



Travel The Oregon Trail in Caribou County

A Self-Guided Tour of Sites Documented in
Emigrant Diaries & Journals of Early Explorers



Photo by Dale Moon

For more information contact:

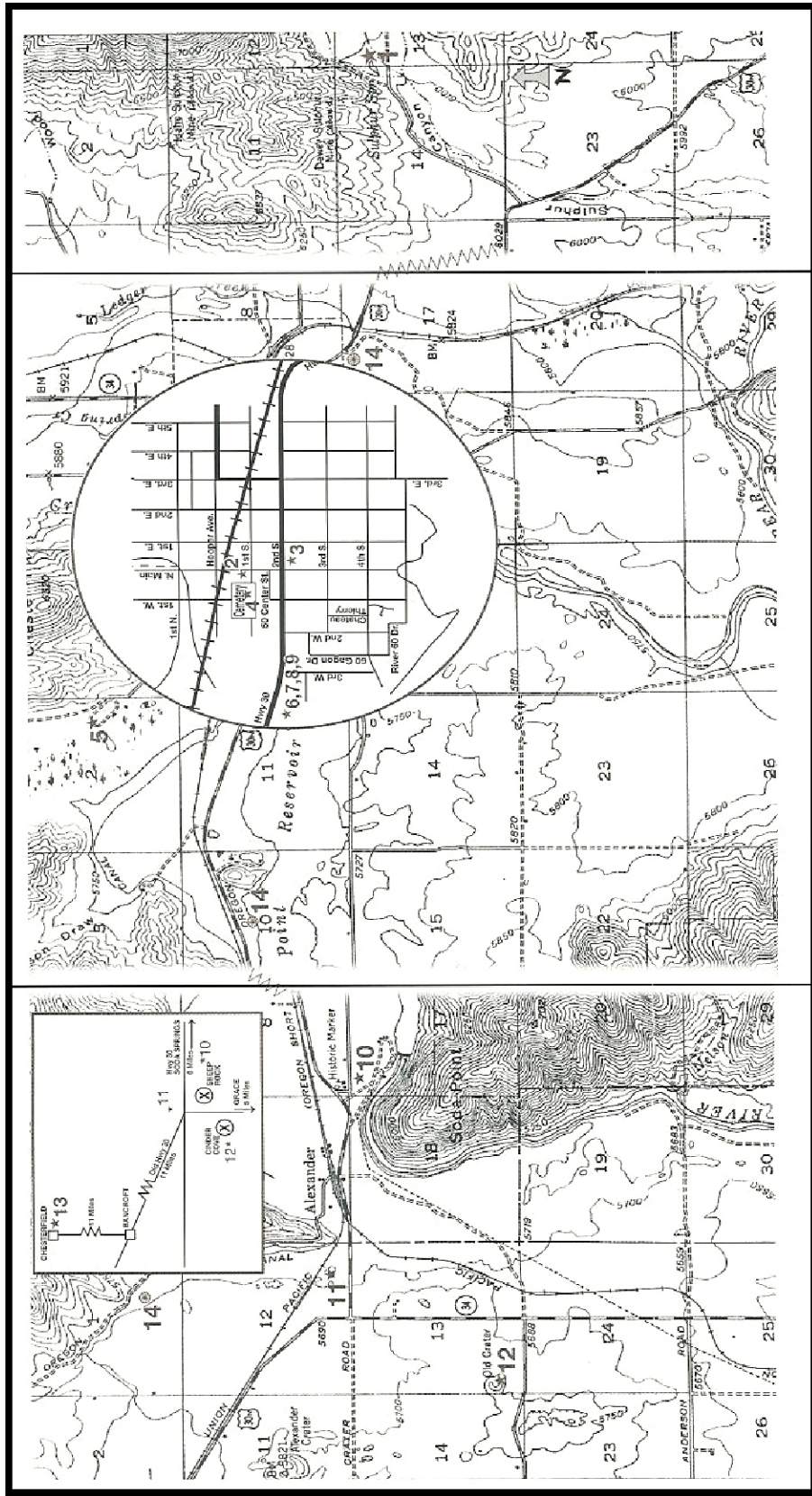
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1. "Tosoiba." Daughters of Utah Pioneer, Camp Meads, 1958
2. "Historic Soda Springs Oasis on the Oregon Trail"
Ellen Carney, Traildust Publishing Co.. 1993
3. "The Oregon Trail: Ruts, Rogues & Reminiscences."
Ellen Carney, Traildust Publishing Co.. 1993



Soda Springs Site Location Map

1. Sulfur Springs
2. Pyramid Springs
3. Brigham Young Cabin Site
4. Wagon Box Grave
5. Ninety Percent Spring
6. Camp Cannor
7. Morrisite Settlement
8. Signing of 1863 Shoshone Bannock Peace Treaty

9. First Marriage in Soda Springs
10. Sheep Rock
11. Hudspeth's Cutoff
12. Cinder Cones
13. Chesterfield Townsite
14. Wagon Ruts 6 Trail Markers

The Oregon Trail on Caribou County closely follows the current location of Highway 30 until it reaches Sheep Rock Point. There are slight deviations from this route, and ruts are best found near the locations shown on the map at the three sites 14, also marked with a small wagon wheel. From there it turns sharply northwest on its way to Chesterfield where well preserved ruts are found. From that point the Trail leads to Fort Hall and the Shoshone Bannock Reservation. Enjoy your tour and be sure to visit other historic sites and natural features in the Soda Springs area.

Sulfur Springs

Site 1



ELLEN CARNEY PHOTO

Sulphur Springs was the first of several notable springs that Oregon Trail emigrants encountered in the Soda Springs area. Its distinct rotten egg odor can still be easily detected as one drives along Highway 30 east of town. The surface of the water bubbles all over and emits a strong sulphur odor. In dry years there is no water in the area and therefore no bubbling. Still, you can clearly detect the sulphur gas emissions. It is no wonder travelers were drawn up the canyon to the source of this malodorous atmosphere. That Sulphur Springs was well known to the emigrants, is confirmed by Henry W. Puckett in 1850.

In the course of the afternoon we passed the celebrated Suplher Soda and Beer (sic, Beer) Springs, all of which lay a little distance from what is know as the "Big Bend of Bear River," or the point where It makes an abrupt turn from north to south.

The Deseret News on August 11, 1871, reported"

Speaking of Sulphur beds in Sulpher Canyon: Hundreds of wagon loadsof Sulphur can be gathered here with a shovel. This certainly must become valuable in the future...

Captain John Codman in his book, **The Mormon country, a summer with the Latter-day Saints**, published in 1879 notes:

The Sulphur Lake is a sheet of water an acre in extent, many times stronger of mineral than the springs of Sharon and Richfield, and bubbling over its whole surface with escaping gas, whose noise is heard a mile away. Behind it is a mountain of Sulpher. Its shore last year was a yellow Sulphur beach, now black as charcoal. A few months before our visit, some curious persons, anxious to know what a literal lake of fire and brimstone was like, visited the place one dark evening. They dropped their matches on the beach, and in a moment found their most vivid anticipations realized. The lurid flames circled the mad, fuming waters, and threw their light on the craigs (sic), and thus these amateur artists painted a horrible picture, which absolutely scared them as they looked from fire to lake and from lake to mountains, and then at the unearthly faces of each other.

An early sulphur mine in the late 1800s was operated for probably no more than two seasons. Charlie Lewis was likely the first foreman, he was followed by a man named Charles Henry. Then in 1918, in response to wartime demand for sulphur, the Idaho Sulphur Co. was organized, a retort built, and plans made to mine the ore. The plant was scheduled to begin operation in 1919, but with the signing of the armistice, the project proved impractical.

LOCATION/DIRECTIONS: Sulphur Springs is located four miles east of Soda Springs on Highway 30, then one mile to the northeast on Sulphur Canyon Road to the first road junction. The main spring lies between the two forks, 50 yards east of the junction. The county owns the road but the springs are on private land. Please respect private land.

Pyramid Springs

Site 2

Early trapper and pioneer diaries are replete strange geology in the area of Soda Springs. In 1845 Joel Palmer, noted that the



ELLEN CARNEY PHOTO

first view he had of Soda Springs was of two or three white hillocks or mounds, standing to the right of the road. He also noted the rocks for miles around were of the soda formation, and that the soda had left a sediment, which was crumbled and loose, with an occasional dry mound of ten or twelve feet elevation. Palmer said the space between the river and the road was covered with grass, but between the road and the mountain was barren of vegetation of any kind.

Many diarists mention the cones being the first visible point in the area. James Field, in 1845, noted the formation of a lime rock which sounded hollow when walking over it. Artist James F. Wilkins, who joined an ox wagon company headed for California during 1849, depicted a series of white mounds, in a painting of the area.

Today many of the cones have been graded away. but occasionally, remaining rocks still show this unusual formation. Pyramid Spring, as mapped in a USGS 1878 survey by George W. Newman, is now the location of the famous Soda Springs Captive Geyser [See map on page 16]. The area around the Geyser is replete with mineral formations and a mound which is undoubtedly one of mentioned by the pioneers.

John Kirk Townsend - July 8, 1834 is quoted in **Emigrant Trails of Southern Idaho:**

Our encampment on the 8th. was near what are called the 'White Clay pits,' still on Bear River.

The soil is soft chalk, white and tenacious: and in the vicinity are several springs of strong supercarbonated water which bubble up with all the activity of artificial fountains. The taste was very agreeable and refreshing, resembling Saratoga water but not so saline. The whole plain to the hills is having depressions on their summits from which once issued streams of water. The extent of these eruptions, at some former period, must have been very great. At about half a mile distant, is an eruptive thermal spring of the temperature of 90 [degrees], and near this is an opening in the earth front which a stream of gas issues without water.

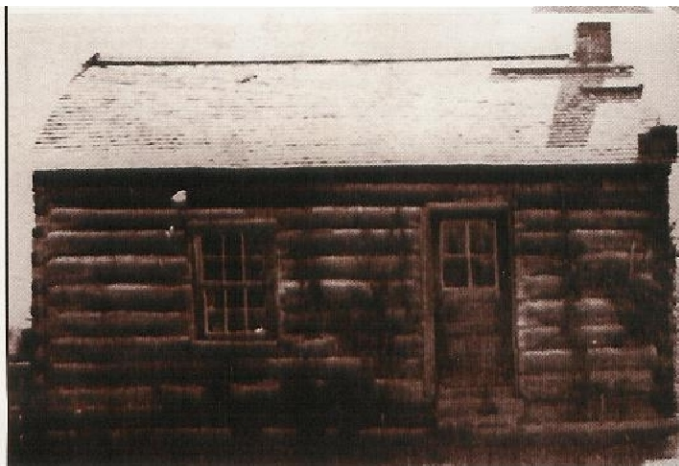
LOCATION/DIRECTIONS: Turn north at the traffic light intersection of 2nd South and Main Street. Pyramid Spring mound and Geyser Park sit behind the Enders Hotel.

Brigham Young Cabin Site 3



ELLEN CARNEY PHOTO

A summer cabin was built in 1870 for Latter Day Saint "Mormon" Church President Brigham Young for many years as a stopping off place for President Young and other church leaders as they traveled through the area doing



COURTESY OF ROERT I. RIGBY

The first log cabin in Soda Springs was built for Brigham Young.

church business. The home was destroyed in 1944 in an attempt to move it.

In June, 1870, members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints residing in the small village of Paris learned Brigham Young and other Church authorities were planning a trip to Soda Springs. Fifty men, led by Charles C. Rich and David P. Kimball, loaded seven wagons with building materials and supplies and headed for Soda Springs to prepare for their arrival. Twenty men, under the direction of John Walmsley, were assigned to erect a home for President Young. It would be a comfortable place near the famed Soda Springs, where Young and other church leaders could stop temporarily as they traveled to and from nearby settlements.

When completed the log cabin had a good floor, windows with calico ruffles, and a shingle roof—a truly fine home for the times. It measured eighteen by twenty-two feet and became the first home in Upper Town of Soda Springs, where Mormon settlement was begun that fall.

Jesse W. Fox, eminent Utah surveyor, and a group of men laid out a townsite consisting of fifty-six ten acre blocks, with streets eight rods wide. Three men, Ludvig Suhrke, Ebeneze Farnes, and a man whose name is unknown, built cabins in Noember of 1870 at the mouth of Wood Canyon, three miles east of the townsite.

In thepring of 1871, the first permanent Mormon settlers arrived in Soda Springs. These included ifl addition to those who built cabins the previous November, Daniel F. Lau, Elijah S. Sheets, Horrace Eldridge, Jeppe G. Folkman and C. G. Rose. The homes they built had dirt floors and roofs, and burlap sacks hung at openings to keep out the weather. They were nowhere near as luxurious as that first home built for President Young.

The “Brigham Young Home,” as it was thereafter known, stood until 1944. Owner Harry Richards was attempting to move it to the back of the lot to make room for the Brigham Young Lodge, a tourist motel, when the roof caved in. Logs from the cabin were used to line the driveways around the cabins at the motor lodge.

LOCATION/DIRECTIONS: A marker, flanked by logs from the cabin, stands in front of the Brigham Young Lodge and indicates the site where the cabin once stood on the south side of Highway 30 between jst and 2nd east streets.

The Wagon Box Grave

Site 4

This was the first grave in what is now known as Fairview Cemetery in Soda Springs. A family of seven, killed by Indians, was buried here together in the wagon box from their covered wagon. The Wagon Box Grave headstone marks the burial site of the emigrant family. A wagon train pulled away from Little Spring Creek, where it had camped overnight (presumably near the southwest corner of present First West and Fourth East) One man's horses were lost and the lone family stayed behind to hunt for them.

The next morning tree trappers—George Goodhart, Bill Wilburn, and John Taung—saw the wagon standing by the creek and went to investigate. They discovered that the father, mother, and five children had

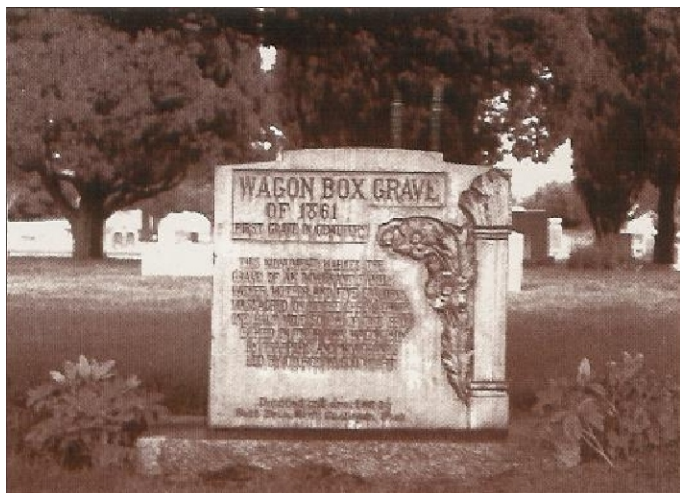


PHOTO BY DALE MOON

been murdered. In **Trails of Early Idaho**, by Abraham C. Anderson, George Goodhart tells of this early tragedy:

We looked them all over and decided to send a message to some emigrants that were camped at a little knoll south of what is known as Davisville. I was selected to carry the message.

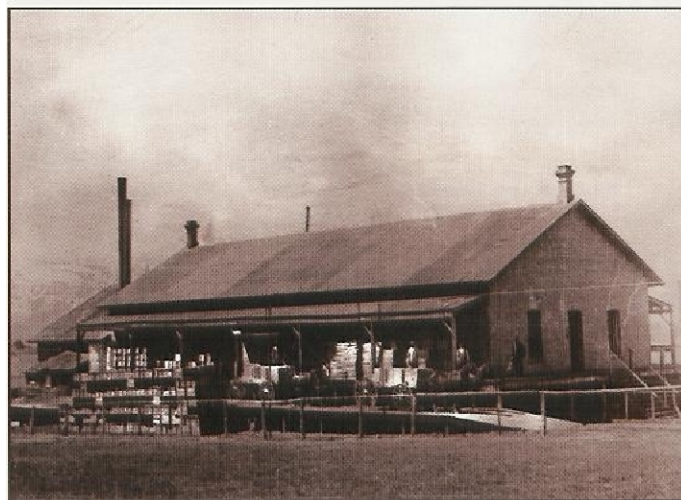
When I told them what had happened they said, They were a family of our own train. We were waiting for them to catch up. The reason they were behind was that their horses had strayed away from the others and they had to hunt them up. They told us to go ahead, as they believed they would find the horses and catch up by night.

They hitched onto a light wagon, and three men and two of the women got in and came back with me., We all decided that the best thing we could do was to bury them in their own wagon box, —for we had no lumber to make a casket. . . We went and got the dead emigrants' horses and hitched them to their wagon, then hauled the bodies in it to the place of burial. We took them out and laid them down on the ground. Then we took off the wagon bed and placed it in the bottom of the grave after it was dug.

LOCATION/DIRECTIONS: Fairview Cemetery is located at the corner of Center Street and First West, in Soda Springs. From Highway 30 in Soda Springs, turn north onto First West by

Ireland Bank. At the end of the first block, enter the cemetery. From the entrance, 100 feet on the right is a flagpole and a "Veterans of all Wars" Memorial. Straight ahead another 100 feet is the the Wagon Box Grave, on the right. It sets back 40 feet from the road, flanked by two evenly spaced spruce trees, one on each side.

Ninety Percent Spring Site 5



COURTESY OF ROBERT L RIGEY

This spring, for its excellent water quality, played an important part in the early growth and development of Soda Springs.

According to Emma Just's December 1864 letter to her cousin, Lucy, Ninety Percent Spring was possibly found by the Morrisites and was named by the Morrisite settlers. What the 'ninety percent' signified, we can only conjecture. Emma writes:

We had not been here long when a party of us young folk discovered an especially good spring not far from our settlement. People who have tasted the famed water of other countries say it is as fine as any. I don't think anyone had ever tasted it before, for the men took the sod away and opened up the source. They have named it "Ninety Percent."

Fred J. Kiesel was a freighter, a distillery operator in Ogden, Utah, and wholesale dealer in liquors.



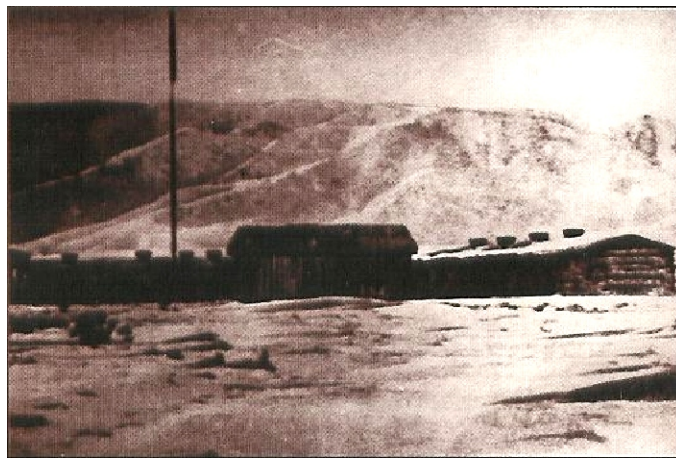
Hearing of the excellent qualities of water this newly-found spring he decided to commercialize the water. With the cooperation of a partner, W. J. Clark of Butte Montana, Kiesel set up a bottling plant at the site. Huge drums were put over Mammoth Spring (on the far side of the Ninety Percent mountain range) to trap the escaping gas, which was piped over the mountain in large tubes to the bottling works. Here the bottles were filled with water from Ninety Percent Spring and charged with gas from Mammoth Spring. "Idan-Ha" was the trade name used for this product.

The Natural Mineral Water Company was incorporated on May 17, 1887. Bottled water was shipped by the carload to the home office in Salt Lake City, to eastern markets, and to foreign countries, bringing money and fame to the fledgling settlement. It took first prize at the Chicago World's Fair in 1893. It took first prize again at the World's Fair in Paris, France.

LOCATION/DIRECTIONS: The spring is located in the Cedar View Subdivision area of Soda Springs. From Hwy. 30 in Soda Springs turn north onto Main Street. Cross the railroad tracks and in 1/10 mile turn onto North Main. At the first stop sign turn left onto First North. Follow First North (it becomes Cedar View Road) 1.8 miles to the spring. The spring is located 90 feet before the pavement ends at a roadend turnaround. There is a 2-pole fence on the left, and the spring is marked by a concrete spillway, park bench, and an information sign that is not readable at the present time. Currently, the spring is not very active.

Camp Conner *Site 6*

Camp Connor, one of the first military posts in Idaho Territory, played a prominent role in the settlement of Southeastern Idaho. Patrick Edward Connor organized the California Volunteers in that state and petitioned the Army for permission to move east and



COURTESY OF ROBERT L RIGEY

Camp Connor, at Soda Springs, Idaho, in 1863.

fight the Confederates. The Army, much to his dismay, sent him to Salt Lake City to control local Indian uprisings. Unofficially, if not officially, he felt it also his duty to keep an eye on the Mormons.

Connor had command over a military district comprised of the territories of Nevada, Idaho, and Utah. In October 1862, he established Camp Douglas in the foothills overlooking Salt Lake City. He planned a campaign against the Shoshone-Bannock Indians, which culminated on January 28, 1863, in the massacre at their village in their winter encampment at the junction of Battle Creek and Bear River—northwest of present day Preston, Idaho. This episode earned Connor the rank of General. He then proceeded to additionally secure the territories under his jurisdiction.

A letter written by General Connor, June 2, 1863, records:

On the 5th of May ultimo Company H Third Infantry California volunteers, under command of Captain Black, left this post pursuant to my orders, enroute, via—Box Elder, Bear River, Cache and Marsh valleys, for a point at or near the great bend of Bear River known as Soda Springs, Idaho Territory, for the purpose of establishing a new post in that region for the protection of the overland emigration to Oregon, California, and the Bannock City mines.

On the 20th, Company H, third Infantry arrived after a long and tedious trip, accompanied by their



PHOTO BY DALE MOON

crimes before Judge Kinney. Some were jailed.

Governor Harding was sent by the United States Government to replace Judge Kinney. He pardoned those Morrisites still under arrest. These people, out of favor with the Mormon community, drifted to the new military camp then called Camp Douglas, where General Connor gave them protection. They accompanied General Connor and his troops to the Soda Springs area in May of 1863 and started Morristown. In a letter written by General Connor, June 2, 1863, he records the following:

Accompanying this expedition [See Camp Connor, Site 6] and under its protection were a large number of persons heretofore residents of this territory, seceders under the name of Morrisites, from the Mormon Church. Many of them have for some months past claimed and received the protection and assistance for the forces under my command. Prudential reasons, applying as well to this command as to the Morrisites themselves, rendered it advisable that they should be removed from the vicinity of Camp Douglas.

Regarding the expedition to Soda Springs as presenting a favorable opportunity for this purpose, I ordered transportation to be provided for the most indigent and the distribution of provisions to the destitute, both enroute and after arrival at the new post.

Some of them were able to furnish their own teams and wagons. They numbered in all 160 souls comprised of 53 families, seven single men and four widows... On the 20th, Company Third Infantry, arrived after a long and tedious trip accompanied by their charges, the settlers for the new town. A suitable and eligible location was selected on the north bank of the Bear River.

The Morrisite settlement is shown on the 1878 Geological Survey map as being in the bottoms, on the northside of the Bear River [Page 16].

"Lieutenant Shoemaker was made land trustee and given right of patent for deeding said property to those who built houses, made homes, and applied for ownership. Two hundred acres of ground was surveyed and set aside for a township. A few plots were west of Soda Creek, but none south of the river. Each family was allotted a parcel of ground 25 by 130 feet, and the men set themselves at once to erect shelters for their households. The houses were one-room structures with dirt floors and mud packing between the logs... Streets were laid out parallel with the river and intersected by streets parallel with Soda Creek."

When Camp Connor was abandoned and the soldiers left Soda Springs, the settlement began to shrink. The loss of government protection and support made it difficult for the Morrisites. The cold weather froze crops several seasons in a row. In 1870 Brigham Young and William H. Hooper bought land northeast of Morristown and Mormon settlers began to populate the area. What remained of the original Morrisite settlement became known as "Lower Town." The waters of Alexander Reservoir now cover part of the Morristown settlement. The lowland west of the LDS Church and the Caribou County Hospital is the general location of Morristown. Stone foundations can be seen when the reservoir is low enough.

LOCATION/DIRECTIONS: *The approximate location of Morristown can be viewed from Site 6 in the LDS Church parking lot on 3rd East Street.*

1863 Shoshone -Bannock Peace Treaty

Site 8

C.M Conrad's 1850 prediction that, The Indians between here and the Dalles are an inoffensive race, who will never be disposed to molest any party as long as troops are on the Columbia River, was quickly proved inaccurate. Conflicts between the emigrants and Native Americans were

grants and Native Americans were becoming increasingly frequent as the Natives found their means of subsistence disappearing because of the hordes of emigrants encroaching on their homeland. Although the 400 miles of Oregon Trail in Idaho is dotted with emigrant graves credited to Indian attacks, there was undoubtedly a similar suffering amongst the Natives.



General Patrick Connor

Conflicts that resulted in emigrant's deaths, such as the Wagon Box Grave tragedy of 1861 and the Massacre Rock incident in August 1862, incited General Patrick E. Connor to attack a Shoshone-Bannock village in January 1863—perpetrating the infamous Bear River Massacre. Estimates of Native casualties range from 200 to 275, with approximately two-thirds being women and children. General Connor's California Volunteers lost 22 soldiers with 53 wounded. The battle was one of the worst disasters for Native Americans in the west.

In late 1863, as a result of this battle and other military actions, General Connor coerced the Natives to sign peace treaties at Camp Connor, and Tooele Valley, Utah. This is recorded in General Connor's report.

*HEADQUARTERS DISTRICT OF UTA
Great Salt Lake City, October 27, 1863*

*Lieut, Col. R. C. Drum,
Assistant Adjutant-General, Cal.:*

COLONEL: I have the honor to inform the department commander that I have just returned from Camp Connor, Idaho, where in connection with Governor Doty, acting superintendent of Indian affairs, a final treaty of peace was concluded with the last remaining band

of Shoshone Indians, and that on the 12th instant another treaty was made in Tooele Valley... With the satisfactory conclusion of these treaties I have the honor to report the settlement of terms of peace with all the indians within this military district from the Snake River on the north, to the lower settlements of Utah and from the Rocky Mountains on the east to Reese River on the west, a region heretofore constantly infested by roving bands of savages, and desolated by their horrid barbarities on passing emigrants for a long series of years. For the first time in the history of the country it may now be truly announced that the great emigrant roads through the Territory may be safely traversed by single persons without danger to life or property or fear of molestation by Indians... I have the honor to remain, very respectfully, your obedient servant.

*P. EDWARD CONNOR.
Brigadier - General. Commanding District*

LOCATION/DIRECTIONS: *The treaty was signed at Camp Connor, which can be viewed from Site 6 in the LDS Church parking lot on 3rd East Street.*

First Marriage in Soda Springs Site 9

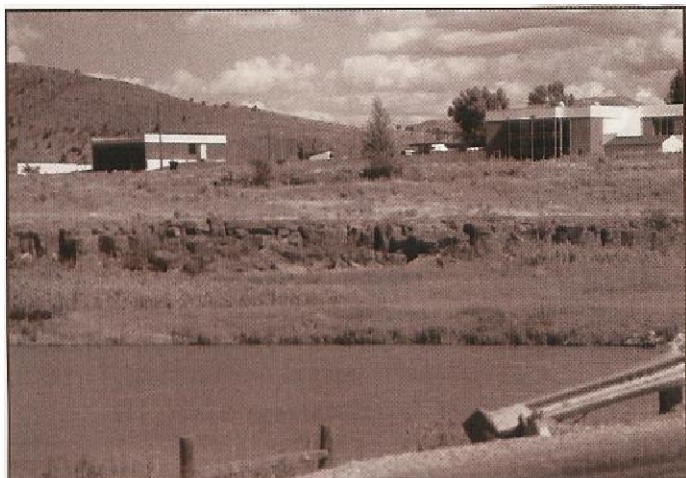


Neils Anderson



Mary Christofferson

Neils Anderson and Mary Christofferson were two of the young people in the Morrisite settlement.



ELLEN CARNEY PHOTO

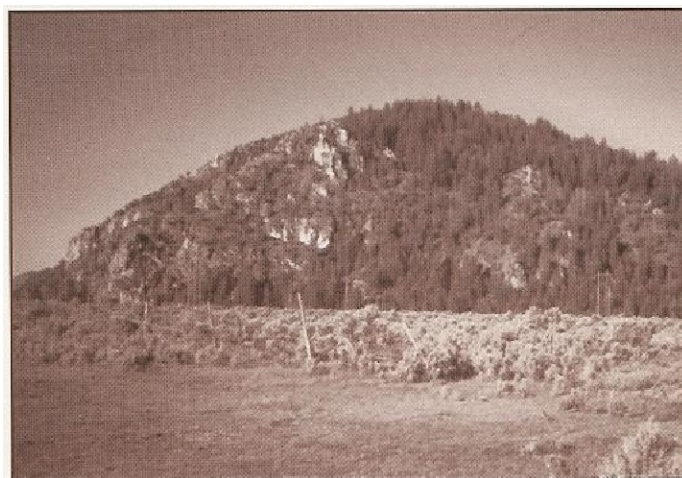
At fifteen years of age, Mary's jaw had been shot away during the fight at Kingston Fort in Weber Canyon. For the rest of her life, she would cover her lower face with a handkerchief whenever she met a stranger. They were the first couple to be married at the military post. Lieutenant Shoemaker, who held the title of Justice of the Peace, married them on July 30, 1863. The wedding took place near a huge outcropping of rocks that still stands on the land owned by the descendants of the Anderson family. Following the ceremony, the couple was feted by a wedding dance. A large canvas was stretched tightly on the ground, which served as the ballroom floor. Music was furnished by Peter Christofferson and the Hansen brothers on harmonicas and fiddles.

Their first son, Abraham C. Anderson, was the first child born in the Morrisite settlement. The Fairview is cemetery overlooking the old town site contains a few Morrisite graves. A large bronze tablet marks the resting place of Neils and Mary Christofferson Anderson. Their headstone, in addition to bearing the names of their children, is engraved with 650 painful words recounting the tragic drama of their Mormon and Morrisite experiences. The Andersons never joined another church and Neils eventually became known as the "father of the anti-Mormon party in Idaho."

LOCATION/DIRECTION: The approximate location of this site can be viewed from Site 6

in the LDS Church parking lot on 3rd East Street. For a better view, proceed south on 3rd East past the Caribou County Hospital to the end of the street and turn right. Proceed down to the bridge over the Bear River. Park and look back to the northeast to view the large rock outcropping.

Sheep Rock Site 10



ELLEN CARNEY PHOTO

Five miles west of Soda Springs is a great stone mountain rising several hundred feet above the river. The Bear River flows around its base and in one majestic curve heads south to the Great Salt Lake. This was a prominent landmark for emigrants and noted in numerous diaries. Just north of Sheep Rock, the Oregon-California Trail divides. The original route turned north to Fort Hall and the Hudpeth Cutoff headed straight west across the valley.

In his 1834 **Journal of a Trapper**, Osborne-Russell-records:

...we traveled down this river and on the 9th encamped at a place called Sheep Rock so called from a point of the mountain terminating at the river bank is a perpendicular high rock. The river curves around the foot of this rock and forms a half circle which brings its course to the S.W. from whence it runs in the same direction to the Salt Lake about 80 miles distant. The sheep occupied this prominent elevation (which over



looked the surrounding country to a great extent) at all seasons of the year.

John C. Fremont from his journal, August 21, writes:

In sweeping around the point of the mountain which runs down into the bend, the river here passes between perpendicular walls of basalt which always fix the attention, from the regular form in which it occurs, and its perfect distinctness from the surrounding rocks among which it has been placed. The mountain which is rugged and steep, and, by our measurement, 1,400 feet above the river directly opposite the place of our halt is called the Sheep rock probably because a flock of the common mountain sheep had been seen on the craggy point.

J. Goldsborough Bruff on August 18, 1849 is quoted in **Historic Sites Along the Oregon Trail**:

This remarkable cliff is surmounted by a high round hill studded with pines & verdure—Height 1000 feet.... Deep below, within these basaltic walls, the clear cold waters of the river rush and roar, hastening to mingle with the Salts of the Great Salt Lake, some 90 odd miles.... A broken place in the bank, filled with detritus, permitted us, by a troublesome path, to reach the stream and dip up water.

LOCATION/DIRECTIONS: This site is reached by traveling west from Soda Springs on Highway 30/34, approximately five miles. It is best observed, at this time, by turning left into the State of Idaho Transportation Road Maintenance Compound. Less than 1/2 mile will bring you to Alexander Dam. This location provides a stunning view of Sheep Rock as the emigrants saw it.

Hudspeth's Cutoff

Site 11

On July 19, 1849, Benoni M. Hudspeth, captain of a wagon train headed for California, and John Myers, its guide, decided to open a new wagon route to shorten the northern and more established route through Fort Hall. Hudspeth was familiar with the area since he had accompanied

John C. Fremont's 1843 expedition to the Great Salt Lake. Myers had previously traveled with the 1843 Chiles group, which split from Joseph Walker's main party near Fort Hall in an attempt to skirt the Sierras and bring supplies back to the main party as it approached California. Both Hudspeth and Myers had traveled over the route of their cutoff when they returned to Missouri in 1848.

Instead of following the main trail northwest to Fort Hall and turning southwest to reach the Raft River, Hudspeth and Myers led their party due west from Soda Springs. They planned to intersect the road to California on the Raft River, thus avoiding the long detour north. This new route, 132 miles in southeastern Idaho, rejoined the older California Trail route northeast of the City of Rocks. The company included about 250 people, many of them women and children, and 70 wagons.

The late Dr. Merle Wells, eminent Boise historian, notes that there was already a trail along this route, and that Myers and Hudspeth had checked it out before taking a wagon train this way.



ELLEN CARNEY PHOTO

Those headed for California after 1849 had to decide whether they would take the established road to Fort Hall or try the new cutoff, which they thought was shorter. It looked good on paper, but saved only about 25 miles in distance. It turned out to be a tough route along the northern rim of The Great Basin. Margaret A. Frink noted on Tuesday, July 9, 1850:

When we came to the forks of the road, we decided



take the right-hand one, leading to Fort Hall, because of the advice and illustration given us by an old Indian at the Soda Springs. He raised up the bail of a bucket to signify a high mountain, and passing his hand over the top, said, "This is Myers Cut-off" Then, laying the bail down and passing his hand around it, said, "This is Fort Hall road." We were told afterwards that this was correct.

After 1849, most California traffic went over the Hudspeth Cutoff instead of through Fort Hall. Arthur C. Hope contends travel over the Hudspeth Cutoff continued because of the abundance of forage for animals. Chester Ingersoll described the road to Fort Hall as "poor road—rocky, hilly or sandy, with water good and grass poor."

In August of 1850, Elisha Douglas Perkins, quoted in **The Wake of the Prairie Schooner**, arrived at the Hudspeth Cutoff junction, and wrote:

"Came to the fork in the road the left hand being the cutoff of which we have been told. Found that it had been considerably traveled by wagons also our Masonic company decided to use it too so we all started on together. At the 'Forks' we found several notes and cards innumerable stuck up for the benefit of various companies left behind, several of which we read stated that 'by this cut off it is only 100 miles to Humboldt River.'"

As to the spot where the trails part, several diaries give us clues. Welboen Beeson, quoted in **The Oregon and Applegate Trail-Diary of Welboen Beeson 1853**, states:

"Bear River Valley will be settled some time and the Soda Springs become a noted watering place for the fashionables, ½ mile to the Steamboat Spring, left of road. It puffs and blows and throws out steam like an engine. 4 miles to forks of road, the right leads to the Willamette Valley via Ft. Hall, and Snake River; the left leads to the California, via the Humboldt [River,] after many difficult miles through southern Idaho, northwest Utah then into Nevada via Hudspeth's Cutoff."

LOCATION/DIRECTIONS: At the junction of Highways 30 and 34, six miles west of Soda Springs, turn north. In approximately 100 yards turn right and follow the old highway to the end of the asphalt. By taking a short walk towards the railroad tracks you will find where the Oregon-California Trail Association has placed white markers, marking the Hudspeth Cutoff.

Volcanic Craters

Site 12



PHOTO BY DALE MOON

Two volcanic craters rise above the valley floor west of Soda Springs. Both are prominent features as viewed from the Hudspeth's Cutoff junction of the Oregon Trail. The crater to the south of Highway 30 is in its original state, appearing as the emigrants would have seen it in passing. The crater to the north of Highway 30 looks different now, with much of its sides removed for gravel.

The craters are noted by many early emigrants in their diaries. William Swain - Aug. 14, 1849:

...on arriving at the crater I ascended its mound which is forty feet above the level of the plain. Smooth outside surface which is covered with grass to its top. The E side is some 6 feet lower than the W. so that from the east a person has a fair view of the crater which is ten feet deep. The Walls are like well arranged masonry. I descended into the .. valley of the crater and found it covered with soil in which sage and some grasses were growing. The lower part of the wall is a mass of broken part which stands as before stated in regular layers. At one point I found the side of the orifice standing, untouched by time, just as ceased, just as it was when the eruptions ceased, ... Judging from the



appearance of the crater it must have been in a state of eruption in some time of modern date.

Cecelia Ad & Parthenia Blank - August 16, 1852:

We left the track of the Californians to day for good about 6 miles from the springs. Crossed a chasm in the rocky road how long we could not tell and in places so deep we could not see the bottom. Must have been caused by an earthquake. About a mile from the road saw the crater of an old volcano...

LOCATION/DIRECTIONS: Take Highway 30 west from Soda Springs, six miles to the junction of Hwy. 34 heading south. Both craters are visible from this junction.

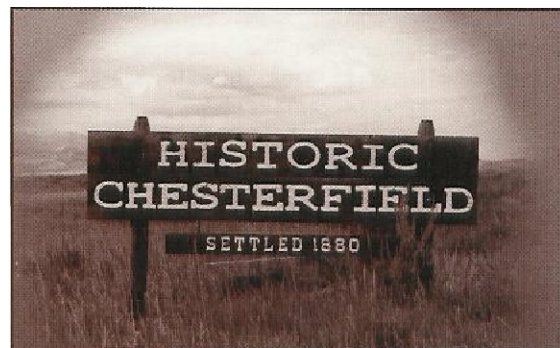
FOR A MUCH BETTER VIEW: Travel 5 miles west of Soda Springs on Highway 30 & 34. Turn right (north) onto Oregon Trail Road. Cross the railroad tracks, follow the road to the left and it crosses a canal. In 1/10 mile the road rises to a rock outcrop on the left (transmission relay towers are uphill on the right.) Walk 120 yards to the rock outcrop overlook. From here you have an excellent view of both craters. Looking north, the canal follows the Oregon Trail towards Chesterfield. Looking below the overlook, directly across the railroad tracks, you can see the white sign that marks the location of Hudspeth's Cutoff to the California Trail.

Chesterfield Townsite

Site 15

Chesterfield is a Mormon ghost town, where visitors today can get a first-hand look at the past. It is located directly on the Oregon Trail. The area around Chesterfield, along with nearby Portneuf and Bear rivers, was noted by fur trappers as early as 1813. In the mid 1870s French-born Alexander Toponce moved cattle into the nearby Portneuf Valley.

In 1879, Chester Call brought a herd of horses to the area. In 1880, this Mormon pioneer moved north from Bountiful, Utah, and established a



PHOTOS BY DALE MOON

homestead near Chesterfield. Wanting to establish a new Mormon outpost, Call persuaded relatives and church members to move to the area in 1881 and 1882. By 1885 a Mormon townsite was surveyed and established on the high ground that is now Chesterfield.

Covered wagons continued to use the Oregon Trail. A plaque at Chesterfield commemorates the role the fledgling town played as the weary emigrants passed through:

After the arrival of the first settlers of Chesterfield, covered wagons continued to use the Oregon Trail which passed this point. Discouraged and ill, the travelers arrived here from early spring that late autumn. Local pioneers fed the hungry, nursed the sick, replenished their supplies and exchanged fresh horses for weak and lame ones.

Today work is being done to preserve this pioneer town. The original LDS Church at Chesterfield, dedicated in 1872 is now a museum. It has an excellent collection of early day photographs, as well as furnishing and other artifacts of the period. Several homes, a store, and other buildings have been restored, with work continuing on many



more. During summer months guided tours of the historic homesteads, stores, and other features are available.


In winter buildings are boarded up there are no tours, and the museum is closed.

LOCATION/DIRECTIONS: *The pioneer townsite of Chesterfield is set in the rolling hills north of Bancroft. Bancroft is 15 miles west of Soda Springs. From the Bancroft Post Office, cross the railroad tracks onto Chesterfield Road. Follow this road for eleven miles, and it takes you directly to the townsite of Chesterfield.*



Wagon Rut Sites

Site 14

Wagon ruts and the actual location of the Oregon-California Trail can still be seen in the area. The Oregon-California Trail Association mapped and signed the Trails. These locations are shown on the map on Page 2, with a .

Lost Sites

The information presented in this brochure covers the most often mentioned sites in emigrant and

explorer's diaries, in what is now Caribou County, that can be visited in our time. Unfortunately two of the most famous sites, Steamboat Springs and Beer Springs, are unavailable for our enjoyment. Both features lie under the waters of the Alexander Reservoir.

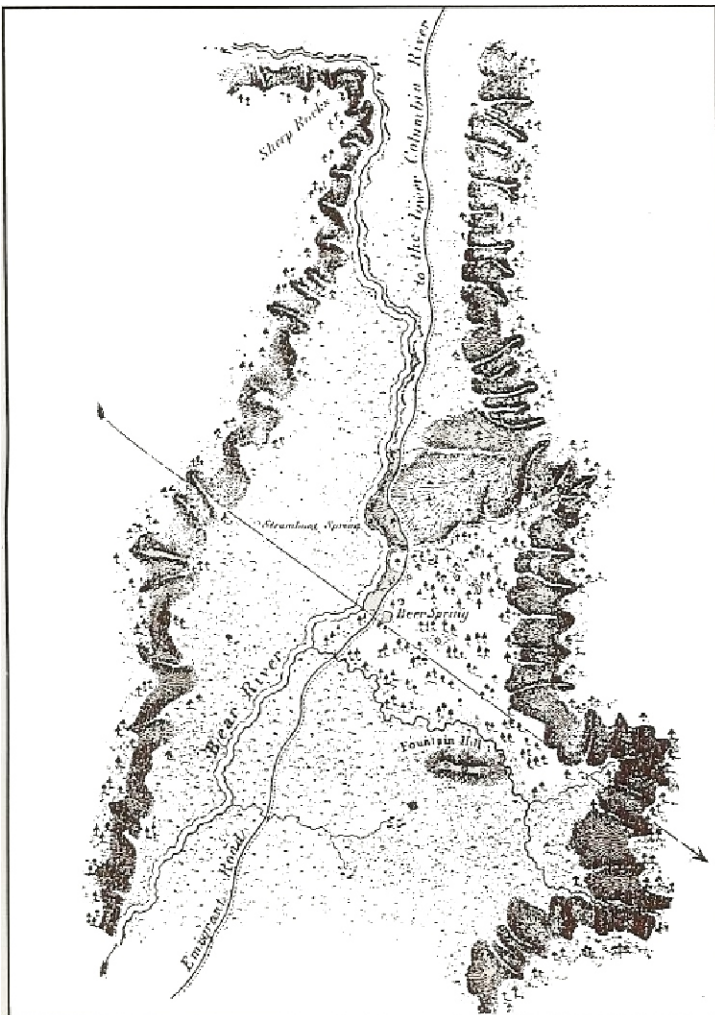
Steamboat Spring



COURTESY OF ROBERT L RIGEY

Steamboat Springs is unquestionably the most famous of all the springs visited by the early fur trappers, explorers, and emigrants. Thomas Jefferson Farnham, August 23, 1839, described the spring in detail.

One fourth of a mile down stream from the Soda Spring [probably Beer Spring] is what is called 'The Steamboat spring.' The orifice from which it casts its water is in the face of a perpendicular rock on the brink of the stream, which seems to have been formed by the depositions of the fountain. It is 8 inches in diameter. Six feet from this, and on a horizontal plane of the rock, is another orifice in the cavern below. On approaching the spring, a deep gurgling, hissing sound is heard under-ground. It appears to be produced by the generating gas in a cavernous receiver. This, when the chamber is filled, bursts through another cavern filled with water, which it thrusts frothing and foaming into the spring. In passing the smaller orifice, the pent gas escapes with very much the same sound as steam makes in the escape-pipe of a steamboat. Hence the name.



Beer Spring

The exact location of Beer Springs is not really know. There may have been one spring, or a collection of springs, originally given the name “Beer Springs” but each description seems to put “Beer Spring” in a different location. For certain, the bubbling, effervescent water emanating from the many spring areas in this valley produced a curiosity amongst travelers and carried the imaginations of many to the extreme. As noted in Washington Irving’s **Adventures of Captain Bonneville** in a quote by the Captain in his journal:

“In the course of the day we arrived at the plain of white clay already mentioned surrounded by the mineral springs called the “Beer” Springs by the trappers. Here the men halted to regale. In a few moments every spring had its jovial know of drinkers with tin cup in hand, indulging in a mock carouse, quaffing, pledging, toasting, bandying jokes, singing, drinking, and uttering peal of laughter; until it seemed as if their imaginations had given potency to the beverage and cheated them into a fit of intoxication. Indeed, in the excitement of the moment they were loud and extravagant in their commendation of the “Mountain Tap” elevating it above every beverage produced from hops or malt.”

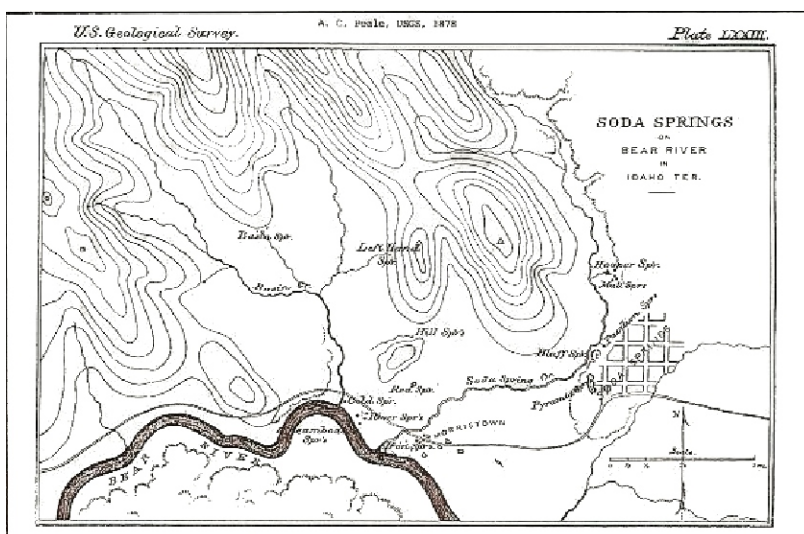
July 30, 1836. “Went today ten miles off our route—to visit the Soda Springs.”

Cyrus C. Loveland noted in 1850:

At times the water is thrown about two feet above the table forcing up pebbles half the size of a hen’s egg, at other times, it seems to have spent all of it’s fury and sinks several inches below the level of the rock through which it flows. The water is very warm. I think it is considerable above blood heat.

On a calm day, one can see the pronounced surface disturbance on Alexander Reservoir from the still active Steamboat Spring which lies 40 feet beneath the surface.

Today’s travelers can still stop at Hooper Spring, Octagon Spring, or several others in the famous Soda Springs area, for the same experience.



Historic Map. A copy of the 1878 US Geologic Survey Map of the Soda Springs area.