

The original documents are located in Box 65, folder “Bicentennial Wagon Train” of the John Marsh Files at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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Aitkin-Kynett

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*Crossed.
Shanno
cc: Ted
Marsh
4/2*

March 24, 1975

John O. Marsh, Jr.
Counsellor to the President
The White House
Washington, D.C.

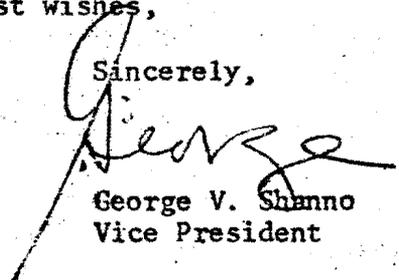
Dear Jack:

Thank you very much for your prompt response to my letter about the ~~Bicentennial Wagon Train Pilgrimage~~

Your letter arrived here on Friday while I was out of town. I have made a copy of it for Mrs. Gray and I know she will attempt to reach ~~Dr. Marsh~~ as quickly as possible. After they have had a chance to communicate with each other, I do hope that something can be worked out that is suitable to all parties.

Again my thanks and with best wishes,

Sincerely,



George V. Shanno
Vice President

GVS:kr



March 18, 1975

Dear George:

Thanks for your recent letter concerning the Bicentennial Wagon Train Pilgrimage.

Based on your letter, the Wagon Train sounds like an unique endeavor. I have asked Dr. Ted Marrs, who handles Bicentennial matters for me, to speak with Mrs. Gray concerning the project. I have asked Ted to get back to me immediately following his conversation. Dr. Marrs can be reached at (202) 456-2735.

I hope something can be worked out which is suitable to all parties concerned.

With kindest personal regards, I am

Sincerely,

John O. Marsh, Jr.
Counsellor to the President

Mr. George V. Shanno
~~Vice President~~
The Aitkin-Kynett Company
Four Penn. Center
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103

cc: Ted Marrs

dl/3-18-75



Aitkin-Kynett

MAR 12 1975

THE AITKIN-KYNETT CO., INC. • FOUR PENN CENTER • PHILADELPHIA, PENNA. 19103 • 215 LOCUST 8-6700

March 11, 1975

Mr. John O. Marsh, Jr.
Counsellor to the President
The White House
Washington, D. C. 20500

Dear Jack:

The Public Relations Division of Aitkin-Kynett is involved in a program that I think you ought to know about.

The program is the Bicentennial Wagon Train Pilgrimage. Essentially the program comprises a Conestoga Wagon given to the Bicentennial Commission of each State. On a carefully worked out plan of logistics, these wagons join together, State by State, to make a tremendous Wagon Train Pilgrimage back to the symbolic birthplace of our Nation -- Valley Forge.

The Wagon Train starts from Blaine, Washington, June 8, 1975 and reaches Valley Forge July 4, 1976.

The Wagon Train moves 20 miles a day and has an encampment every evening to which the surrounding communities are invited. This encampment is essentially a Bicentennial celebration highlighted by the Wagon Train show which is a patriotic "Godspell". At the ARBA presentation at Washington, D. C. March 3 and 4, this show was the outstanding event. Reciprocal entertainment is provided by glee clubs, square dance groups, and such, from the high schools and colleges of the communities around the encampment.

The program is further enhanced by a Scroll of Rededication Program for communities and private citizens to sign. These Scrolls are taken back to Valley Forge by 20,000 Outriders with the Wagon Train.

There is also an educational program for all the high schools in the country built around the theme of the program.

The attached brochure describes the program and shows the route in detail.

Thelma Gray, the head of our Public Relations Division, was invited by William Baroody, Jr. to attend a meeting at the White House of business executives on February 5. Thelma Gray is listed as one of the five people in this country who have done the most to advance the profession of public relations.





Subsequent to that meeting, Thelma Gray met with Dick Lukstat and discussed the Bicentennial program in depth. Several problems are of great concern to her and to the agency at this time, and she discussed these problems with Mr. Lukstat.

There are now over 150,000 volunteers in the Bicentennial Wagon Train Pilgrimage. There are people who will serve as Outriders, as the Wagon crews, and as organizers of the Bicentennial Wagon Train activities in each State. To secure national support for the program, members of her staff met with every Bicentennial Commission in the country. I doubt that there is any other national Bicentennial program, other than the operation of ARBA, which is working as cooperatively with the Bicentennial Commissions of the States.

Additionally, the Bicentennial Commissions of a great many of the States, being short of funds, have adopted the Wagon Train Pilgrimage as their State program.

The essence of the problem is that ARBA did not have a Board set up to give out Board approval until the end of September 1974. This meant that Thelma Gray and her staff were soliciting sponsorship for this Pilgrimage program from business and industry starting in mid-October 1974 -- just as the economy went sour.

Some success has been met with. The total cost of the program is \$4.7-million. They have raised \$2.5-million in essential services which cuts the need for dollars to \$2.2-million.

Major corporations have been reluctant to put up funds until they see how the economy goes in the first half of 1975. Inasmuch as the Wagon Train begins its Pilgrimage June 8, 1975, the program cannot wait for funds or commitment of funds that far off.

The press has picked up the Wagon Train story because it is dramatic and romantic. They have run the story in every village, hamlet and city. The agency has been deluged with letters from people coast to coast who want to be involved with this program. It is truly the only national Bicentennial program in which people are participants instead of spectators. Recognizing this fact, Dick Lukstat felt that the program must happen. He has asked Syd Eiges of ARBA to call corporations and try to secure funding. Mr. Eiges has been deeply involved with this, but, so far, no results.

It is my personal belief that there will be a national hue and cry if this program is terminated. The public does not identify the source of a program and they consider a national Bicentennial program such as the Wagon Train as a government-inspired program. People will feel that they have been deprived of their one opportunity to participate in the Bicentennial.





There are 5-million members of horseman associations in this country. Each association has endorsed this program and the association members are enthusiastic about it.

Inasmuch as this celebration is, in the words of Pat Hall, the Executive Director of the Bicentennial Commission of Oregon: "The catalyst of the Bicentennial in the State of Oregon and the total inspiration for Oregon" -- and the program is built on a community celebration across the country every 20 miles -- I believe the public would be justified in its potential disappointment.

Somewhere there must be Federal funds that can help this program survive. The ARBA grants are small and will not happen until the end of April, but Thelma Gray is still pursuing that avenue. Unless, however, funding is found immediately, the program cannot meet its deadline. Wagons must be built within the next two weeks. If not funds, at least a commitment is needed.

I may be wrong, but I have a feeling that if Thelma Gray could talk to you and President Ford about this program, help would be found. It seems to me almost inconceivable that a program that has inspired so many thousands of families to write to us and ask to be part of this Pilgrimage program, should be terminated because of shortage of funding.

With a meeting in mind, I will suggest to Mrs. Gray that she call you by 'phone for any direction or help you can give.

With best wishes.

Sincerely,

George W. Shanno
Vice President

eq

cc: Mrs. Thelma Gray

Enc.



BICENTENNIAL WAGON TRAIN PILGRIMAGE to Pennsylvania

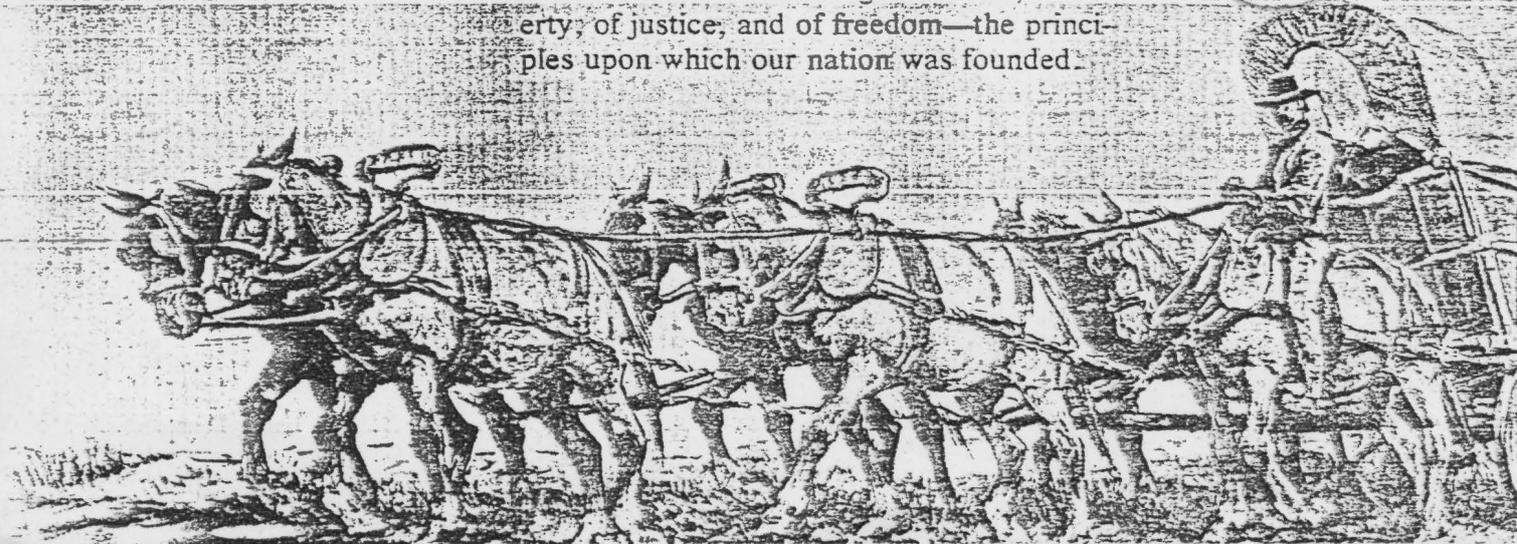
The chronicle of the wagon train is the story of infant America.

Early in the eighteenth century, settlers began moving inland. An endless procession of covered wagons loaded with household goods and supplies headed westward.

The wagons scaled the Allegheny Mountains. Made trails through the broad western plains. Followed primitive Indian paths through valleys and mountain gaps. Wherever possible they took advantage of natural water-ways by floating on rafts and river boats. The wagons followed the trail to opportunity and opportunity made America great.

Outriders and scouts foraged from the wagon trains seeking fresh water, green pastures and fertile grounds. Occasionally, a wagoner would leave the train to build a homestead for his family. These primitive log homes became way stations for other wagon trains. Soon they grew into outposts. Villages. And finally full grown Communities.

The settlers were drawn by a compelling belief in the inalienable rights of man, of liberty, of justice, and of freedom—the principles upon which our nation was founded.



As an appropriate tribute to the Nation's 200th anniversary, we will roll the wagons once more.

Once more we'll take to the wagon trails. But this time we'll head *Eastward*.

Back to the Cradle of Liberty. A pilgrimage to the birthplace of the nation. To rededicate the faith of the nation's citizens to the same principles which inspired their forefathers.

Briefly, the Bicentennial Wagon Train Pilgrimage to Pennsylvania is a replay of history—in reverse. A train of covered wagons—one wagon for each State—will cross the country, west to east, adhering as closely as possible to historic trails and wagon routes.

With the cooperation of the ARBA, the Wagon Train Pilgrimage will be offered to all officially designated Bicentennial Communities as an element for their Bicentennial celebration.

The Pilgrimage will serve as the cohesive thread for the Bicentennial Communities.

Volunteers from the North American Trail Ride Conference and local riding groups will serve the wagon train as mounted escorts and outriders. These 'Pony Express' riders will branch out from the State Wagons to reach communities not on the main trails.

The outriders will bring back scrolls from each Bicentennial Community signed by the citizens reaffirming their belief in the principles upon which this nation was founded.

The State covered wagon will tour its home state from the State Capital to a junction point with the National Wagon Train. It will stop in cities, towns, and hamlets to receive the signed scrolls... the rededication of faith in America.

While enroute, the State wagon will inspire historic ceremonies. Schedule permitting, it could join parades, visit State Parks, shrines, fairs and civic events.

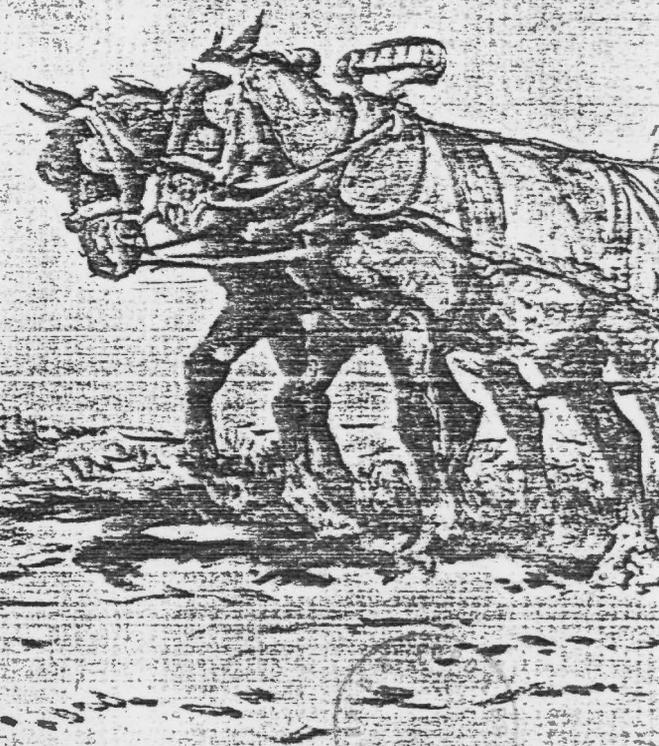
Eventually the State wagon will join Bicentennial Wagons from other States in a massive Pilgrimage to our Nation's birthplace where the signed scrolls will be enshrined.

The Bicentennial Wagon Train Pilgrimage is a program that reaches out to all the people of the Nation. One that involves everyone in a dramatic display of democracy in action. It is an event which will be remembered as the peoples' celebration of the Nation's 200th birthday.

An exceptional, exciting adventure.

The Bicentennial Wagon Train Pilgrimage will be one continuous exciting event.

Every day on the road and every night camping in local park sites and in National Parks, the wagoneers will host the people of



America. Local wagon and carriage groups, riding clubs, youth organizations will be invited to join the Wagon Train during the period of its approach to and departure from the outskirts of any community.

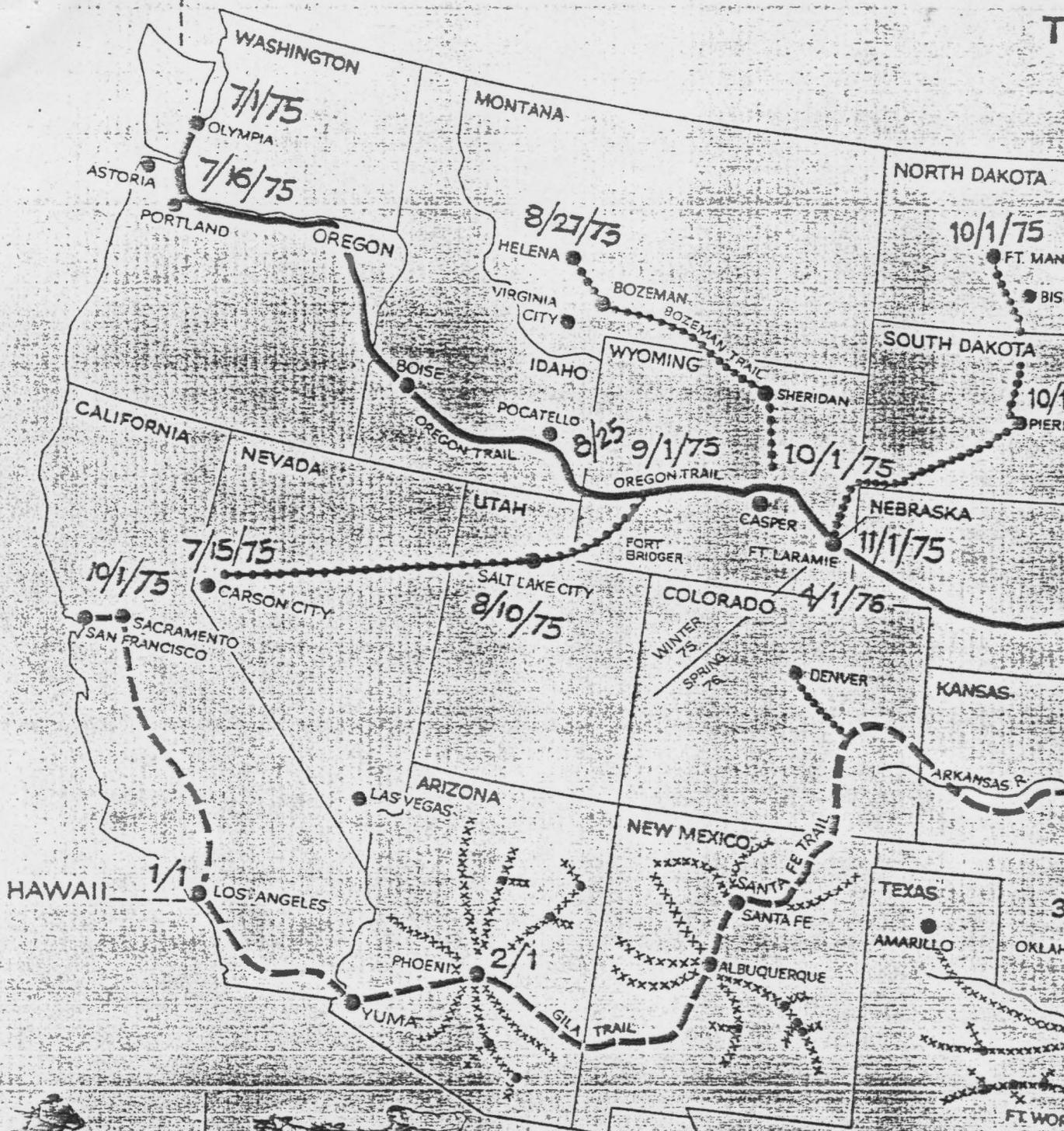
Spectators will be welcome to view the ritual of encamping, watering, feeding and grooming the teams of horses. Those who wish will share a meal with the wagoners.

The signed Pilgrimage scrolls will be accepted by the Wagon Master with appropriate ceremony.

The entertainment around the campfire will be reciprocal. School bands, local glee clubs will be invited to perform. Weather and scheduling permitting, the Wagoners will put on a stirring musical performance composed specially for the Wagon Train Pilgrimage. The evening will conclude with campfire sing-alongs and country hoedowns.

Since the announcement of the Wagon Train Pilgrimage, a great number of school children have asked how they can be a part of the program. School teachers have viewed the Pilgrimage as an ideal method of dramatizing the early history of our Nation. These requests have inspired the beginning of an educational study unit based on the Colonization and Pioneering periods of American history.





XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
 Volunteer outriders will pick up signed scrolls from Bicentennial Communities and deliver them to each State Wagon on the National trail

- NORTH WEST ROUTE
- SOUTHWEST ROUTE
- ***** SOUTHERN ROUTE
- GREAT LAKES ROUTE
- B-STATES ROUTE
- WATER ROUTE
- BRANCH ROUTE



The Wagon Train Pilgrimage provides an opportunity to direct attention of local schools to the heritage of each Bicentennial Community. Awards will be presented to school children for outstanding essays on their local forefathers who pioneered the paths through the wilderness during the founding days of our country.

To further perpetuate the impact of the national Wagon Train Pilgrimage, the historic trails used by the wagons will be marked with small roadside plaques. Several Western States have applied for Federal funding to designate these pioneering roadways as National shrines and parks.

The Bicentennial Wagon Train Pilgrimage will terminate on July 4, 1976 at Valley Forge Park in Pennsylvania. It will encamp there for two months during the height of the Bicentennial celebration. Millions of people are expected to visit the park during the period. They will be invited to join the wagoners for the daily and evening activities.

The North American Trail Ride Conference, whose volunteers serve as outriders for the Wagon Train, plan a coast to coast Pony Express relay timed to arrive at Valley Forge simultaneously with the arrival of the National Wagon Train.

Logistics

Each State will be supplied with: an authentic covered wagon—altered somewhat to withstand the rigors of modern road beds; two teams of horses and relief horses; harnesses, and all necessary hitching equipment; a station wagon and house trailer; and uniforms for the State's Wagoners.

Each State will be asked only to supply the Wagoners to represent the State during the six-month Pilgrimage. Preliminary research indicates that these crews will be readily available as volunteers from carriage, wagon, and horsemen associations or farm groups.

The national Wagon Train Pilgrimage will be conducted in five separate segments, each segment funneling into the main wagon train heading Eastward. They will follow as closely as possible such well-known historic routes as the Oregon and California Trails, Gila, Mormon, Santa Fe, Old Spanish, Natchez Trace, Wilderness, Old Post and, of course, the famous wagon road, Lancaster Pike. These routes will be cleared in advance with the necessary authorities.

Each segment leaves on a different schedule after July 1, 1975 to arrive in Valley Forge by July 4, 1976 (see attached map).

Cooperation and support of statewide horsemen, wagon and carriage groups will provide maintenance and care for the wagons and the horses while on the trail.

Each of the five Wagon Train segments will be operated by a Wagon Master and two assistants, a public relations professional, an activities director, and a staff of six.

The Bicentennial Wagon Train Pilgrimage program will be conducted with the complete support and cooperation of the American Revolution Bicentennial Administration, the Federal Bicentennial coordinating organization.

Financing and Budget

The Bicentennial Commission of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has provided the initial funding to establish viability of the program and to complete its initial stages. The balance of the funds will be secured through sponsorship of business and industry.

American Revolution
Bicentennial Administration



“The only truly national coverage program that we have exclusive of television media possibilities is the Bicentennial Wagon Train Pilgrimage to Pennsylvania—*this program goes to the people, really physically, geographically goes to the people!* The Wagon Train goes through every State, and every State will have its own wagon. The Trail Riders (the Scroll Outriders) are also going to cover every official Bicentennial Community in each State. They will actually, on behalf of the Wagon Train Pilgrimage, make a statewide horseback relay ride which will pick up the scrolls from each community—every official Bicentennial Community—for deposit, if you will, in the State Wagon for subsequent later display in Valley Forge.

“There are now 2,000 and will be more than 4,000 official Bicentennial Communities by 1976. Each Community has a Bicentennial Committee so that each one must have some form of ORGANIZED Bicentennial activity. *But there is no national cohesive thread!*

“The Wagon Train fills that need—~~together with the Trail Riders.~~ The big thrust of the Wagon Train is the nationwide geographic coverage. The Bicentennial Wagon Train Pilgrimage thrust is matched only by the population of the Bicentennial Communities. *Now that is a reaching of participants and spectators. From a participation standpoint you will reach every group that is doing something in every community that has a Bicentennial Committee.* You will have these people actually participating in greeting the Wagon Train when it comes into that particular town and being involved with the Wagon Train. The Wagon Train Pilgrimage will have the largest nationwide coverage during the Bicentennial year.”

Bicentennial Pilgrimage to Pennsylvania



So your children can tell
their children.

A Sponsored Project of the Bicentennial Commission of Pennsylvania

Lt. Governor Ernest P. Kline, Chairman

George H. Ebner, Executive Director

**BICENTENNIAL
WAGON TRAIN
PILGRIMAGE**
to Pennsylvania



A Project of:
Bicentennial Commission of Pennsylvania

Lt. Governor Ernest P. Kline, Chairman

George H. Ebner, Executive Director

For information contact: (215) LO 3-0380

With the support of:
North American Trail Ride Conference

May 20, 1976

Mr. Milton Mitler
Special Assistant to the
President
The White House
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Mitler:

Attached are various items that will substantiate our statement that the Associated Press was in error in the article concerning abuse of horses.

We have a national Equine Advisory Council (see attached list). The stature of the members of this council precludes their allowing any mistreatment of animals on the Wagon Train.

The incident that stimulated the AP story was a "Bicentennial Pilgrimage" of two teenagers with two mules riding from San Diego, California to Canada. The mules were in bad condition and were impounded.

The Bicentennial Wagon Train Pilgrimage to Pennsylvania was never in San Diego, California. Additionally, at the time these horses were impounded, April 22, every segment of the Wagon Train was east of the Mississippi. Mr. Virdon used our Pilgrimage Program as an example of good equine care when he made his announcement. The AP, by their own admission, garbled the story and we are taking the punishment. However, additional stories are being released and have already appeared which attest to the fact that we are super-careful on the question of equine care.

I have enclosed a xerox of the AP retraction; a release that we sent out immediately after the story appeared; a second release quoting Dr. Thomas Dunkin who is a national authority on horse care; a statement of Mr. Ebner which has been sent out in answer to letters and telephone calls; the letter that Lt. Governor Kline has issued.

- more -



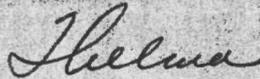
Mr. Milton Mitler
May 20, 1976

Page 2....

I believe that the problems created by the erroneous stories
have quieted down.

We appreciate your interest and hope that our Valley Forge arrival
and opening ceremonies may culminate this Pilgrimage of rededication
with the kind of tribute it deserves.

Sincerely,



Thelma Gray
Vice President, Public Relations

TG/es
att:



Dear _____

I have received your correspondence about the report of mistreatment of horses on the Bicentennial Wagon Train Pilgrimage to Pennsylvania.

That report was erroneous. The Commonwealth would not have undertaken this program without giving full consideration to the safety and well being of the animals. The wagon train pilgrimage was organized and planned with the advice and guidance of a committee of horse industry leaders and veterinarians who specialize in equine practice.

The teamsters and outriders in the program have been selected for their expertise and for the suitability of their horses for the program. The teamsters are under constant supervision and their horses are checked periodically by veterinarians and animal health officials in the states they are passing through.

I hope this information will allay your concern.

Sincerely,

George H. Ebner
Executive Director, Bicentennial
Commission of Pennsylvania



A Project of:
Bicentennial Commission of Pennsylvania

Li. Governor Ernest P. Kline, Chairman

George H. Ebner, Executive Director

For information contact: (215) LO 3-0380

With the support of:
North American Trail Ride Conference

For Further Information:
T. Ward Welsh
Aitkin-Kynett
4 Penn Center
Philadelphia, Pa. 19103
(215) LO 3-0380

May 7, 1976

Wagon Train Horses Are Fine

Illinois Veterinarian Says

CICERO, Illinois -- The horses that are bringing the Bicentennial Wagon Train Pilgrimage to Pennsylvania on paved highways are faring much better than their ancestors did going West, a prominent Illinois veterinarian said today.

Dr. Thomas E. Dunkin, a horse specialist who is advising the Pennsylvania bicentennial program, was at the state line last week when the Great Lakes segment of the train entered Illinois north of Chicago. He and other veterinarians checked the animals.

"They are in good condition," he said. "We don't foresee any problems with horses on this trip."

Dunkin said if horses are conditioned for distance riding, are properly shod, stop regularly for a rest and water, and are accompanied by effective traffic control they can travel safely on modern highways.

The 20-mile treks the wagon train makes each day are easier on the draft horses than on the saddle horses accompanying the wagons, Dunkin said, because the riding horses are carrying weight. But most of the saddle horses are only traveling part of the way and they frequently can walk on the shoulder of the road rather than the pavement.

The horses, which are shod with special borium shoes to improve their footing on pavement, move at a comfortable gait -- about four

(more)



Wagon Train Horses Are Fine, Illinois Veterinarian Says

miles per hour, Dunkin pointed out. They stop three times during each day for a rest and water and generally are off the road by mid-afternoon. At any sign of fatigue or lameness, participating horses are trailered ahead to the next encampment, Dunkin said.

About 25,000 horses have participated in the program, covering 11,000 miles in the western and southern states, Dunkin said, and there has been no sickness or injury attributable to the demands of traveling on the road.

Many horses have been turned away from the pilgrimage because they didn't have the necessary health certificates, or appeared to be inadequately conditioned or trained for highway travel, Dunkin said.

Dunkin said scores of veterinarians had checked the pilgrimage horses and mules over the past 10 months and he has invited his colleagues in the eastern states to visit the pilgrimage at any time to examine the animals.

Dunkin has been a veterinarian for 10 years. He is a founder and former president of the National Association of Equine Practitioners. He is a member of the U. S. Department of Agriculture's Advisory Board on Equine Policy, the Illinois Veterinary Medical Association, the American Veterinary Radiological Association and the American Animal Hospital Association.

"As a veterinarian I am deeply committed to the humane treatment of animals," Dunkin said. "But these animals don't face half the hazards that their ancestors did when they pulled wagons west 150 years ago." Things like gopher holes, rushing rivers and waterless days.



Wagon Train Horses Are Fine, Illinois Veterinarian Says

William J. "Bill" Chambers, President of the North American Trail Ride Conference, another advisor to the program, rode with the Santa Fe Trail Train into Kansas City last weekend. He said the horses on that train were in superb condition when they arrived in Missouri.

Chambers, who has been a competitive and endurance rider for six years, said his main concern after visiting trains in Nebraska and Tennessee was that some of the horses were getting fat.

"We have gone to great lengths to select the proper horses, shoes and diet for this trip and to plan a reasonable schedule," Chambers said. "Obviously we will have to pay special attention to traffic control as we get into densely populated areas in the Northeast. But we are confident that with the cooperation of traffic officers in each county we can bring the program to another 200 towns without endangering either horses or riders."



For Further Information:
T. Ward Welsh
Aitkin-Kynett Company, Inc.
4 Penn Center
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103
(215) 563-0380

April 23, 1976

Wagon Train Horses Are Thriving,
Trail Ride Official Says

SEDONA, Arizona -- The president of a national competitive trail riding organization said today the horses pulling the Bicentennial Wagon Train Pilgrimage to Pennsylvania are thriving on the trip.

"In fact, some of them are getting fat," said William J. "Bill" Chambers, president of the North American Trail Ride Conference. Chambers heads the Equine Advisory Council of the Wagon Train Pilgrimage, an advisory committee of veterinarians and horse experts which is assisting the program.

Chambers' remarks were prompted by a widely-circulated news service story which quoted a San Diego humane society official as saying inexperienced handlers were mistreating animals on some wagon treks.

Chambers said it was unfortunate if the Pennsylvania Pilgrimage was being confused with other, smaller treks which are occurring in several states.

The Pennsylvania program involves about 100 wagons and 400 riders, who are on the road today in Wisconsin, Nebraska, Tennessee, Kansas, and Georgia, headed for a July 3 rendezvous at Valley Forge.

Chambers said pilgrimage officials have gone to great lengths to assure that horses participating in the program are fit, are trained for the trek and are handled by experienced riders and teamsters.

(more)

Chambers Release

Owners must present medical health certificates for their animals before participating. Horses which don't meet the program's standards are turned away, he said.

To date about 25,000 horses have participated in the pilgrimage in 25 states in the west and south, Chambers pointed out. And no horses have been lost to fatigue or sickness related to their handling.

Each train is led by an experienced horseman who is responsible for supplies and quality of horse feed and water, Chambers pointed out.

Chambers said his committee has made an extensive study of all facets of mule and horse care on long highway treks, including diet, harness, shoeing and leg stress and has constantly supervised the care, feeding and handling of the horses.

"I travel constantly from wagon train to wagon train checking the animals," Chambers said. "I see the same teams from month to month and some of them are getting fat and I fear, lazy."

"We tend to forget these animals are created to pull and they love it."

Most of the draft horses are pulling authentic replicas of Conestoga Wagons and Prairie Schooners which were built especially for the program. They have roller bearings in the wheels, a hard rubber tread on the rims and can be pulled easily by two men, one pilgrimage official said.

The pilgrimage moves about 20 miles per day with a rest day scheduled almost every week. In those cases where the pilgrimage does not have an official "rest day", additional hitches of horses are provided. This allows for horses to pull the wagons three days and rest every fourth day.

The pilgrimage is bringing a bicentennial musical to each town it

(more)

Chambers Release

visits. The pilgrimage has rolled about 11,000 miles. It has camped in some 850 towns and has 250 stops ahead of it.

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COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR'S OFFICE
HARRISBURG

ERNEST P. KLINE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

May 17, 1976

Ms. Ruth M. Jones
Executive Director
The Society for Prevention of Cruelty
To Animals of Luzerne County
R.D. #2
Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania 18702

Dear Ms. Jones:

Thank you for your letter of May 6, 1976.

As Chairman of the Bicentennial Commission, I certainly share your concerns that animals on the Bicentennial Wagon Train Pilgrimage to Pennsylvania not be mistreated. I must point out, however, that the Associated Press story, which obtained wide circulation on April 22, 1976, was, in plain words, inaccurate. I have enclosed a copy of a subsequent Associated Press story, which appeared in the Philadelphia Evening Bulletin of May 6, 1976, which states unequivocally that the Associated Press made an error, and that Mr. Virdon was not referring to our program.

As I understand the situation in San Diego, Mr. Virdon's people impounded some animals that were being mistreated by the organizers of an informal "wagon train" making its way from the southwest to Canada. At no time, to the best of my knowledge, has any animal been impounded as a result of use on the Bicentennial Wagon Train Pilgrimage to Pennsylvania.

Thousands of horses have been used to date, thousands of individuals have loaned or rented their livestock, and I have received not a single complaint of mistreatment. I am, very frankly, distressed by a well respected organization such as the Society for Animal Rights reprinting an inaccurate story and widely distributing it without taking the time to check out either the facts or the circumstances of the event with responsible officials. I get angry letters every day, many of which justly criticize state government for actions it has taken. Uninformed criticism, however, disturbs me greatly.

Ms. Ruth M. Jones

Page 2

May 17, 1976

Should you or the members of your Society come upon specific cases of animal mistreatment on the Wagon Train, I would ask that you bring them to my personal attention.

Sincerely,

ERNEST P. KLINE

EPK/jld

DEC: MR. EBNER
MR. WELSH ✓
MR. BLOTZER

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PHONE 561-2000

... president for the President in the general election. Republican leaders understand that, he said, and will therefore come to view Reagan as far more electable.

Bicen Trek Cleared of Horse Abuse

San Diego — (AP) — The Associated Press erroneously reported on April 22 that San Diego's chief humane officer said horses and mules harnessed for the Bicentennial wagon trains are suffering at the hands of inexperienced wagonmasters.

The humane officer, Bill Virdon, was referring in remarks that day to the removal of a white burro with eye cancer and an underweight mule from a privately sponsored packtrip from Phoenix, Ariz. to Canada.

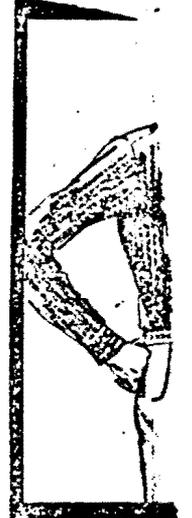
He also cautioned against mistreatment of animals elsewhere during Bicentennial-oriented events, but said that "small, independent, fringe groups are the ones that will require watching."

His specific reference was to a private event unrelated to the five wagon trains organized by the Pennsylvania Bicentennial Commission, generally recognized as a major part of the celebration of the nation's 200th birthday this year. They are heading from various parts of the country and are scheduled to arrive in Valley Forge on July 4.

Officials of the Pennsylvania Bicentennial Commission have denied there has been mistreatment of animals on any of their trains.

Pollution Unit to Meet

The Air Pollution Control Board will meet at 2 P.M. Tuesday in the 11th floor conference room of the Philadelphia City Hall Annex, Juniper and Filbert sts.



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PHILADELPHIA:

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