

# The River Road Review

Oregon-California Trail Association—Nebraska chapter

Winter 2006

## Spring Trek is Planned for All Fools' Day

It's no joke—the annual spring trail trek will be held on Saturday, April 1. There is a fee of \$10, which includes lunch, and you must RSVP to Bill Petersen by March 20. We will begin the day's activities at 8:30 A.M. in the Museum at the Ft. Kearny State Historical Park. Coffee and rolls will be provided.

At 9:00 A.M. Eugene Hunt, the park superintendent, will give a presentation on Ft. Kearny on the Platte followed by a tour of the facility. The Park is not officially open until Memorial Day weekend, so we should have the place pretty much to ourselves. If you don't have a state park permit you can purchase one then.

The lunch, included in your \$10 fee, will be at the Archway Monument at 11:30 A.M. After lunch you are on your own until 1:00 P.M. During the break you might tour the Archway, although some of you may have already seen it or plan to return in June for the *150th Anniversary Handcart Celebration*. Or you might just want to take a stroll the or rest up for the afternoon's activities.

The annual chapter meeting will be held at 1:00 P.M. in the Morrison room at the Archway.

After the meeting we will travel the trail from Central City/Dirty Women Ranch to the Susan Haile grave and show you to the first view of the *Coast of Nebrathka*. There should still be sandhill cranes in

## The Grave of Susan Haile

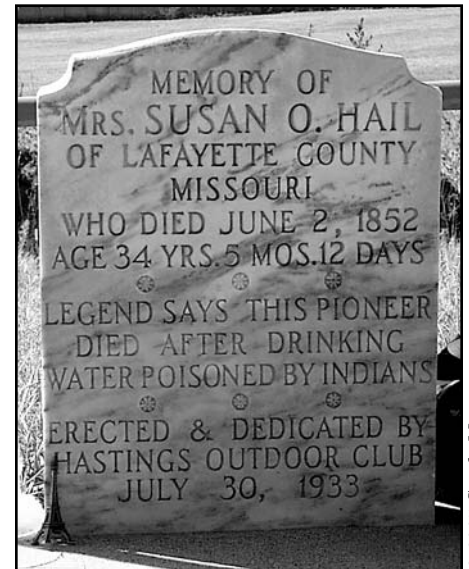
by Randy Brown, Graves and Sites Committee Chairman for OCTA  
reprinted courtesy of Adams County Historical Society

It has been called *The Lone Grave*, and it lies on a sandy knoll about four miles northwest of Kenesaw, Nebraska. Most assuredly, however, when Susan C. Haile died in 1852 hers was not a lone grave. This was in the midst of the *cholera corridor*, the segment of Oregon-California Trail between the jumping-off towns on the Missouri River and central Nebraska where thousands of emigrants lie buried, victims of the scourge of overland travel, Asiatic cholera. During the trail era, the grave's location was at the northwestern edge of the dry run over the divide between the valley of the Little Blue and the Platte river. There are probably a hundred other lost graves of emigrants not far from that of Susan Haile, but hers is the only one in the Ft. Kearny area to survive with its identity intact. 1852 was a particularly bad year for cholera, a bacterial disease which struck the digestive system

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the fields along the Platte. Time permitting you can drive back down the trail crossing 32-Mile Creek to the Little Blue or visit the National Audubon Society's Rowe Sanctuary to view the cranes. Please note that restrooms are not available east of Ft. Kearny on the trail; the nearest is 4 miles from the Haile grave at Kenesaw.

You need to RSVP by March 20 to Bill and Nancy Petersen via e-mail at [bilancy@hotmail.com](mailto:bilancy@hotmail.com) or



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One of the most enduring legends of Adams County is the story of the Lone Grave near Kenesaw. The resting place of Susan Haile (sometimes spelled "Hail" or "Hale") has captivated generations of area residents, and no less than three historical markers have been erected at or near the site.

phone at either (308) 832-2211 or (308) 830-1287 or mail at 615 S. Colorado, Minden, NE 68959.

Bill and Nancy will be in California March 8-14, but they can be still be reached by cell phone at (308) 830-1287, unless they are out of service in the Black Rock Desert or up on the Lassen Cut-off.

The Petersens are planning on camping at the Ft. Kearny recreation area if it's not snowing. You're welcome to join them.

# The Editor's Corner

## Have any ideas for future OCTA-NE events?

Although a good many miles of Trail crossed Nebraska, there are only a few places that we know of where definite ruts and swales can be seen today. Fortunately there is no hard and fast rule that says that these are the only places where we are allowed to cluster for fellowship

## OCTA-NE Spring Trek

**April 1**

**meet at 8:30 A.M.  
Museum at  
Ft. Kearny  
Historical Park**

**\$10 Fee**

**RSVP by March 20:  
bilancy@hotmail.com**

or

**(308) 832-2211**

or

**(308) 830-1287**

or

**615 S. Colorado  
Minden, NE 68959**

### **The Oregon-California Trails Association—Nebraska chapter**

*Event Coordinator:* Loren Pospisil  
*Secretary:* Corrine Rickner  
*Treasurer:* Betty Scheinost  
*Newsletter Editor:* Carole Meyer

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and frolic. Likewise, there is no formula. We are not obliged to work a tour of a museum or historic site into every gathering or even to visit every trail marker in our path—although the obsessive-compulsive complex is not unknown among our membership.

OCTA-NE has no recreation director so it's up to us to find an excuse to romp, socialize, collect sandburs, talk trail history and eat. Occasionally we even transact a little chapter business.

Some of our past events have been very well-organized with far more crammed into a single day than any other same group would dream of. Some, on the other hand, have been about as well-rehearsed as a belch. Either way, we haven't heard any complaints. Our little group of Nebraska Rut Nuts is easily entertained. So if you have some ideas about future events, speak up or, better yet, volunteer to be our guru.

Don't worry about the location. The really nice thing about Nebraska is that any given trail segment is equally inconvenient for the majority of our members, and even those of us who live in the central region, often wind up spending two or three hours on the road getting to wherever it is we're supposed to start.

### **2006 Chapter Dues**

Send your chapter dues of \$10 directly to the treasurer:  
Betty Scheinost  
2760 36th Avenue  
Columbus, NE 68601-2342

### **Nebraska Trail News**

Send trail news, photos, and upcoming events to the editor.

Carole Meyer  
1118 N. Minnesota Avenue  
Hastings, NE 68901

In e-mail use **OCTA** as the subject.  
cmartist@inebraska.com

There is no reason why we can't get together and do a scenic drive along the Loup Forks Route. Who knows, maybe we'll spot a swale from one of the back roads. It probably wouldn't do us any harm to get together in Omaha; after all, a couple of hundred thousand emigrants started there. The county road network makes it possible to approximate large portions of the Nebraska City Road, the Oregon Trail, the Little Blue Route and probably others. We can't recall ever having seen any evidence of the trail from the Interstate west of Julesburg, but in the 1860s a very large number of emigrants (as many as 60- or 70-thousand) used the Lodgepole Creek Route to get to the Overland Trail in southern Wyoming. Maybe it is time that we got together and took a closer look. With that many wagons there just might be some trail remnants.

If you can't decide who to contact with your ideas, just send a letter to the editor. There is probably somebody out there who will even pitch in.

~Carole Meyer

cmartist@inebraska.com

150<sup>th</sup>  
Anniversary  
Celebration

## **Mormon Handcart Expedition**

June 2-3

Archway Monument  
Kearney

www.archway.org

# From the House of Burke

by Marvin Burke

On a Saturday last July, Dorene and I drove to Nebraska City and spent Sunday driving around Nebraska City. We're from the suburbs of Denver, and we never expected to see so much in a little town.

The first stop on Sunday was the Lewis and Clark Interpretative Center. Wow—what a great place! We visited all the major stops in the Center and got our card embossed with the Lewis and Clark seal. We drove across the Missouri River and immediately turned around and went downtown to the site of the original Fort Kearny. (By the way, do you know why the town of Kearney is spelled with an "e"? This was an error by the U.S. Post Office, and no one ever changed it.)

As luck would have it, a gentleman was mowing the lawn at the Fort. I, of course, had to ask him several questions. I noticed that here was a sign "Fort Bramer". I started the conversation asking him about this name. He stated that this was the site of Fort Kearny, and that he was now the owner, and his name was "Bramer". He added the word Fort to the sign, because his son was on his second tour in Iraq, and he was collecting some souvenirs. He then told me that the first two log-like buildings were used during the WPA days. The last building, on the east side, was built in the 1990s for use as a teen community center. I then learned that the two buildings across the street (northeast corner, second and third buildings from the corner) were used as warehouses for those on the Trail. Who am I to say anything different? I shall say that the architecture for these two buildings was different than the others on the block.

We didn't get to see old Wyoming and the tombstones, but we did see the Taylor, Wessel, Bickel (Nelson) House, and we saw the old Post Office now occupied by the Farmers Bank. Don't forget the Grand Army of the Republic Hall. There is just so much to see here.

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*The single-story buildings, second and third from the left, were warehouses for folks on the Oregon Trail according to Mr. Bramer, a land owner on the south side of the main street in Nebraska City.*

We then moved on to Arbor Lodge State Park. Another wow! And I still haven't left Nebraska City. We took time to tour the mansion. The folks knew the meaning of living well. Still difficult to believe that just about everything was built around the existing property.

The next stop was John Brown's Cave, a.k.a. the Mayhew Cabin, which apparently was used during the days of the *Underground Railroad*. We did not have time to take the tour, but I must ask, "Where is the cave?"

Being a bit of a railroad nut, we finally found the railroad station. The nearby marker mentioned Joseph Brown and his steam wagon, and that it broke down about seven miles away. Let's go see it! We drove past the Russell, Majors and Waddell Freighting Company, and that was a real treat. Drove past Arbor Lodge and drove west on Steam Wagon Road. We noted the Steam Wagon Angus Cattle Company and eventually found the stone marking the demise of the steam wagon. (Our daughter got married at the Stanley Hotel in Estes Park. This Mr. Stanley was the developer of the Stanley Steamer. Too bad they weren't able to share notes. Mr. Stanley developed a film process and sold it to

George Eastman. Need I say more?)

A final review of the Nebraska City map showed the Arbor Trail Winery. After all this driving we found the winery about a mile from the Lewis and Clark Center. Needless to say, a donation was made for the good of the cause. Who ever heard of a winery in Nebraska?

We did not get to Beaver Crossing. We wanted to follow the Fort Kearny Road to Kearney. We followed the directions in the *River Road Review*, Winter 2005.

I know we would have learned a great deal more, if we could joined the trek, but we believe the trip to Nebraska City was worthwhile, and we certainly learned more than anticipated. Years ago Nebraska City would not have been the top of our list of things to see. This was a good day! By the way, we had dinner at the Embers. If you want a good meal, especially the steak, you may want to consider this.

This is an opportunity to thank Laurence L. Falk, PhD for preparing the article "Nebraska City to Fort Kearny Cutoff". We used this article as our guide from Nebraska City to Fort Kearny. I never cease to be amazed how these folks traveled so many miles without the

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so quickly that one could be “healthy in the morning and dead by nightfall”. The sheer number of deaths, especially from contaminated water, helps account for the graves that survive elsewhere from that year’s emigration. Wyoming has several: Henry Hill, Mary Homsley, Elva Ingram, Mily Irwin, Quintina Snodderly, William H. Bedford, and Nancy Hill, all originally marked by stone grave markers. Nebraska has the grave of Rachel Winters near Scottsbluff. But the Haile grave is conspicuous by being the only grave of 1852 that can still be identified in the cholera corridor of Nebraska. That is part of the Haile story.

Susan C. (Seawell) Haile was born December 20, 1817 at Cape Girardeau in southeast Missouri, not far from where the Ohio and Mississippi rivers converge. She was the seventh and youngest child of Joseph and Prudence Seawell. Both parents were members of pioneering families of Eastern and Middle Tennessee. Joseph Seawell’s father was Colonel Benjamin Seawell, Jr., scion of the family of Seawells who

had been in Gloucester County, Virginia, as early as the 1630s.

Benjamin Seawell migrated to Bute County, North Carolina, with his brothers and their families in the early 1770s. He became one of the state’s most prominent citizens during the Revolutionary War. Seawell was a member of the Committee of Safety in Halifax, North Carolina and later became colonel of the North Carolina Regiment of Militia composed of men from Franklin and Halifax counties. In that capacity he saw action at the Battle of Camden, August 10, 1780. Following the war, Seawell, his family and most of their relations moved west, taking up lands granted to North Carolina’s war veterans. Col. Seawell settled in what later became Wilson County, Tennessee.

Joseph Seawell, the father of Susan Haile, was born to Benjamin and Mary (Booker) Seawell January 31, 1776. He was their third son. In the early 1790s he probably first traveled to Middle Tennessee with his older brothers, who were surveyors. Joseph eventually settled in Sumner County. He was described as a “handsome young captain of a military company” and likely served in the War of 1812. By that time Joseph had a wife and four children, as he married Prudence Bledsoe on April 4, 1805 in Sumner County.

Like Joseph Seawell, Prudence Bledsoe was a member of a family of pioneers who were prominent in the early history of Tennessee. Her parents were Anthony and Mary (Ramsey) Bledsoe. Soon after their marriage, the Bledsoes moved to southwestern Virginia, then still a wilderness, and located on the Holston River. Anthony Bledsoe was a surveyor and helped establish the western extension of the boundary between Virginia and North Carolina across the mountains which later separated Kentucky and Tennessee. Bledsoe

was also a captain in the Virginia militia and took part in the relief of Fort Watauga, in present Carter County, Tennessee, which was besieged by Cherokee Indians soon after the outbreak of the Revolutionary War. He too rose to the rank of colonel.

Following the route of American forces in the disastrous Battle of Camden in 1780, an appeal was sent to Col. Anthony Bledsoe and Col. John Sevier, commanders of the *Overmountain Men*, to send help from the settlements west of the Appalachian mountains. Col. Bledsoe remained behind to protect the frontier from Indian attacks and sent a subordinate with Sevier to the reorganizing Patriot forces. They participated in the battle of King’s Mountain, where British Major Patrick Ferguson and his Tory militia were defeated and Ferguson killed. This was part of the chain of events that led to the British surrender at Yorktown. Because he missed the Battle of King’s Mountain, some say Col. Anthony Bledsoe has not received the historic recognition he deserves.

For his services during the war, however, Col. Bledsoe was granted over 6,000 acres of land on the Cumberland River in what would eventually become Sumner County, Tennessee. He established a fort called Greenfield Station two and a half miles north of his brother Isaac’s settlement at Bledsoe’s Lick. Isaac Bledsoe himself was an early explorer of this region of Middle Tennessee and one of the legendary *Long Hunters* of the frontier. In 1771 he discovered a spring and salt lick during his travels and later convinced the family to settle there. After Sumner County was organized in 1785, it was still a part of North Carolina. Anthony Bledsoe was elected representative to the North Carolina legislature and served until his death.

## Online Resources

Nebraska chapter of The Oregon-California Trail Association:

<http://incolor.inetnebr.com/gnelson/neocta.html>

The Oregon-California Trail Assn.:

<http://www.octa-trails.org>

Mormon Pioneer and Pony Express NHT online books:

<http://www.cr.nps.gov>

Pony Express Historical Assn.:

<http://www.stjoseph.net/ponyexpress/>

The National Park Service:

<http://www.nps.gov>

Still not reconciled to loss of their Cumberland territories, the Cherokee and Creek tribes renewed their warfare on the Tennessee frontier in 1787. On July 20, 1788, Bledsoe's Station was raided by Indians who stampeded the settlers' stock. Anthony Bledsoe and another man incautiously stepped into an opening in the stockade, and both were wounded fatally while standing in the bright moonlight. Bledsoe lived long enough to dictate his will and made provisions for his daughters to receive part of his property. Otherwise, under the North Carolina law of that time, only his sons would have shared in the inheritance.

Just nine months later, on April 23, 1789, the eleventh child of Anthony and Mary Bledsoe was born. The baby girl, named Prudence, would become the mother of Susan Haile. Mary Ransey Bledsoe, "a woman of remarkable energy and . . . noted for her independence of thought and action", was aged fifty-four when Prudence was born, twenty-six years after the birth of her first child. Three years after Col. Bledsoe's death Mrs. Bledsoe married an elderly widower named Nathaniel Parker. Mary Bledsoe Parker lived until 1808.

For little Prudence Bledsoe the cost of living on the Tennessee frontier was high. Her father, three uncles, two brothers, and at least one cousin were casualties of the Indian wars of the 1780s and '90s. It may have been some consolation that in 1807 Col. Bledsoe was honored by the State of Tennessee when it named a newly organized county for him. Bledsoe County in southeast Tennessee still exists today. While not immediately pertinent to the story of Susan Haile's life and death, her family's roots clearly lay deep in American history. Yet many Oregon and California emigrants had similar ancestral backgrounds, descending from Indian fighters and heroes of the American Revolution and always part of the great westward migration of early America.

Over and over again, the same pattern emerges: families moved from colonial Virginia or Pennsylvania to the Carolinas, then over the mountains into Tennessee and Kentucky. Later generations kept moving west into Illinois and Missouri and then finally over the plains to the West Coast.

Most of these people had great numbers of children, and their migration was motivated as much by a quest for land for the ever increasing population as it was by the urge to "Go West", as boosters like Horace Greeley exhorted.

Following the War of 1812 Joseph and Prudence Seawell became part of this historical pattern. They crossed the Mississippi River into Missouri and settled in Cape Girardeau County. Records show that other members of the Seawell and Bledsoe clans were also in Cape Girardeau at that time, continuing another phenomenon that had been long established. Pioneer families tended to move together with groups of brothers, sisters, and cousins all settling in neighboring areas as they moved west. By this time Joseph and Prudence were the parents of five children, all born in Sumner County: Martha, born in 1806; Rachel, in 1807; Margaret, in 1809; William Neely, in 1811; and Mary, in 1813. The two youngest Seawell children were born in Missouri, John Henry in 1815, and Susan C. on December 20, 1817.

It is not known what Susan's middle initial "C" stands for. But it may be for Caroline. One of Susan's cousins, the daughter of her Aunt Rachel (Bledsoe) and Uncle William Neely, was named Caroline, and her older brother and sister, William Neely Seawell and Rachel Seawell were named



Randy Brown undertook this project and placed an OCTA marker at the grave site in July, 2002.

for these relatives. The two families apparently were close, and the Neelys may have made the move to Cape Girardeau about the same time as Joseph and Prudence Seawell. Joseph Seawell died on October 27, 1819, when Susan was not yet two years old.

Prudence decided to return to Sumner County, Tennessee, where the Bledsoe clan could help care for her young children. But it is not known exactly where the family went. Perhaps Prudence Bledsoe still owned land inherited from her father, but at this time she disappears from the records. She may later have married a Mr. Wilson, but this marriage record cannot be found in court documents. Sumner County does, however, record the marriages of several of Prudence's children, including Susan C. Seawell. This is where we again pick up her story.

On November 15, 1836 the clerk of Sumner County issued a marriage license for twenty-year old R.C. Haile and Susan C. Sewell, the misspelling perhaps being a reflection on how she pronounced her last name. The young couple were married two days later. Susan was a month shy of her nineteenth birthday. Richard C. Haile was a native of Smith County, Tennessee, where he was born July 13, 1816. He received his early education in

(cont. on page 6)

# Grants Are Available for Trail Projects

The Conservation Fund, Eastman Kodak Company and the National Geographic Society is accepting applications for the 2006 Kodak American Greenways Awards program. Applications for the awards, which provide important seed money to stimulate greenway, blueway and trail planning and design, may be submitted to The Conservation Fund through June 1. The award recipients, announced in early fall, will receive grants of \$500–\$2500 to support their pioneering work in linking the nation's natural areas, historic sites, parks and open space. Local, regional, and statewide nonprofits, as well as community-based and municipal government organizations are encouraged to apply. Last year, Kodak, The Conservation Fund, and the National Geographic Society awarded 47 community grants.

In addition to providing small grants, the Kodak American Greenways Awards Program honors groups and individuals whose creativity and vision foster a nationwide network of greenways and open space. Outstanding achievement awards were presented to the Honorable Mark R. Warner, Governor of Virginia, Lewis and Clark National Historical Park, Lockheed Martin Corporation and Maxine Johnston of the Big Thicket Association.

Grants can be used for all appropriate expenses needed to complete a greenway, blueway and trail project including public outreach, planning, design, construction, technical assistance, legal and other costs. Grants may not be used for academic research, general institutional support, lobbying, or political activities.

Each year, greenway initiatives touch hundreds of cities and towns

across America. Through its American Greenways Program, The Conservation Fund continues to help build a national network of linked open spaces and natural areas, connecting communities to the outdoors and to each other and forging partnerships for a sustainable future.

For more information, an online application, grant guidelines and additional program information are available on The Conservation Fund's website [www.conservationfund.org](http://www.conservationfund.org) under "Award Programs". It is preferred that applicants use the online application. If you do not have internet access, please contact:

Kodak American Greenways  
Awards Program  
c/o The Conservation Fund  
1655 N Fort Myer Dr, Suite 1300  
Arlington, VA, 22209  
(703) 525-6300  
[jhauck@conservationfund.org](mailto:jhauck@conservationfund.org)

## Susan Haile *(cont. from page 5)*

nearby Nashville, after which he settled in Sumner County and engaged in the *mercantile* business. Richard and Susan's first child was born on August 16, 1837. The baby boy was named Joseph Seawell Haile (after his Grandfather Seawell). Less than two years later, on March 27, 1839, their first girl was born, Martha Antoinette. The family called her Nettie. A second son named Leeman was born November 25, 1840.

About this time the Hailes left Tennessee and moved to Lafayette County, Missouri, to the east of Kansas City. No reason is given for the move, but records show that this county in western Missouri was already—or was soon to be—well populated with members of Susan's extended family, both Seawells and Bledsoes. Undoubtedly it was another clan movement as had been traditional in her family for generations. In Lafayette County Richard Haile was respectively employed in "school-teaching, book-keeping, and clerking". Every few years another child was

added to the Haile household: Sarah Jane (Sallie) on September 16, 1843; John William on August 23, 1846; and finally the baby of the family, Susan Henrietta (Retta) on December 3, 1848.

In 1849 Richard Haile joined the California Gold Rush. Details are lacking, but he may well have been accompanied on the overland trek by John Henry Seawell, Susan's older brother. John was married to Mary S. Lauderdale, whose sister was married to Susan's cousin, George Washington Bledsoe, and all were residents of Lafayette County. Richard Haile arrived in Sacramento on October 7, 1849 but soon went out to Nevada City, where he engaged in mining for about a year. In the fall of 1850, Richard and John Seawell resolved to settle in California permanently. Sometime in 1851 they returned to Missouri, going the long way around by Cape Horn and New York City.

On May 1, 1852, it was recorded that Richard and Susan Haile sold forty acres of land to Susan's

brother, William Neely Seawell, for two hundred dollars. The parcel was located about ten miles south of Lexington, Lafayette County, Missouri. There is no record of the Haile's acquisition of the land or whether the Haile's lived and farmed on the property. In fact, the Seawell land sale the is the only legal record of their stay in Missouri of over ten years, and they do not appear in the 1850 census.

The Haile property was likely sold just before they left for California. But this latest westward movement was another extended family affair for Susan. Besides her brother John and his household, at least one other of her siblings left Missouri with them, Martha Seawell, Susan's unmarried older sister. There were probably several wagons in the company and perhaps some hired hands as well, since the Hailes were bringing with them over one hundred head of cattle. Martha must have been a help to Susan. The six Haile children

*(cont. on page 8)*

# Pony Express Marker Vandalized

**HASTINGS**—Thieves sacked a historic marker along U.S. Highway 6 near Hastings sometime in mid-February, prying off one of two bronze plaques. A few days later, with the investigation underway, the second plaque also disappeared.

The memorial, erected by the Adams County Historical Society in 1962 to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the original Pony Express, is located 8 miles west of town at the intersection of U.S. 6 and Roseland Avenue. It has been targeted before. A few years ago vandals toppled the three-by-five foot monolith off its concrete base.

Also in mid-month, Clay County officials reported that the pioneer cemetery near Spring Ranch Stage Station, about 20 miles southeast of Hastings, had been trashed. It is uncertain if these incidents are related.

Local OCTA-NE members are cooperating with police, and have asked Association Manager, Travis Boley, to assist in putting a fair value on these custom-made castings. No official estimate of damage

has yet been released, but is almost certain to run to several thousand dollars.

The investigation is being conducted by the Adams County Sheriff's Office (402-461-7181), and OCTA members are encourage to monitor E-Bay and other likely sources in case the bronzes are put up for sale.



*This forgotten-looking Pony Express monument is what remains after thieves stole the two bronze plaques pictured above.*

© 2005 Carole Meyer

## **Burke House** *(cont. from page 3)*

benefit of a Magellan GPS (global positioning system), and there were no stores nearby to do shopping for groceries.

(As an aside, with the advent of GPS what would be the chances of using the longitude and latitude coordinates in locating a lesser-known town, etc.? Don't get me wrong, I still like the written directions, but the coordinates would assist those of us in finding west in the absence of mountains.)

I reluctantly admit that I missed Fairbury. It's just a little too far south for this venture.

We bid adieu to Nebraska City and proceeded to Syracuse and Palmyra. I realize that the plaque in Syracuse was unavailable for viewing. Then we started looking for the marker in Palmyra; no luck. I had no mountains from which to

get my bearings. This is why I suggested the use of coordinates.

The next stop was quite an adventure. Our Magellan allows us to search for an intersection. We entered Saltillo Road, but it would not accept 14th Street. Not to be denied, the system suggested the 5600 block. Good enough for me! We proceeded on a dirt road and found Saltillo. The GPS then told us the next direction. We finally found 14th Street. I found one reddish stone, but it had no marker. Alas and alack, what to do! I reoriented the cat (based on GPS) and looked in a southwesterly direction. Guess what? Sitting under a shade tree was a large red stone with a plaque, telling just what I needed.

We then drove to Pleasant Dale; however, I have no idea where Camden is located. This is not on

the map. (We visited Fort Kearny the next day and asked about Camden. The lady had a book about Seward County, and she showed me an 1875 entry for Camden, which had a population of 75.) This is why I'm suggesting the use of coordinates. I'm sure, I was close, but no prize. We proceeded to the rest area on I-80; another success.

I'm pleased to announce that we were successful in locating the plaques in the York area. Again, we were successful in locating the plaques at exit 342 and at the Aurora exit. By this time, we needed to move into Fort Kearny and select a motel—first things first.

Again, thanks to Dr. Falk for preparing this little venture. We intend to complete the trek. Another great day!

then ranged in age from fourteen-year old Joseph to little Retta, who was just three.

Unfortunately there is no contemporary account of the journey. The Hailes, however, probably left the Missouri River in the Kansas City area, or they could well have gone northwest from Lafayette to St. Joseph, one of the major outfitting towns of the time. They had at least two experienced trail hands with them, Richard Haile himself, and brother-in-law John Seawell, the former Forty-Niners. All that is known is that when they reached the Platte River in south central Nebraska, Susan C. Haile died. In 1879, a California author familiar with Richard's story wrote of the event: "When at Platte river, Mrs. Haile was seized with cholera, from the effects of which she succumbed on June 2, 1852. Here far away from friends, on the lonely waste of an unknown border, was this fair pioneer buried, near Fort Kearny, on that river, leaving naught but a mound, heaped by loving hands; the last tender offering to a devoted wife and mother, by her sorrowing husband and children."

Legend says that Richard Haile identified the grave with a temporary marker and turned back east to get a proper marble headstone so that the grave of his wife would be forever marked. According to this story Richard left the wagon train, placed his children under the care of their Aunt Martha Seawell and returned to St. Joseph or Omaha with his horses. Once there he sold the horses and used the proceeds to pay for an engraved marble headstone. Not having enough money to buy another outfit, he "procured a wheelbarrow and with this vehicle set out on foot, pushing his wife's headstone before him". After marking Susan's grave, he joined another wagon train as a hired hand and proceeded to California. There is no confirmation of the story in Richard

Haile's brief biography in a Solano, California history book, but it may well be true and would account for the grave's survival, though the wheelbarrow aspect is probably an embellishment added in later years by local people. Indeed, the wheelbarrow story is also told about two other known graves in Nebraska, those of Amanda Lamme (sometimes recorded as Lamin) near Bridgeport and Sarepta Fly near Lexington.

Still, the existence of a marble grave marker in this area during the trail era is confirmed by William Woodhams, who arrived here May 10, 1854: "[We] passed many graves. One had a nice marble headstone with a woman's name on it. It stood on the top of a little sandhill, and strange enough was that sad evidence of civilization here in the wilderness, the more so as it bore a woman's name. Bad enough for man to be buried in this wild region, but a woman's place seems peculiarly in the comforts of home and friends."

The grave was noted at least once during 1852 season by John H. Hays. Hays kept a list of graves he had seen while crossing the plains and had it published in a Sacramento newspaper. There is no indication of the date on which Hays saw Susan's grave. The inscription, however, was noted by him: "S.C. Haile of Missouri, died June 2, 1852". Did Hays see the first, temporary marker Richard left at the grave or the marble gravestone he put there later? There is no way of knowing. The original marker has been replaced at least two times. The original and its successor were chipped away by souvenir hunters, a common nineteenth century practice.

None of the contemporary accounts mention the entrepreneur with the hand-dug well (although soldiers had dug a well two miles east of Kenesaw about this time), the Indian attack or the poisoned

water at the site, probably because these things never happened. But within a few years, the romantic Lone Grave legend was well known, and it persists today.

Richard Haile was reunited with his children, either in California or possibly somewhere in Nevada, burdened as their slow-moving wagon train was with a drove of cattle. They settled in the Napa Valley, where Richard farmed in partnership with John Henry Seawell (now known as Major Seawell) and one L.C. Burroughs. The farming operation was combined with commercial lumbering. In 1857 the partnership was dissolved, but Haile continued to farm and added merchandising to his business. In 1858 the Haile family moved to the Suisun river valley in Solano County, California, about midway between Sacramento and San Francisco, where Richard bought a farm of 510 acres near the town of Fairfield. By this time Richard Haile had remarried the widowed Susan D. (Clayton) Sears, a mother of four children. They had four more children together, and it has come down that in the family the children were referred to as *your* children, *my* children and *our* children as a way of keeping track of the respective parentages. Mr. Haile served several terms in the California legislature, representing in turn Napa and Solano counties. The Seawell genealogy describes him as "a highly honored and influential citizen in the history of the development of California".

Richard C. Haile died on January 23, 1890 at his home in California. His name is long forgotten in the story of Adams County. But his fame lives on as the husband of Susan Haile, the occupant of the Lone Grave on the Oregon-California Trail, and the man who trekked across the prairie with a headstone in a wheelbarrow (in legend, at least) to honor his wife's final repose.