



## EMIGRANT TRAILS HALL OF FAME

OREGON-CALIFORNIA TRAILS ASSOCIATION

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# Gregory Mathew Franzwa

### Biography

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- Born: 1926, Carroll, Iowa
- Died: 2009, Tooele, Utah
- Married: Laura Goehri; Kathleen Colyer
- Preservationist, author, publisher, trail researcher

### Achievements

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- Co-founder: Oregon-California Trails Association
- Owner, Patrice Press
- Scholar of the Overland Trails and the Lincoln Highway

Gregory Franzwa might rightly be called the “Father of OCTA.” Upon hearing of continued destruction of pristine Oregon Trail ruts, in August 1982 he convened a meeting of other concerned individuals in Denver, Colorado. The result was an organization, the Oregon-California Trails Association, dedicated to the preservation of existing historic western emigrant trails and education of the American public of their significance in American history. Greg served as first president, first editor of *Overland Journal*, and OCTA’s driving force during its formative years.

Born and raised in Iowa, he joined the U.S. Navy after graduating from high school and served in WWII. Upon release from the military, he entered college, graduating from the University of Iowa with a degree in journalism in 1950. His interest in history led to writing and establishment of his firm, The Patrice Press. Until his death, The Patrice Press was the nation’s most active publisher of books on historic trails and the Lincoln Highway.

Franzwa’s *The Oregon Trail Revisited* in 1967 established his credentials as a leading scholar on the westward migration. This book literally and figuratively led interested parties over the Oregon Trail. His subsequent trail books expanded to include the Mormon Trail, the Santa Fe Trail, and the California Trail. They remain valuable resources for trail study and navigation of the trails today.