

NATIONAL STAGECOACH AND FREIGHT WAGON ASSOCIATION



SPRING 2025 NEWSLETTER

“Sharing The Legacy of a Transportation Empire”



"Sharing the Legacy of a Transportation Empire"

NSFWA President's Message

NSFWA President's Message

Spring – 2025

Greetings and happy to have the chance to Report to each NSFWA Member and Family.

Looking back to 2024, we had a very well organized 2024 NSFWA Conference, due to the efforts and work that was put into your Conference to make it work well. A thank You goes out to each person, who made it a "Great Conference" in the Virginia City, Montana vicinity. A Special Thank You goes out to Ashlee Ganoung, for her Hosting and Organizing.

I have received many calls regarding the Interesting Newsletters that Members have lately received. I would like to say, Thank You Adam Hanger, and to each person who contributed greatly, we appreciate your taking care to pull together a great Newsletter.

Looking ahead, to 2025, your Organization is planning, with key Members helping, to Host a great NSFWA Conference, On July 9 – 12 at Scottsbluff/ Gering Nebraska, that will prove to have everyone enjoying their selves. The Conference is filled with many, easy to attend events. We have mailed the Members a complete set of information of the Schedule, Accommodations, and the Registration. If you did not receive a letter in the mail, or have a Question, please contact Jeff @ 307-272-1838 and we will help take care of your needs. This Conference covers some new territory, and I would hate to know that you missed a great time!!

Your NSFWA President, Jeff McManus

New Members:

We would like to welcome the following new members to the NSFWA!

- Michael & Dona McGilvary of Kansas
- Troy Peterson of Nebraska
- David Wolf of Nebraska

Memoriams:

It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of Donna Pomajevich, the wife of Jim Pomajevich.

We also, with great sadness, announce the loss of Gloria Austin of Weirsdale, Florida.

Please keep these families in your thoughts and prayers.

Front Cover: Photo courtesy of hansenwheel.com, Photo is of a US Army 4 Mule Escort Wagon



"Sharing the Legacy of a Transportation Empire"

About the NSFWA

Our history

The National Stagecoach & Freight Wagon Association (NSFWA) is a not-for-profit organization created to help detail the triumphs, struggles and day-to-day operation of these legendary vehicles within the extremely competitive, early commercial empires they supported.

We were founded in 2008 by a group of people who saw the need for an organization that focused on the commercial stagecoach and freight wagon.

Mission Statement

We are dedicated to the interpretation, education and preservation of the legacy of commercial stagecoaches and freight wagons which were integral to the development of the western United States in the 19th century, this includes the stories of the people who designed, built and drove these remarkable vehicles.

NSFWA is committed to:

- Perpetuate the historic record of commercial wagon freighting and stage coaching
- Study the use of the stagecoach and freight wagon, its trade, its trails
- Preserve period vehicles and relevant documents
- Promote the continued practice of the methods of turnout and driving
- Provide a center for collecting, assimilating, and sharing of related information
- Honor the stagecoach and freight wagon for their role in providing substance, communication, commerce, and industry to settlements prior to the development the railroads and motor trucks

Related Information

We are interested in gathering information on the following:

- Vehicle Model Details
- Historic Trails
- Travel Logistics
- Historical Accounts
- Location and identification of all the coaches we can find!



"Sharing the Legacy of a Transportation Empire"

Upcoming Evtents

Public Auction for the Estate of Gloria Austin: (Weirsdale, Florida)

March 21-22, 2025

Location:

3024 Marion County Road

Weirsdale, FL 32195



Up for public auction are 40+ coaches, carriages, gigs, sleighs including good quality harness, state harness, 4-in-hand harness, Hungarian harness, side saddles, life size horses, livery, holly whips, assorted appointment kits, large inventory of coach & carriage lamps, coach horns & appointments, large gallery of quality framed & unframed sporting art from the estate of Gloria Austin. Mrs. Austin was a member of the NSFVA.

See the link (auctioneer's website) for more information:

<https://www.martinauctioneers.com/auction/carriages/public-auction-for-the-estate-of-gloria-austin>

Farm Team Competition: (Lyndon, Kansas)

April 26-27, 2025

The Lyndon Saddle Club is holding their Fourth Annual Farm Team Competition in Lyndon, Kansas. Farm teams from different parts of the country will have fun and compete in a log skidding challenge, cultivating challenge, driving challenge, and more! Come out to Lyndon, Kansas to check out this event that is focused on participants being challenged to become better teamsters. If there are any questions, please contact Frank Burkdoll @ 785-256-3430.

Concessions on Grounds Free Admission at Gate

FARM TEAM COMPETITION

APRIL 26 & 27, 2025

PRIZES: MINIMUM \$700 PREMIUM PER CLASS
Entry Fee: \$150 per Team by April 1 | \$200 per Team after April 1

For info call/text:
785-256-3430

LYNDON SADDLE CLUB ARENA
1.5 Miles North of Lyndon, Kans.

LOG PULL - OBSTACLE COURSE
CULTIVATOR CHALLENGE
FEED TEAM CHALLENGE
TEAM BARREL CHALLENGE

Lyndon Saddle Club, Inc., or any of its sponsors will NOT be responsible for accidents, loss, injury or death.



"Sharing the Legacy of a Transportation Empire"

2nd Annual Spring River Pioneer Days:

(Verona, Missouri)

May 30-31, 2025

Come out to the 2nd Annual Spring River Pioneer Days as they have a pioneer village, mountain man encampment, western reenacting, stagecoach rides, chuckwagons, and more!

Please note that this event is looking for anyone that is interested in bringing wagons to come and participate!

For more information, or to find out more details on bringing your wagons, contact Shane Spears @ 417-848-8620.

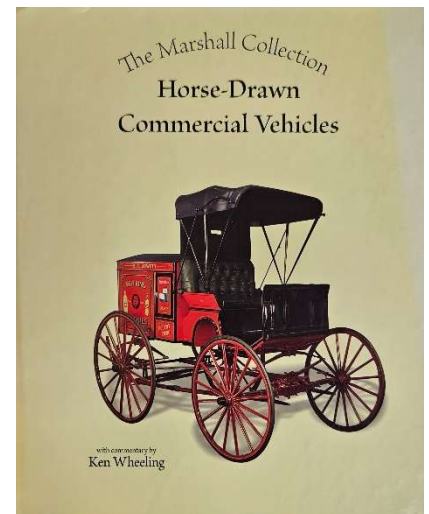


Sut & Margaret Marshall Auction: (Fryeburg, Maine)

June 13-14, 2025

Location: West Oxford Agricultural Society Building at the Fryeburg Fairgrounds in Fryeburg, Maine

Important Collection of 100+ Horse-Drawn Vehicles including Carriages, Commercial Vehicles & Wagons, Gypsy Wagons, Stagecoaches including Abbott & Downing, Broughams, Omnibuses, Hearse, Tram, Fire Pumper Wagon, Park Drag, Road Coaches, Sheep Herder's Wagon and specialty vehicles such as 'The Globe' Advertising Wagon, Hood's Milk & Cream Wagon, Lesey Brewery Dray, Cretors Peanut & Popcorn Wagon, Studebaker Sprinkler Wagon and Studebaker Street Sweeper plus many more!



Also selling lots of a fine selection of Antiques, Equine Appointments and smaller items including harnesses, sleigh bells, carriage and coaching books, showcases, butchering tables, butchering kettles, farm tool primitives and many small carriage related items!

For more information, see the link to the auction information website:

<https://www.auctionzip.com/Listings/3954006.html>



"Sharing the Legacy of a Transportation Empire"

2025 Annual Conference: **(Scottsbluff and Gering, Nebraska)**

July 9-12, 2025

The NSFWA 2025 Conference will be held in Scottsbluff and Gering, Nebraska! The conference's top feature will be a start to finish demonstration of haying with horses and mules. It will also feature a wagon and stagecoach show, trade show (to buy and sell stagecoach, wagon, and harness related items), chuckwagon meal, a lecture from Rawhide Johnson on "Interesting Stagecoach Facts on Concord Coaches and Mud Wagons, the annual directors and membership meeting, a talk from Doug Hansen on "The Oregon Trail Wagons and Issues Concerning this Trying Journey West, touring the Legacy of the Plains Museum, a bus tour to wagon trail ruts, graves, remnants of trading posts, national markers, and much more!! You can find the conference registration, schedule, and hotel list on our website under the events page. For any questions, Contact Jeff McManus @ 307-272-1838.



We hope that you all can come out to this exciting and event-filled conference to enjoy the history of the past!

Santa Fe Trail Association Symposium: **(Council Grove, Kansas)**

September 19-27, 2025

The Heart of the Flint Hills Chapter of the Santa Fe Trail Association is hosting the 2025 Santa Fe Trail Symposium in Council Grove, Kansas. The theme this year will be, "Marking a Road to Santa Fe: Set Your Sights on Sibley", which will commemorate the 200th Anniversary of the 1825 Sibley Survey of the Santa Fe Trail. There will be a wagon show that the NSFWA will be involved in and they are looking for wagons to come to participate. For the wagon registration form, see our Events page on our website, and for more information, contact Mark Brooks @ 620-307-2754.



**MARKING A ROAD TO SANTA FE:
200TH COMMEMORATION WAGON SHOW**
September 19 & 20, 2025,
on the Santa Fe Trail, in Council Oak Park,
210 East Main Street,
Council Grove, Kansas

ANTIQUE WAGON REGISTRATION FORM
The wagon show will have two divisions: Wagon and Carriage.
Trophies will be awarded to the top entry in both divisions.
A people choice trophy will also be awarded.
Note: NO rubber tires and No animals unless approved by the Wagon Committee
Please send a photo and a short description of your wagon. There is no registration fee.

PRESENTERS INCLUDE...
Nationally renowned Wagon expert David Sneed,
National Freight Wagon and Stagecoach Association,
President and Blacksmith, Jeff McManus,
and Wagon builder and Wheelwright Don Werner



"Sharing the Legacy of a Transportation Empire"

Before and After: Winona Spring Wagon

Story contributed by:

*High Country Horse Drawn llc, Harlan and Joal Olson,
Bozeman, MT 59715, (406) 548-2041 cell,
email: highcountryhorsedrawn@gmail.com,
website: www.highcountryhorsedrawn.com*

Records indicate this wagon was purchased and brought into Yellowstone National Park in 1915. It was used for one season before horses were banned from the Park.



This wagon came to us in original condition retaining much of its original paint and pinstriping. All three bottom seat cushions were missing. The top, stanchions, and all mounting hardware were also missing.



The left front corner of the main sill and brace of the body was rotted out along with the front spring block rendering it non-driveable. Our client wanted it kept as original as possible and to still be able to hitch his horses and drive it.

The corner was repaired by removing the body, coping new wood onto the front part of the sill and replacing the entire front cross brace and spring block.



The original seat backs were cleaned and patched. New seat bottom cushions were built.

An original top was found and purchased as a pattern and to procure the top stanchions. A new top was built along with a full set of side curtains.





"Sharing the Legacy of a Transportation Empire"

Before and After: Winona Spring Wagon (continued)

The body attachments for the top had been removed. New pieces were 3D printed in metal from an original pattern.

The original paint was preserved with a thorough cleaning and a colored oil wash. New wood was patinaed and blended to match the original colors. One side of the drivers seat riser was weathered to the extent that it was blank wood, missing all its paint and color, while the other side retained some paint and the original numbers. Our friend Clyde Aspevig, a Montana artist was able to reproduce the paint patina and numbers on the blank panel to match the existing original.

This wagon is a beautiful example of a Winona three seat springwagon with interesting history.



Story: Mike Hanley: Preserving the Old-Fashioned Way

Submitted by Mike Hanley from a 1993 Idaho Press-Tribune article written by Brad Carlson



Many people love history, Mike Hanley lives it. The Jordan Valley rancher and author has dedicated his life to recording and preserving local history. But to Hanley, writing three books—soon to be four, is not enough. Restoring stagecoaches and wagons, using horse-drawn feeding equipment, and blacksmithing are a way of life for the 51-year old. Even in rebuilding his renown coaches and buggies, he uses methods of the 1800s. “I can’t go back and re-live the old ways. But I can do it today, my way,” Hanley said. Complete or partial stagecoaches, wagons, and buggies dot the Hanley workshop. Appropriately, it is where the old Jordan Valley stagecoach station once stood. Blacksmithing and wheelwrighting are done here, with traditional methods only. Hanley has been featured in many newspapers and magazines, including National Geographic. His stagecoaches have been in photographs and calendars. “Sometimes he acts like he’s 80,” said his wife Linda.

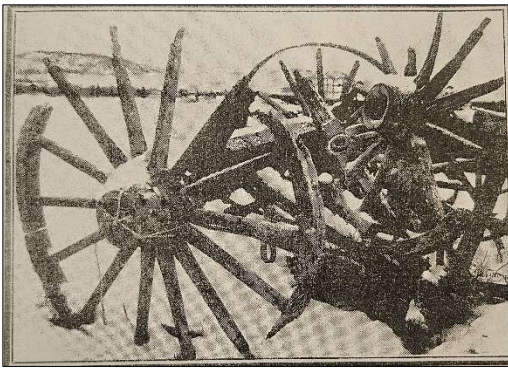


"Sharing the Legacy of a Transportation Empire"

Story: Mike Hanley: Preserving the Old-Fashioned Way (continued)

Often Hanley wishes he lived in an earlier time, she said.

A graduate of Eastern Oregon State College with a degree in general studies, Hanley was a student teacher for a single day before deciding to be a rancher, as his father and grandfather were. Even before graduating, he was writing a book. "If you're not interviewing him to find out about Mike Hanley, he's interviewing you. He wants to know about people," Linda Hanley said. Interviews with many local people have filled his books. His new book is in the "box" stage and untitled as of December 1992, he said. It features "tall tales... My wife thinks they're fiction, but they are the truth."



There will be "a lot of short stories, folklore and legends," he said. Photographs from Hanley's stagecoach trips, 1800s-vintage mileage logs, and advertisements will be in the book. Hanley's other books are *Owyhee Trails*, *Sagebrush and Axle Grease*, and *Tales of the I-O-N Country*.

Hanley's goal has been "trying to make an awareness among local people of their heritage and history. I probably helped a little bit, and I'm happy with it," he said. "I feel honored to have interviewed some of the older people," He even interviewed Butch Cassidy's sister. Cassidy, the Old West bank robber, camped at Jordan Valley during an adventure which saw him rob the Winnemucca, Nev., bank and travel through Washington state. Hanley also located the grave of Sacajawea's son. Not only does Hanley document local history, he also helps people track down lost relatives, he said. Among the many people he interviews or is interviewed by, these information seekers are among his favorites... as well as people who just want to "talk history," he said. "There's a real sense of history around here," Hanley said of the Jordan Valley area. Many small communities have lost their sense of history, aided by events such as the local newspaper office burning down, he added. An appreciation of Old West history is being lost in the western United States, he said. At rodeos, for example, it's more difficult to find customary parades and pageants he said.

"It's a way of preserving the West..." Meanwhile, Japan, Germany and France are "hotbeds" of Western history buffs, he said. A lot of people talk about the rancher's way of life in the past tense period... the way it was. But it's still going on." Hanley noted he is "probably more traditional than most." His craftsmanship and knowledge are displayed frequently in authentic group stage coach trips to remote destinations, in parades and in re-enactments at Western history festivals. "When Mike Hanley's going to do a stagecoach run, you want to go. You hop on," said Linda Hanley. Destinations have included McDermitt, Nev., Nampa and Silver City. The coaches carry the mail. Everyone should have a hobby, Hanley said. Sometimes, daily ranch work leaves only 15 minutes to work in the shop or write, but the time is important, he said. "Some of these things, I've had around for a few years," until he has found time to work on them, he said. Building curve-sided stagecoach bodies is probably Hanley's most difficult task, he said. Like a boat, the coach bodies are supported by ribs. His collection includes five stagecoaches, one procured from Yellowstone National Park in 1916 when the park got tour buses. He bought it in 1973 and restored it.



"Sharing the Legacy of a Transportation Empire"

Story: Mike Hanley: Preserving the Old-Fashioned Way (continued)

Another vintage coach was “headed for the landfill” when Hanley got it in 1966 as a restoration project. There is an original Wells Fargo coach trunk, and a one-seat buggy reminiscent of the vehicle used by the *Gunsmoke* TV series character Doc Baker.

He started working with wagons and wheels while a second-or third-grader in school, under the tutelage of his father and a neighbor, the late Omer Stanford. The condition was that Hanley pass on the trade.

The Handley living room is filled with stagecoach photos and Old West memorabilia. “We’ve found that people just love to do reenactments,” Handley said, noting the writers especially enjoy the secluded areas. Participants dress in period costume. “Everyone is equal,” he said. “When you have six horses on that, going as fast as you can, and you’re up on top, that’s a thrill,” Linda Hanley said.

Amish people in the East supply handling with coach parts. “It’s great to do business with them,” he said of the group whose doctrine for living requires farming, simplicity and restriction from modern conveniences. It might take six months for a part to arrive, but it always is of the highest quality, Hanley said. More people are doing wheelwright work, but many are using inferior materials and fast but inadequate methods, Hanley said. “Then they come to me for repairs.”

Eastern wood is moist from the humidity in that region. “I like to dry the wheels for a year, then in August treat them with oil.” The best wood is kiln dried or dried and cured in the West, Hanley said. The Hanleys helped to start the Cowboys Then and Now Museum at Portland Ore. His entire family is interested in history, and they have been involved in starting three museums.



Want to do things Hanley's way? Try hitching a two-horse team to a feed wagon at the dawn of a new day. It will be fun - and rigorous. This is how his approximately 900 head of cattle receive their nourishment in the winter, and it is the best way, he said. If it isn't broke, don't fix it, the saying goes. The method of Hanley and hired man Mike Kershner worked well in the 1860s, and works well now, they said. Once, they tried feeding by truck. “It was only a three-day rest for the horses,” Hanley said. With horse-drawn wagons, there is no engine to start, and

keep running during periodic bitter cold. The method is fast, and the feed is distributed evenly. “It’s a way of doing something we want to do, that is effective, he said. The wagons are vintage; one originally had wooden wheels. The newest horse harness is 60 years old. “We make everything we need for them.” Feed is placed on the wagons with a modern loader. Each wagon is a one-man operation, so the driver must drop the reins to pitch hay as the horses move at their usual pace.

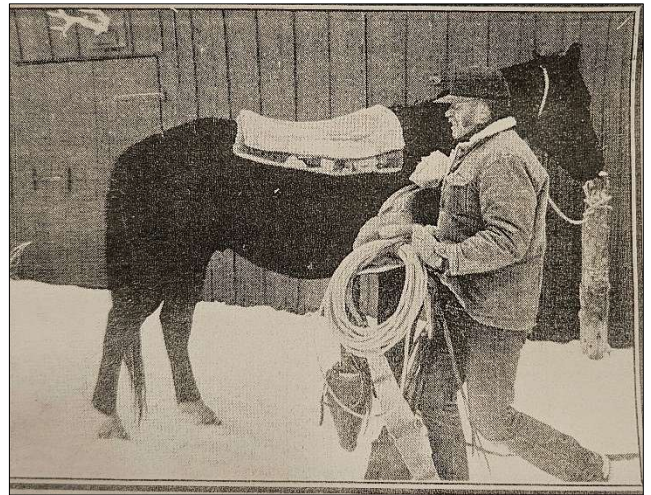


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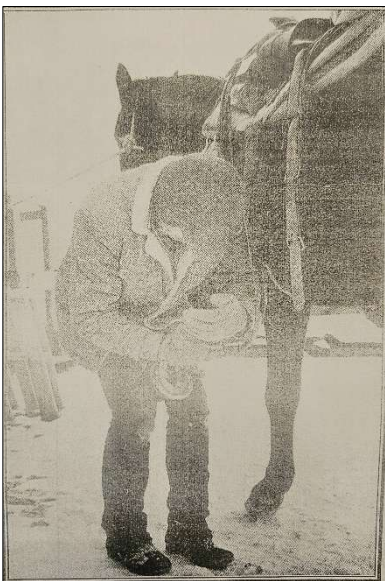
Story: Mike Hanley: Preserving the Old-Fashioned Way (continued)

Hanley and Kershner each run a wagon. Key to success is a well-trained horse team, and good balance afoot, Hanley said. Midwestern ranch boys made excellent naval ship crewmen because they had good balance aboard ship, he said. Like a child who learns to ski at a very early age, a hay pitcher acquires sure-footedness naturally and is confident, Kershner said. Confidence is important as the shock-absorberless vehicle goes over bumps, hills, creek beds and frozen cow patties while the pitcher is standing in the middle with nothing to hold on to but a pitchfork. Kershner has been with Hanley for more than three years and will have his own ranch soon, Hanley said. "we're pretty selective of who we hire," Hanley added.

"Some guys think they can't get off of horse," said Kershner as he pitched a fork full of hay, his legs acting as a natural spring to absorb the many jolts on a subzero winter day. "The cowboys don't last," Hanley said. The command, "Boys", keeps Hanley's team in the proper direction when the rancher drops the reins to pitch hay. "You're dogging it," he tells one animal after returning to the reins. "There's such a thing as a willing (horse) team," Hanley said. "One is willing to work and the other is willing to let him do it." When the horses get older, "they'll learn to do it" (loaf occasionally), Hanley said. "They're just like people. You can learn a lot about humans from horses." Hanley became involved with horses and wagons at age 5. "Horses are not smarter than cows," he said.



Feeding cattle on the wagons is physically hard work and must be done seven days a week. "If you like to do a job, you don't think about it," he said. "We do this for 4 1/2 months. We enjoy the winter." A vintage sleigh is used when enough snow is on the ground. It takes about five years for a horse team to achieve top form. Hanley's team is entering its prime just in time for this year's 150th anniversary of the Oregon Trail. Hanley and his horses will go all over the United States. "They already do a lot of parades." Hanley pampers his horses and never lends them. He does his own blacksmithing, a task he enjoys. The horses wear antique horseshoes. Hanley believes he has a form of "tennis elbow" from many years pounding at the anvil. Riding on Hanley's feed wagons and stagecoaches, the observer gets a feel for the Good Old Days. But they weren't so good, in some respects, Mike Hanley said. "Stagecoach traffic was an ordeal." Bumpy rides went on for days at a time. If the rider laid over, he had to wait for the next coach, and hope there was room for him. Trekking the Oregon Trail by Conestoga wagon was very grueling, and children were buried along the trail. Sanitation, insects, and pollution from stock animals caused problems. Wood had to be gathered and cut, and lights ran on kerosene. "People didn't survive," Hanley said. The Old West lifestyle was rigorous, if Hanley is any indication.





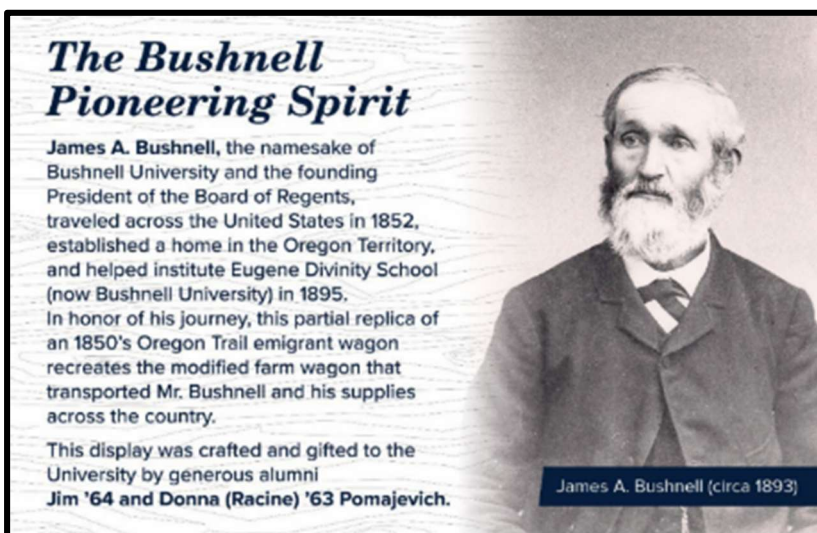
"Sharing the Legacy of a Transportation Empire"

Story: Mike Hanley: Preserving the Old-Fashioned Way (continued)

"You hop on and ride, or get left behind. He does not wait. He's on the go all the time," Linda Hanley said. The typewriter is out continuously, and when he receives a wagon part, "for me it's the fact that I've lost him again," she said, laughingly. "He just loves to build things. He has to have something to build all the time. He believes that if he doesn't have anything to do, he won't be here anymore," Linda Hanley said. "He's seen too many people who've retired, sat down on the couch, and died."

Hanley "belongs to the community," she said, noting they have had 40 people for a meal. "He's not mine. But it's never boring around here."

Story: The James Bushnell Emmigrant Wagon, Bushnell University



This wagon recreation was built to honor one of the founders of Eugene Bible University; known through the years as Northwest Christian College, Northwest Christian University and now Bushnell University. Meant to replicate the 1852 wagon in which James A. Bushnell traveled the Oregon Trail to the Willamette Valley many familiar hands were involved in the construction. The undercarriage was built by the Hansen Wheel and Wagon team, the box by Bill Twigg of Moscow Carriage with help from Jim Pomajevich, Jason Pomajevich, Gene DeYoung and Jeff Meslin. Marvin Alfred sewed the canvas top. Jeff McManus did much of the iron work on the box. The mural was painted by Dan Chen and members of the Pacific Rim Art Guild.



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Thank you to our partners!!

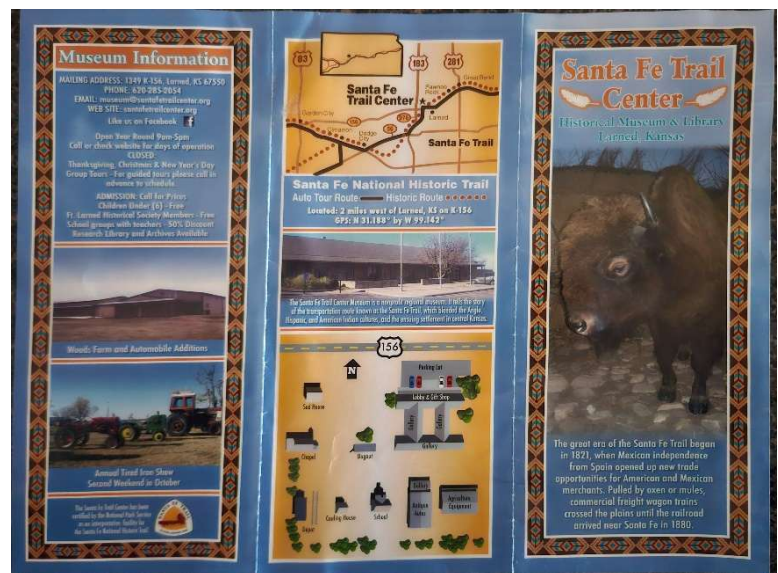
The American Chuck Wagon Association mission is to preserve the heritage of the chuckwagon.

For more information or if interested in joining, visit their website or contact them!



Welcome to the Santa Fe Trail Center Museum & Research Library!

It is our mission to provide visitors with fun and engaging educational opportunities to learn about the historic commerce route known as the Santa Fe Trail and the effect of Westward Expansion on what is now known as central Kansas.



Helpful Resources: Here are resources that you may find helpful in your historic preservation, restoration, and conservation. *If you have a resource that is helpful, please send it in to us so we can include it in our next newsletter! Email*



The Wisconsin Historical Society is an invaluable resource for the horse drawn enthusiast. Specifically, they have an entire online data base of McCormick-Deering Archives to include International Harvester Company Catalogs. See the link below:

<https://content.wisconsinhistory.org/>



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“That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” – John 3:15-16 KJV

As Easter is upon us, let us remember the true meaning of Easter!

NSFWA Mission Statement:

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