

## Branch Normal Lumber Route

# Hiking Trail follows Old Pioneer Road



**REST STOP.** Participants in the first Old Main Lumber Trail Hike take a pause that refreshes midway during the five mile jaunt.

Horned toads, blue bottle flies and an occasional rusted butter knife or broken wooden bucket found along a beautiful five-mile trail are adding a new dimension to one of the most significant events in Southern Utah State College history.

A hiking trail following part of the route used by pioneer builders to haul lumber for S USC's oldest building is being developed.

Anyone familiar with S USC history has heard about the lumbering expedition started in January, 1898, in the midst of an unusually cold and bitter winter, which was made in order to have Old Main, S USC's first building, completed by that September.

Volunteers traveled to the Jensen Sawmill, located 35 miles east of town on Mammoth Creek, to bring down lumber desperately needed to complete the building by the deadline set by the state attorney general.

Until the original road was located and marked this summer, most information regarding the route was included in a written reminiscence of the expedition told in 1955 by one of the volunteers, Rob Will Bulloch, which was later published by the college in a booklet entitled "For Sweet

Learning's Sake," and in a history of S USC, "A Delicate and Tenuous Thread," written by S USC Special Collections Historian Inez Cooper.

A first attempt to find parts of the old Wagon trail was made last year by S USC Professors Phil Carter and Bob Moss and members of the Elementary Block Class. With Cedar City resident Roy "Pug" Urie as the guide they hiked down part of Maple Canyon, finding hand-carved wooden troughs, buckets and broken shovels as evidence of the old trail.

During the summer, Ken Benson, S USC Coordinator of Student Activities, had Scout Troop 330 start from Martin's Flat to find the road from the bottom of Cedar Canyon.

After a number of interviews with long-time Cedar City residents Otto Fife, Lamont Ashdown, Leonard Ashdown, and several area historians, the road was finally established when Roy Urie and Leonard Ashdown hiked down the trail.

A five-mile section of the original route, from the base of Sugar Loaf Mountain at the Forest Service Boundary down to Martin's Flat, was then thoroughly marked by Brian Terry, a S USC student from Cedar City who is the

ASSUSC attorney general this year.

Terry was the guide for the "First Old Main Lumber Trail Hike" which was held in September following a student leadership conference in the Biran Head area. Several members of the S USC staff and faculty, along with representatives of the S USC Alumni Association, joined the student leaders for the Sugar Loaf - Martin's Flat trek.

There was some speculation as to just how long a distance the hike covered. Some participants said that the trail couldn't have been more than three or four miles long; Alumni President Ann Jones is adamant that it was at least 40.

Following still another trail marking by Troop 330, a second hike was made by Professors Moss and Carter

and students in the fall quarter Elementary Block Class. The group has made tentative plans for a two-day trail ride down the canyon this spring.

The "S" Dugway, Top of the Cedars, Maple Canyon and Martin's Flat are a few areas of special significance located along the five-mile section of the original wagon route, which was crossed in the historic lumbering expedition with wagons converted into sleighs, the only means of hauling the heavy lumber through the heavy mountain snows.

Copies for "For Sweet Learning's Sake," and "A Delicate and Tenuous Thread" are available at the S USC Library and anyone taking the hike is urged to read the accounts before starting the trek. Plans are being made for permanent markers along the trail.