin of these maps. By January 6, 1846, the Senate proposed to create 10,000 copies and hopefully sell them for five to ten cents each. Lithographer E. Weber & Co., Baltimore was again selected to work for the Senate. In April, Preuss was engaged to produce the maps according to terms he proposed. Using notes from the 1842 and 1843-44 expeditions, Preuss went to work creating seven maps using 10 miles to the inch; approximately 250 miles per sheet (map). This scale allowed for much more detail than the 1845 map.

Jackson muses that these maps could be considered the first American road atlas but hardly useful today. Comprised of seven separate sections these maps were sold throughout the east and in England to emigrating Mormons. The maps served the government, wagon train masters, and emigrants venturing to the west.

* Donald Jackson and Mary Lee Spence (Distinguished Professors of History at the University of Illinois) published a four volume set of books (including maps) titled *The Expeditions of John Charles Frémont* (1970). Mrs. Spence is in her late eighties and I have been in contact with her since finishing my book in 2011.

Fremont sought out Preuss for a 5th Expedition in the spring of 1853. Mrs. Preuss (Gertrude) intervened because of previous experiences with Frémont. Instead, Preuss took a job as a draftsman on the Pacific Railroad Survey in the southwest. After his return to Washington, DC, where he lived in Ward 7 with Gertrude and three young daughters (son died in 1854), he became ill. Unable to fulfill his work with the survey he became depressed. On September 2, 1854, his hanging body was found in Blandensburg, a few miles from his home in the District of Columbia.
The *Evening Star* (Sept. 2, 1854) obituary read:

**Melancholy Event**

_We have to record today the most melancholy event that has occurred in our midst for years. Mr. Charles Preuss, surveyor and companion of Col. Fremont in the discovery of the best route to California, is no more. Some four years ago he was sun-struck in California, which more or less afflicted his mind ever since._

_About a week ago the malady became worse, derangement fully appearing when he was kept at home, and carefully attended to. Day before yesterday he walked out, and went to the penitentiary, where he asked the keeper to furnish him with a room. The keeper put him off in a kind manner, when he left the building, and no trace of him could be found until last evening, when his dead body was found back of the farm of Clark Mills, Esq., near Bladensburg. In his insanity he wandered away from home and perished there._

_Mr. Preuss was one of the most scientific men in his profession, and bore a most excellent character. His last trip was with Capt. Williamson, surveying a route for the Pacific railroad, during which he was afflicted with an attack consequent upon the first injuries received. He was a Prussian by birth, we understand, and leaves a deeply afflicted wife and family and numerous warm friends to mourn the melancholy event._

_My personal interest in Charles Preuss began after I completed a monograph about Frémont's journey through what is today northern Colorado and into southern Wyoming. In July of 1843, he divided his contingent into two groups. One group lead by Thomas Fitzpatrick left Fort St. Vrain and headed to a trading fort that eventually became Fort Laramie where the Laramie River empties into the North Platte. From there he would continue on to Fort Hall and meet up with Frémont who was heading in a different direction._

_Frémont and his group, including Preuss, headed northwest in search of a short cut through the Rockies. My work included the identification of his trail and campsites from Fort St. Vrain through what eventually became Milliken, Centerra Shopping Center (Loveland), Fort Collins, Bellvue (near Laporte), Eagles Nest Open Space (Larimer County), Livermore, and over the present day border and northwest to Albany, WY, and over the Snowy Range to Elk Mountain. At the conclusion of my work, I became interested in Charles Preuss and was able to locate and buy his autobiography. The book, *Charles Preuss Exploring with Frémont*, translated and edited by Erwin G. and Elizabeth K. Gudde was originally a lost manuscript sent by Preuss' widow to her family in Germany after his death in 1854. It showed up in Berlin in 1954. The manuscripts were sold to a German library but a copy was made and sent to the Library of Congress. Thereafter the Gudde team made the translation and it was published in 1958 by the University of Oklahoma Press._
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