

# The Old Shoebox Newsletter

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## **An Introduction and Background - Do You Have a Rock in Your History?**

### **Where In The World - Is? Part 2**

**The AMOD AGL 3080 Knows**

**The Perfect Companion to  
Heritage Collector**

**by Marlo E. Schuldt**

**Becoming "Older" is not all bad! Other than the new aches and pains, the view is pretty impressive as we "start over the hill" we also have the advantage of "20/20 hindsight!"**

I'm sharing the following newsletter to provide some ideas to help get your children and family more interested in family history. You will learn how the new GPS Maps module in Heritage Collector and AMOD GPS Logger will make it easier and much more interesting.

History has a way of repeating itself. Fortunately our grandchildren value our stories and appreciate the wisdom we endeavor to share with them with the hope they can avoid the mistakes we've made.

It's important for us to offer an optimistic and positive outlook of the future no matter how bleak or challenging our economic challenges become. Our ancestors survived overwhelming odds as they created a better world for us to inherit in spite of the impossible challenges they faced.

The goal of this newsletter is to provide some suggestions and examples you can use to entice your children and posterity to rediscover the forgotten treasures and valuable experiences of the past. It has been said, "an understanding of the past provides a key for a better understanding of the future."

Sharing your family history may be one of the most priceless things you can offer to the next generation. It's your choice and opportunity to make a difference.

**Preparation and Sharing Hidden Treasures.** As you travel and study your family history be sure to document and share the interesting discoveries with your family. Recording GPS coordinates and making personalized maps will make it easier, enticing and fun for your family to visit your special finds. For example, we almost drove past Independence Rock because it is not clearly marked on the highway. Proper climbing boots and raincoats would have improved our visit. Noting the exact location some of the more interesting inscriptions carved into the "Rock" will assure that others will not miss some of the more impressive and inspiring inscriptions.

What you need.

1. A way to record GPS coordinates. The AMOD 3080 GPS Data Logger makes it easy and convenient to automatically gather the coordinates wherever you travel. It will embed the GPS coordinates into all the photos you take. You can also use a Garmin or other GPS device to manually record coordinates.
2. Heritage Collector GPS Maps module.
3. Digital Camera.
4. A desire to share and help your family rediscover their heritage and the special places you visit.



# Do You Have a Rock in Your History?

A week ago we traveled to Sheridan, Wyoming to attend the Wyoming Family History Expo to teach classes and demonstrate our family history software. We decided to chart our return trip via the historic pioneer sites of Independence Rock, Devil's Gate and Martin's Cove.

Until a week ago Independence Rock was not a significant place to me. It was kind of a fuzzy image from some ancient geography or American history class I grudgingly attended during my high school daze (misspelling intended).



*We almost drove past Independence Rock without stopping.*

I never had the opportunity to visit this national monument so important in the history of the pioneers traveling during the mid to late 1800's. I had no idea what Independence Rock looked like and could not remember why it was an icon of the pioneer era. Even more amazing and embarrassing, I almost drove right past it as we traveled along Wyoming Highway 220 heading toward Rawlins, Wyoming.

My wife commented and drew my attention to the unusual shape of a geologic formation up ahead. We took a few photos out the window as we neared this strange rock formation with no intention of slowing down. I was expecting a large road sign to alert us as we neared Independence Rock. I passed a little blue sign that said, "Parking Ahead." I saw no reason to slow down for a rest stop and continued my 65 MPH highway speed. I did notice there was an unusually long left turn lane in the middle of the road. Just as we were almost past the parking area I spied a little sign, "Independence Rock." I braked hard and said to my wife, "We're stopping here" and barely made the left turn without leaving any rubber on the road.

The strange worm like, black Archean granite monolith was actually Independence Rock. I had envisioned Independence Rock as some large, craggy and imposing rock face you could see for miles. What a surprise. I'm so glad I saw the little sign.

July 19, 2009 at 1:00 PM at Independence Rock was a hot day. About 90 degrees with a hot wind blowing a stinging rain. We walked over to a little covered area to read more about the "Rock." We looked at each other and wondered if we should brave the wind and rain to walk closer to the rock about a quarter of a mile away. As we neared the Rock we were amazed to see people

climbing all over the Rock. Some were climbing up a little crack in the face of the Rock.

The rain stopped, so we explored a little further around the Rock to an area you could not see from the visitor area. This must be something important because there was a high fence protecting some monuments embedded in the rock. It was here we started to make a "connection" with this unusual old Rock. As we read the short dedications and inscriptions on the plaques we started to understand why this was such an important and special place in our personal pioneer heritage.



*Ezra Meeker 1830 - 1928. 42 29.6900 N 107 7.9850*





*The Mormon Pioneers. 42 29.6717 N 107 8.0350 W*

We learned Independence Rock got its name because the Emigrant and Oregon Trails passed close to the Rock and was a rest stop used by wagon parties heading for Oregon, California and Utah. We also discovered it was a sacred place with an estimated 20 unmarked graves in close proximity to the Rock.

The Rock received its official name during a celebration held on July 4<sup>th</sup>, 1830 by William Sublette as he guided the first wagon train across this new overland route. It is said he named the rock in honor of the birth of the United States and the "Independence" this nation had battled so hard to win from other countries. This large convoluted dark piece of granite is 1,900 feet long, 700 feet wide and 128 - 136 feet high. Walking around the Rock is over one mile in circumference and worth the effort.

The pioneer wagon trains tried to reach this spot by July 4<sup>th</sup> since it was the halfway point in the journey West and the travelers wanted to reach their destinations safely before the dangerous first mountain snowfall.



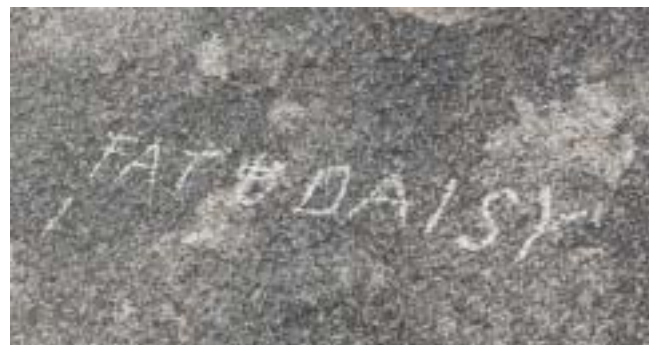
*The "Register of the Desert." 42 29.6717 N 107 8.0350 W*

The trail was used extensively from 1843 to 1869. Independence Rock was also called "The Register in the Desert" because the emigrants liked to carve, scratch, paint and use wagon grease to leave their names and dates on the rock as a witness to their historic passage.



*Another name. 42 29.6100 N 107 8.0200 W*

As we walked about the Rock we felt as if we were being introduced and becoming acquainted with the people who signed the Rock. It was interesting and revealing to view and read each of the testaments and optimistic handwriting styles of others who'd scratched



*42 29.6050 N 107 8.0150 W*

and added their names to this rock register. It was almost like a treasure hunt for us to see if we could identify more names and dates as we explored around the Rock.



*Appears to say, Nic ? Tormey.  
Maybe he was a colonel in the US Calvary in 1862  
This is part of the intrigue - figuring out the inscriptions.  
42 29.4550 N 107 7.8517 W*

Leanna was wearing flip flops, not recommended for mountain or rock climbing. In her defense we were not planning to climb anything and would have been better prepared had we known how easy the Rock was to climb.

We carefully ventured up one simple incline on the west side about halfway around and found it fun and easy climbing. The granite and lichen encrustations made an excellent nonslip surface for walking and climbing even if you were wearing flip flops.



*An easy place to start your climb*  
42 29.6300 N 107 7.8383 W

We discovered a friendly little jackrabbit that posed for a picture just a few feet away.



A friendly little jackrabbit makes its home on the Rock.  
42 29.5933 N 107 7.8117 W

I discovered evidence of another animal. I found a dried skin presumably shed from a poisonous rattlesnake earlier in the spring. The skin was about two or three



*Long snake skin.* 42 29.5267 N 107 7.8400 W

feet long. I'm glad it was the skin we discovered and not the snake who was probably lurking nearby in a crack! Always be alert and careful when exploring wild places.

From atop that great Rock I took photos and thought, "Somewhere between here and Nebraska lies an unmarked grave hidden next to this great pioneer trail where my great grandpa and grandma Olsen, with tearful eyes, carefully dug a tiny grave and gently buried a one day old baby girl, and then had the courage to walk on.



*North view off the Rock.* 42 29.5217 N 107 7.8883 W

The pioneers passed by many graves as they walked each day. I'm sure each night every traveler wondered if their journey would end the next day or if they would have the stamina to endure more new hardships as they neared the end of the trail.



*Unknown grave by Independence Rock.*  
42 29.5067 N 107 7.9200 W





*Climbing around on the rock was fun and not a challenge. This is the best place to start your climb.  
42 29.5333 N 107 7.8067 W*

We discovered more names as we climbed and explored the top of the Rock. Eventually, we went back down the way we came up and walked around the rest of the rock finding more names, wild flowers and an unknown grave site surrounded by an ornate black wrought iron fence.

I secretly hoped I would see the name "C. S. Olsen 1866" scratched in the Rock since my great grandfather was one of the early Norwegian pioneers who passed by the big old Rock. Carl Steen Olsen traveled by Independence Rock as part of the Peter Nebeker ox train that departed Wyoming, Nebraska August 1<sup>st</sup> 1866.



*More names. I was still searching for my great grandfather's name.  
42 29.4500 N 107 7.8000 W*



View of Independence Rock. 42 29.5850 N 107 8.1917 W

We walked back to the visitors center and read more about the Rock. We left with a new appreciation and understanding of a place in the history that gave encouragement and hope to our brave ancestors.

We departed for the next destination on our journey of discovery with a stop planned at Devil's Gate. As we made a left turn and started southward I wondered if the road would take us through the narrow cut in the mountain. I had no idea I was looking at Devil's Gate.



We had the same experience finding Devil's Gate. A very small sign you will drive past if you are not carefully reading EVERY road sign. Two small signs indicated this was the location of Devil's Gate and Martin's Cove.

Once again we were lost and learning not to rely on the few road markers in Wyoming. The night before I was unsuccessful in finding any tourist pamphlets about Independence Rock, Devil's Gate or Martin's Cove. I should have prepared better BEFORE we left on the trip.

In the past I've experienced the shortcomings of maps. A map shows you where you need to go but will not help you easily determine where you are located on the map. The Garmin does just the opposite. It will usually tell you where you are and *but not always correctly guide where you need to go.* Yes, my Garmin has gotten lost a few times in desolate places. The previous night it took us to the wrong place in CASPER Wyoming (Another story for another time).

I had entered the coordinates into my Garmin for Martin's Cove and mistakenly thought the Garmin would get us close enough to see a sign on the highway for Martin's Cove. That was before I knew Wyoming does not mark their highways with many signs. It's like the Wyoming highway department thinks you should know where you are going.



When I heard the Garmin confidently announce in its happy little voice, "Arriving at destination on right" all I could see was Devil's gate and desert. So once again I felt embarrassed and lost like a true pioneer exploring a strange new land.



I silently vowed to never depend solely on modern technology. *I should have had printed maps of ALL our intended destinations before we left home.*

An experienced traveler quickly learns that you need both - maps and the GPS unit. The GPS can help you determine where you are physically located and then you can compare that location with the printed map.

I guess this should be put in my Guidebook as a Marlo's Minefield Warning since I've now been then and experienced a navigation minefield.

A few miles south of Independence Rock we entered a sacred place called Martin's Cove which is close to Devil's Gate. Here many pioneers pushing handcarts froze to death in early snow storms. The story of their miraculous rescue and the sacrifice of those who came to save them is truly inspiring and worth a stop here.



*Martin's Cove (Sun Ranch).  
Here are the exact GPS coordinates so you  
will not get lost and easily find the location.  
42 25.9767 N 107 13.6350 W*

You can experience pulling a handcart to literally know how these early pioneers struggled on the trail.

One of the guides at Martin's Cove shared some very helpful and important information with me I would have never known.

He pointed me toward Rattlesnake Pass which is about a half mile north of the ranch. It was here that all pioneer trails converged into one trail. ALL the pioneers came through this little pass. He told me I would know the exact location when I saw an old grave next to the road. We got into the van and headed up an old dirt road in search of a new experience that would help us connect with the past. As we journeyed up the little road we had a much better view of Devil's Gate.

About a mile to the north of Martin's Cove I stood in a little valley known as "Rattlesnake Pass" and next to the pioneer grave of a Frederick Richard Fulkerson, aged 18, who abruptly ended his journey on July 1, 1847.



*View of Devil's Gate. 42 26.5183 N 107 13.0350 W*

The day before he had attempted to swim and ford the stock across the Platt River. The river caught him by surprise since it so swift and cold he and the animals were washed farther downstream than planned. He became so chilled and exhausted he died and was buried right there next to the trail.

Countless pioneers offered a silent tribute as they passed by this teenager's grave on their way to Oregon, California and Utah. I'm sure the early pioneers passed many graves and wondered if they would be next.



*The grave of 18 year old pioneer..  
Frederick Richard Fulkerson.  
Died on July 1, 1847.  
42 26.6383 N 107 12.4100 W*

As I stood there, I looked to the north, south, east and west and thought, "My great grandpa saw and felt exactly what I'm seeing today. My great grandfather passed RIGHT HERE as he "walked" the trail.

Each day his walk was courageous and lonely. He often lagged far behind and didn't make camp until late in the evening because his duty was to herd all the wagon train's slow walking sick cattle. It was very humbling to stand in that spot and think of the courage and faith of my pioneer ancestors. I wondered if I could walk halfway across the United States and be alone most of the time and defenseless with no one to protect me but the good Lord.

I'm sure not much has changed in the little pass on the trail. I encourage all my children and grandchildren to make the effort to travel to this exact spot and experience the sights and smells of this part of the trail. I hope you each remember your great – great – great grandfather Carl and grandmother Maren and their children, Ole and Chris Olsen. They passed this way over 143 years ago.



*Marlo E. Schuldt. July 22, 2009 at Rattlesnake Pass. 42 26.6383 N 107 12.4100 W*

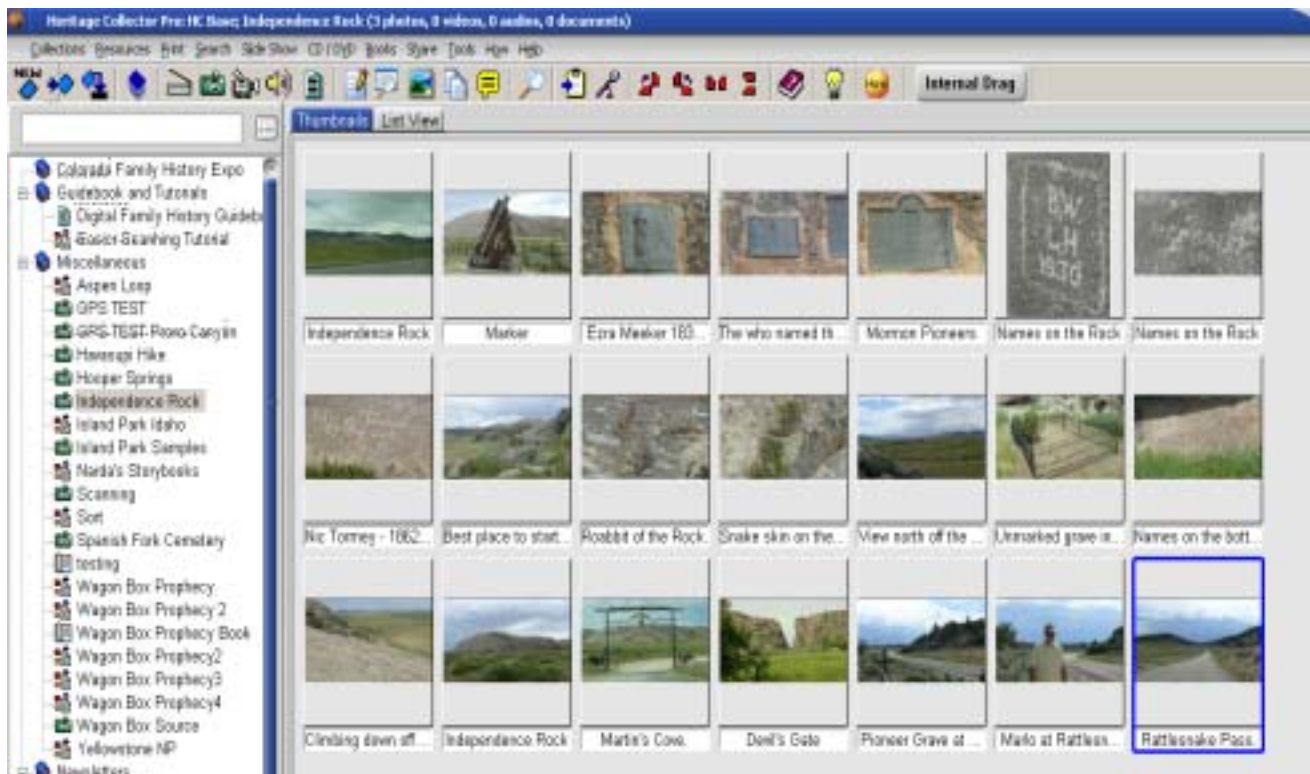


*Rattle Snake Pass on July 22, 2009. About the only that has changed is the wagon ruts have been replace with a wider gravel road. 42 26.8967 N 107 11.8367 W*

We climbed into our van, turned on the air conditioning, cruise control, made one stop for gas, a hamburger and milkshake and were home by 11:30 PM that same night. We unloaded the car and were in our nice clean, cool and soft beds by midnight. In the same length of time the Olsen's may have traveled a few more miles in the 90 degree heat taking care not to step on a rattlesnake while fighting off stinging flies and big blood sucking mosquitoes hiding along the streams waiting to come out after dark. Carl's bed was probably a piece of canvas or thin blanket spread over uneven and rocky ground that he shared with the ants and a variety of crawling little critters that bite or sting.

The Olsen family did not arrive at their destination sitting in a soft chair and could not order fast food and have a refreshing pineapple milkshake as we did. I'm grateful they made their pioneering sacrifice so we and our children could have the life and conveniences we have today.





Heritage Collector Independence Rock collection. Double clicking on a thumbnail displays the image full screen.



Clicking the Collections menu and selecting GPS Track displays a satellite view of Independence Rock. Thumbnail images appear on the left side of the display. Red symbols note the exact GPS location of each photo. Clicking on a thumbnail will change the symbol from red to blue indicating the location of the thumbnail being clicked. Double clicking a thumbnail will display the image full screen. This will make it possible for you to find the exact locations we visited and photos we took at those locations.



I used the AMOD 3080 GPS Logger to capture and associate GPS coordinates with all the photos I took at Independence Rock, Devil's Gate, Martin's Cover and Rattlesnake Pass.

The GPS coordinates generated by the AMOD are compatible for use with Heritage Collector software and our new GPS Maps module.

The good people at AMOD have offered to supply you with a 10% coupon code for the AMOD 3080. The coupon code is "AMOD10" and it does not expire.

Go to the following link to order or for more information:

<http://www.semsons.com/amaggpsdalos.html>

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<http://www.heritagecollector.com/Newsletter/Newslist.htm>

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