Washington Medal Winners Named In DAR Essay Contest

Top entries in the recent essay contest conducted by the Daughters of the American Revolution were recently selected.

A winning essay was selected in each of grades five through eight. Writers have been awarded a Bronze George Washington Medal.

The four top essays follow:

RANDELL CLAYTON

YREKA TRAIL

By RANDELL CLAYTON

Grade 8, Altamont Jr. High

In the beginning the wild animals and Indians pioneered the trails. After many "moons" the trails were well worn between waterholes, along rivers and streams, through valleys and over mountain passes. These trails and desirable campsites were well known to the Indian. When the first white men came the Indian willingly shared this knowledge with them. They had already established the routes; the white men had only to ask and follow directions.

The problem of taking covered wagons was not always easy and quite different from trails on foot or horseback. Therefore, the emigrant had to consider a route that would be the easiest to take their wagons and still be the shortest and straightest.

In the many diaries handed down by the emigrants, the Indian is seldom given any credit. If they are mentioned at all it is to tell of the difficulties the emigrants had when they encountered them. Let us then use these few brief words as acknowledgement to the Indians and their part in pioneering the trails.

The Yreka Trail branched left from the Applegate Trail just west of the divide between Willow Creek and Laird's Landing on Lower Klamath Lake—southwest of the lake. Turning southward, it followed Willow Creek four miles to Willow Springs, passing en route a place later known as the Van Brimmer ranch. The springs were an old Indian campsite. From Willow Springs the trail ran southwest across Red Rock Valley and crossed Butte Creek near the present day Southern Pacific railroad siding of Kegg. It continued south through the Orr Lake gap, along the south shores of Grass Lake. Continuing south it intersected the Military Pass at Sheep Rock, through the Sheep Rock gap or Picture Pass, and then took a northwest direction past the old Smelting place, later the Herd and now called the Coonrod ranch, on to Yreka.

First written record of whites using the Military Pass-Sheep Rock Trail is by Hudson Bay fur trappers under Peter Skene Ogden during the winter of 1826-27. From then on it was in constant use by the Hudson Bay fur trappers, among them: Alexander Roderick McLeod, John Work, Michel LaFramboise.

The South Road Party of fifteen men from the Willamette Valley, who laid out the Applegate Trail during July, 1846, led a number of emigrants over the route that fall.

The Gold Rush years of 1848-1850 saw hundreds of overland travelers between Oregon and California.

In March, 1851, gold was discovered at Yreka. Immediately Yreka became a boom town, growing to considerable size overnight with the rush for the new diggings. Settlers of the Shasta Valley during that summer lost a great deal of stock by Modoc Indian raids who disappeared over the Sheep Rock Gap to the west. Due to the gold rush supplies were at a premium. A supply train of 25 mules, belonging to Augustus Scoamber, was completely stolen by the Modocs.

A company of twenty men was formed in Yreka to punish the Indians. Led by Samuel Smith, as captain, and Ben Wright as guide and scout, the trail of the lost stock was followed over the Yreka Trail and led on to an Indian village on the Lost River below the Stone Bridge. (The actions of these men with these Indians were a major factor in promotion of the Modoc War.) After part of the stolen stock was recovered, the return was made by way of Willow Creek.

In September, 1851, one emigrant train, the Hills-Riddle train, of twelve wagons passed through Klamath country with some leaving the Applegate Trail and turning south at its junction with the Yreka Trail.

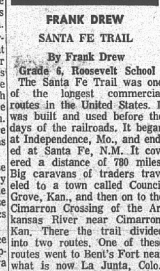
There are records of numerous emigrant trains arriving at Yreka in the fall of 1852 over the Yreka Trail. It was this year's emigration that had the first disastrous encounters with the Modoc Indians which made Bloody Point too well known. Also, the Ben Wright massacre of Modocs at Stone Bridge was during this season.

The Yreka Trail was in use as an emigrant road for only about ten or twelve years, due to new routes coming into use and the dangers of the Modocs around Tule Lake.

During the Modoc War, since Yreka was the depot for supplies to the army at the Lava Beds, the Yreka Trail saw constant use by the military as a supply route. Military communications were sent by horseback over the trail from Tule Lake to Yreka. From Yreka they were then telegraphed. Newspaper correspondents beat a path over the Yreka Trail to Yreka in order to telegraph their stories. Many a numerous horseback race was ridden by these war correspondents trying to file their stories first. Few of them were experienced horsemen.

The Yreka Trail continued to have a great deal of use by freighters after the Modoc War until the railroad reached Klamath Falls in 1909. A semi-weekly mail route was established over it. In 1883 railroad construction continued north from Redding. In 1896 Abner Weed built his mill at Weed and pushed the railroad north until by 1900 it had reached Grass Lake. During 1907-08 the railroad was pushed across Butte Valley gradually replacing use of the Yreka Trail.

Small sections of the Yreka Trail are still in use. The remainder of the trail has grown dim and many places have disappeared altogether. However, one can still trace most of the route from its Applegate Trail fork to Yreka. It takes time and a great deal of walking but the rewards are great. Who knows what artifact of the Yreka Trail days you might find . . . mine were oxen shoes.



FRANK DREW

SANTA FE TRAIL

By Frank Drew

Grade 6, Roosevelt School

The Santa Fe Trail was one of the longest commercial routes in the United States. It was built and used before the days of the railroads. It began at Independence, Mo., and ended at Santa Fe, N.M. It covered a distance of 780 miles. Big caravans of traders traveled to a town called Council Grove, Kan., and then on to the Cimarron Crossing of the Arkansas River near Cimarron, Kan. There the trail divided into two routes. One of these routes went to Bent's Fort near what is now La Junta, Colo., and then turned southwest across Raton Pass to the upper Canadian River in New Mexico. The other trail led across the Cimarron Desert. This trail was shorter than the other route, but unfriendly Indians raided the pioneer camps and wagon trains, and this made the shorter route more dangerous.

The earliest travelers carried their goods on packhorses. A man named William Becknell first used wagons on the trail in 1821. After that, traders brought manufactured goods to Santa Fe by wagon to exchange for mules, furs, gold and silver. In the 23 years of trading between 1821 and 1844, the annual value of the merchandise carried over the trail averaged $130,000. About 80 wagons and 150 men used the Santa Fe Trail each year. An extension of the trail, known as the "Old Spanish Trail," ran from Santa Fe, N.M., to Los Angeles, Calif., in a semicircle route by way of Durango, Colo., the Green and Virgin rivers in Utah, the Colorado River, and across the Mojave Desert in California.

With all the dangers and hardships, settlers increased the population of the towns and cities along the Santa Fe Trail, and by 1845, there were 7,000 settlers in the Oregon country.

STEVEN WYNNE

THE OREGON TRAIL

By Steven Wynne

Grade 7, Roosevelt School

American history is filled with great moments, great decisions and great men, but the most significant moment for Oregonians was when the decision was made to blaze the Oregon Trail.

Two thousand miles was more than most people traveled in a lifetime in those days, but thousands embarked eagerly on this heartbreaking journey.

Had they not, Oregonians might now be singing "God Save the Queen" as their national anthem.

England and the United States were contesting ownership of the Oregon territory. The fact that these Americans came to this area, established homes and schools gave the United States legitimate claim, and the U.S. gained possession by the treaty of 1846.

The trip, however, was long and perilous for the hardy breed who set out to settle this land.

The trail across prairies and mountains is well marked by the deep ruts of passing wagons and the grave markers of those who died during passage.

In reviewing this trail, it is important to understand some of the hardships and problems that these brave pioneers had to face. Indians, weather, terrain, illness and accident, all posed perils for these settlers.

Most wagon trains assembled in the small town of Independence, Missouri. Others gathered at Westport (now Kansas City), and St. Joseph, Missouri. Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, and Council Bluffs, Iowa.

Trains were organized. The tasks of driving, scouting and guarding were assigned on a democratic basis. A wagon master was named as top authority.

Those unskilled at camp crafts, and there were many, had to learn by doing.

When the go-ahead signal was given, whips cracked and the wagon train moved westward in a cloud of dust.

Diaries of those who made this historic journey contain complaints of the food, dirt, death and the day's travel.

The first day's travel reached the Shawnee Methodist Mission 15 miles West, and each succeeding day's travel grew longer as humans, animals and equipment settled into the routine.

There were untold hardships.

Wagons with little or no brakes had to be aided by ropes on steep inclines. Rivers and creeks had to be forded or ferried, often-times at the cost of animals, equipment and lives.

Indians, too, presented problems.

An incident is recounted when Pawnees refused to let the travelers build a bridge across the Red Vermillion River. A brave emigrant named Zelber, armed only with a map and a pencil went among the savages and convinced them that the Great White Father in Washington had given him authority to escort the people safely through their country. They relented and the train crossed the river.

Many unique methods were used to measure distances. One man, for instance, used a long chain. Another told of counting steps. Later, a Mormon emigrant was credited with a device that measured distance by the turning of the wagon wheels.

Only the birth of a baby, severe illness, bad accidents, death and burial, straying of oxen or some other emergency was permitted to delay travel.

Some wanted to stop on Sunday and spend the day in worship, but the trains had to move on. A long journey lay ahead and the grim spectre of winter in the mountains always remained at the far end of the trail.

Death was a constant companion on the trail.

One woman counted graves as she followed the trail later. In her diary she noted: "June 14—passed seven new made graves.

"June 16—passed eleven new graves.

"June 17 — passed six new graves.

"June 18—passed twenty-one new graves.

"June 19 — passed thirteen graves.

"June 20—passed ten graves.

"June 22 — passed seven graves. If we should go by the camp grounds, we would see five times as many graves as we do."

Buffalo stampedes were another danger. Black masses of buffalo swamped many a wagon train, causing much damage.

The trail led across the Kansas and Nebraska plains to a spot on the Platte River called Dogtown where trains coming from Nebraska City joined up.

From the North Platte River, the trail turned Northwest to Fort Laramie.

Unusual rock formations became landmarks along the route. Today they still bear such names as Jail Rock, Courthouse Rock and Chimney Rock.

Fort Laramie, the most famous trading post on the trail, was the jumping off point for the hazardous trip over the Rocky Mountains.

Looking westward from Independence Rock which was almost halfway on the journey, they could see a distant V-shaped split in the mountains which was called Devil's Rock, Devil's Gap or Hell's Gate.

Here trails converged. Oregon-bound settlers, California gold-seekers and Mormon travelers all used the same route.

Once through the gap they separated. Wagon trains for Oregon headed for Bear Valley in Idaho, across numerous creeks to the Green River and then to Fort Bridger.

The trail now followed the Snake River for 300 miles to the present Oregon border. Deep canyons made it impossible to get down to the water. Cattle died and cholera struck many trains.

Next came Fort Boise and the Blue Mountains, final barrier. Those fortunate enough to survive the dangerous trip were overjoyed to see the Columbia River.

Many remained at Fort Vancouver and settled nearby in a village called Portland.

For untold Americans, this trail brought only death and disaster. For others, a new start in a new land.

The Oregon Trail is their legacy to us, an exploit of the highest courage, determination and dedication.

CINTHIA K. DEVORE

JOURNEY OF 1850

By Cinthia K. DeVore

Grade 5

Twyla Ferguson School

The Birmingham Emigrating Company started from Birmingham, Iowa, April 11, 1850, and arrived in Sacramento, California, August 15th of the same year. The route followed by this party covered part of the old Dragoon Trail, established in 1846 by Captain Nathon Boone, son of Daniel Boone. From Council Bluffs to Pacific Springs, they followed the same route as the Mormons in 1847. From Pacific Springs to the junction of Hudspeth's Cutoff and the Fort Hall Road, they followed Sublket's Cut-off. They traveled from Soda Springs, via Fort Hall, from the City of Rocks on to Sacramento. This journey is of great interest to me because the first captain of the company was my great, great grandfather, Hiram Barnes.

Hiram Barnes was born in Ohio, March 18, 1818. In 1839 he moved to Iowa and homesteaded a farm southeast of Birmingham. He served as a lieutenant in the Third Iowa Cavalry during the Civil War and afterwards returned to Birmingham.

The party left Birmingham on the 11th of April with 51 persons, 20 wagons, and 84 horses. All were in good spirits on this the first day of travel, the next few days being uneventful as they traveled over open prairie country where the roads were good and they could average twenty miles per day. By April 19th they had reached the Des Moines River and crossed at Martin's Ferry, the Mormon's having crossed at Bonaparte, lower down the river. From this point, Captain Barnes went on to Council Bluffs to purchase grain for the company as it was too early in the year for grass enough to feed the stock. After the company crossed at Martin's Ferry, they traveled about forty nine miles before camping on the Middle River. This being Sunday, all hands were in camp and they had preaching by the preacher, Mr. Loury. A large number of the company were church members and an agreement to observe the Sabbath whenever possible was part of their constitution.

After a month of travel the horses were standing the trip well but the grass was hardly started yet and they still had to feed them light. They were camping on the prairie by that time and fire wood was hard to find. They finally burned the bed of an old feed wagon which they were going to leave, to cook their evening meal by.

The next few weeks they made good time because the prairie roads were very good. Water was a problem and sometimes they traveled as far as twenty five miles to have water to use in camp. Game was plentiful and their hunting party was able to keep the travelers supplied with fresh deer and buffalo meat and a few wild geese.

By the end of May the company saw several indians from the Cheyenne tribe and on one occasion, visited a Cheyenne village. They found these indians friendly, and more proud and noble looking people than the Omahas or Pawnees had been.

They rolled on past Chimney Rock, by Scott's Bluff, on toward Fort Laramie. The weather was fair, with only a rain storm now and then, the days usually warm and the nights cool.

By June 1st they had reached Fort Laramie. Members of the party were disappointed in the fort. Instead of 6 or 8 log huts, they found 30 or 40 buildings, some of fine style frame construction two stories high. It was enclosed by a wall 11 feet high, made of adobe or Spanish brick, with two brass cannons of good size inside the fort. On the morning of June 3rd they saw the famous Kit Carson, who along with Tim Goodale, had brought fifty head of horses and mules to trade with the emigrants. They found the celebrated mountaineer to be a small man, well proportioned, and "with an eagle in his eye."

The company, all in good health, good spirits, and the teams looking well, arrived at Independence Rock by June 10. The huge mass of stone made a grand and beautiful sight and from the top of this land mark, they could view the country around them.

The weather was colder as they traveled over the summit of the Rocky Mountains and many came down with "mountain fever." By the time they reached the Big Sandy all members of the party were again in good health.

Steamboat Spring, a bathing place and favorite camp for emigrants, was reached by the end of June. Here the company took a vote in favor of going by way of Fort Hall instead of Mile's Cut-off. The next few days found the roads good, plenty of grass and water.

Upon reaching Fort Hall they found traders dealing in horses, cattle, and dry goods. Butter sold for 50 cents a pound and traveling on, they passed American Falls, one of the great natural land marks of the Oregon Trail.

The company made good progress due to the fact that they were equipped, with good stock, good equipment and money. They were always humane to their animals.

They saw more suffering and passed through more hardships after reaching "the beautiful Humboldt" than in all the rest of the journey. They had to swim the river and wade through slews every day in order to get grass for the teams.

August 9th found them moving up the third and last range of mountains. Reaching the summit, they found the American flag, with stars and stripes floating in the breeze, bidding defiance to the cold breezes on the peak of the Sierra Nevadas.

The morning of August 15th they started early and moved at a slow pace, reaching the city of Sacramento a little before nightfall. They have now reached the end of their journey, safely landed, ready to begin building a new life in a new land.

Remodeling Protested

WASHINGTON (UPI) — Oregon's three Democratic representatives joined with Democratic house members from 11 western states in protesting the proposed remodeling of the two older House office buildings.

Reps. Al Ullman, Robert Duncan and Edith Green joined in drafting a letter to the House Office Building Commission protesting the expenditure of "many millions of dollars" for the project.

African Still Prefers Payment For Marriage

By KEVIN J. HAMILTON

SALISBURY, Rhodesia (UPI) — The young African lawyer looked incredulous. "How on earth can you be proud of a woman for whom you did not pay lobola?" he asked in impeccable English.

His words bring to light at least one aspect of life in which emergent Africa prefers to remain traditional — marriage customs.

"Lobola" is a payment traditionally made in cattle, but today often in cash, by an African bridegroom or his parents to the parents of his prospective wife. The amount varies with the "worth" of the girl.

The early white settlers in Africa thought originally the lobola payment meant an outright purchase of the woman, and criticized it along with slavery. But modern anthropology has shown this is not the case.

Lobola, in the words of one city African, is "a kind of payment to the girl's parents during our marriage, to please them." Another young man said, "Lobola should always be paid to the parents as a sign of respect to the people who have kept her since she was born."

It is the return of the investment made by African parents in rearing their offspring. It is a mark of respect, not just a cash payment when the goods are delivered.

Lobola has taken many forms among the different African tribes. In Zambia for instance, the tribes of the northwestern province give hoes and axes. In the souther province cattle are the offering, and among tribes such as the Bemba and Tonga, beads are the customary gift.

In urban areas today lobola is paid almost exclusively in cash, and varies between 20 and 30 pounds sterling ($56 and $84) depending upon the eligibility and education of the girl.

With the immorality and large-scale breakdown of family life that has hit the urban centres of Johannesburg, Salisbury and all other large towns in southern Africa, lobola more than ever is an affirmation of the bridegroom's seriousness of purpose.

There are, of course, those who want to do away with lobola. A letter to the "agony" column of a Rhodesian weekly summed up the position in this way:

"I think the time has come to reason about lobola. In most cases lobola has endangered many families.

"Lobola has been a good custom to our forefathers because during past centuries all people had enough cattle, goats and sheep with which to pay their lobola.

"But now where all people depend on money it seems parents are not preparing a better future for their daughters."

The letter ended with the plea: "Let's care more for our daughters and less for money."

In spite of the reluctance by most to do away with the system, what is happening is that the African bride is turning her back on traditional wedding ceremonies and going more and more for European-style weddings complete with chapel, maids of honor, cake and in some cases champagne.

Wedding dresses are all the rage and brides-to-be are paying small fortunes for them (presumably financed from lobola). Some firms are cashing in on the idea by offering pay-as-you-marry gowns on the installment plan.

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The building is made of brick, 60x100 feet, single story. Salvage materials include used brick, dimensional lumber, 2x12 purlins, rafters and joists and other dimension and interior lumber, and four 60-foot span timber roof trusses. All materials must be removed from the site, except the concrete floor may be left in place. The purchaser must furnish the City a performance bond.

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