

Upcoming Chapter Meetings

October 25 (Thursday)

7:00 p.m.

Elwood, Kansas, Community Center

(From U.S. 36 take 238 in Elwood. Go west to 7th Street. Turn right and continue until you see the Elwood City Park and Community Center on your left.)

Program presented by

Outdoor Semester students of Missouri Western State University

Students will share their experiences as they traveled parts of the Trail. Instructor for the course is Gateway member Dr. Elizabeth Sawin.

The program is sponsored jointly by Gateway and the Doniphan County Historical Society.

Please plan to attend!

Annual Membership Dinner and Election of Officers

Date: November 13 (Tuesday) at 6:00 p.m.

Place: Wyeth-Tootle Mansion Museum at 11th & Charles

Special Program, "Oxen, the Beasts of Burden on the Overland Trails" by Cindy Weaver

Save this date - more details to follow.

The following letter was received from OCTA Education Chair Bill Hill in response to Gateway's donation of \$100 to provide trail history books to students. Each year, OCTA hopes to present books to schools in the area of the convention site.

Dear Chapter President

I just wanted to thank you and your chapter again for your support of our 25th anniversary activity book donation program. Without your support it would have been more difficult to have had a successful project. Please extend thanks to your chapter. I know that this program was a success in all the ways we hoped it would. I have received a personal note from Penny Businga, Administrator for the ESU #13, for the 950 books that you helped to provide. She also sent OCTA headquarters a nice thank you. As a result 950 fourth grade students will benefit, teachers will have an additional resource, the book donation was covered by an article in one of the local papers and it was also covered on the local radio program providing a positive image for OCTA to a large number of people. I know that some chapters have sponsored a similar class or school book donation program previously. I would hope that your chapter will continue to do so or consider sponsoring such a program in the future. As I said it is a win/win situation for everyone - the students, schools, community and OCTA.

Thanks again

Silver Dollars Rock Arrow Rock

As Missouri gained statehood in 1821, William Becknell, a former salt works manager for Nathan & Daniel Boone, was nearly bankrupt and feared jail time for inability to pay his debts. To reverse his fortunes, he undertook a daring adventure. In September, he packed trade goods on mules, crossed the Missouri River and headed off overland at Arrow Rock toward Sante Fe then a possession of Spain. If he somehow avoided attack by Indians living along the route, it was more than likely he and his crew would be taken prisoners by Spain and sent to rot in a Mexican jail for their troubles, than he was to make a profit.

Missourians got an unexpected surprise on January 22, 1822, when a triumphant Becknell returned, dumping bags of silver dollars on the sidewalks of Arrow Rock. This simple act that brought proof the Mexican government, having recently wrested control from Spain, was inviting Americans to trade. When Becknell proposed returning to Sante Fe, using a wagon train, people were sure he was joking and laughingly referred to this proposed venture as the Caravan of Death. But on May 22, 1822, Becknell filled his water casks at Big Spring, and his train of three wagons filled with trade goods, twenty-four oxen and twenty-one men rumbled out of town. Every citizen of Arrow Rock came out to watch his departure.

Becknell's wagon route became the famed Santa Fe Trail, passing the future jumping-off site of Independence, Missouri and traveling on through what would become Gardner, Kansas, later the turning-off point for the Oregon Trail. He slogged through Kansas gumbo clay, wet and slick from spring rains, appeased the Osage Indians near Bridge Creek, forded Rock Creek and traveled leisurely past the oaks later known as Council Grove, then laboriously journeyed on to successfully reach Santa Fe.

The Santa Fe Trail became an international commercial highway used by American and Mexican traders. In 1846, the Army of the West traveled it to invade Mexico. When the Treaty of Hidalgo ended the Mexican War, it became a national road connecting the United States to its new territories, a highway of commercial and military freighting, forts, stagecoach lines, gold seekers, adventurers, and emigrants.

It all started near Arrow Rock, a historic town settled in 1829 on the bluff above the Arrow Rock ferry which took Becknell across the Missouri River from Franklin. Today, the Big Spring still flows and the original stone gutters carry water off Main Street. It was settled by peoples from the upper South, and in 1860 nearly half the population was African-American slaves living on nearby hemp and tobacco plantations.

Lewis & Clark noted the bluff as they passed it in 1804, a site where Native Americans had long gathered flint for arrows. The French had mapped it in 1732 as "*pierre fleche*", rock of arrows.

In 1805, Daniel Boone's sons and the Morrisons began a salt-making business in the nearby salt springs, which became known as Boone's Lick. Producing 30 bushels a day, using 60 kettles and 20 men, they shipped the salt, an essential pioneer commodity, by keelboat down the Missouri River to St. Louis. Although the Boone's left the business before 1812, the road they built between St. Charles and the "lick" still bears their name.

In 1812, when the Sac, Fox & Iowa tribes, warring against settlers, forced those on the frontier further east, the Fort Osage trading post and the Osage tribe around it removed to Arrow Rock for protection.

Today, Arrow Rock is noted for historic buildings dating back to 1834 and also as the home of three Missouri governors, Meridith Marmaduke in 1844, Claiborne Jackson in 1860 and J.S. Marmaduke in the 1880s. John Sappington,

a medical doctor who discovered quinine as a cure for malaria, hailed from Arrow Rock. (*Sappington Museum at left*) Artist George Caleb Bingham also lived in Arrow Rock where his home is preserved.



Arrow Rock is a step back in time, with wooden sidewalks and overhead store canopies. It borders the Big Muddy National Wildlife Refuge. If you take the US Fish & Wildlife Service's Lewis & Clark Trail of Discovery which takes hikers not only to the Arrow Rock bluffs but to the old river wharf and ferry site, in your imagination you can look out to see Meriwether Lewis, William Clark, and William Becknell as they open the West.

By Marilyn Bryan