

SPANISH TRACES



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Autumn 2016

Ecosystem Change

Old Roads

Paso por Aqui

Redoubt Site

OSTA Board - 2016-2017

President

Ashley Hall
4651 White Rock Dr.
Las Vegas, NV 89121
702-433-7875
ashleyhall1@cox.net

Vice-President

Reba Wells Grandrud, Ph.D.
2322 E. Cholla St.
Phoenix, AZ 85028-1709
602-992-0339
rgrandrud@cox.net

Secretary

Paul Ostapuk
PO Box 3532
Page, AZ 86040
928-645-2558
postapuk@gmail.com

Treasurer

Gary Boyd
1540 W. Warm Springs, Ste 100
Henderson, NV 89014
702-321-8804
gary@boydcpa.com

Arizona Director

Earl Fosdick
4046 E. Dynamite
Cave Creek, AZ 85331
602-376-4277
ekfosstorm@netzero.com

California Director

Paul McClure
23718 Aspen Meadow Court
Valencia, CA 91354
909-373-6200
espabloaqui@twc.com

Colorado Director

Vicki Felmlee
178 Glory View Drive
Grand Junction, CO 81503
970-245-8484
vickie@americamoreorless.com

Nevada Director

Robert Spurlock
HC 37, Box 610
Sandy Valley, NV 89019
702-596-5875
treeboar711@gmail.com

New Mexico Director

Bob Hilley
2858 Plaza Verde
Santa Fe, NM 87507-6512
505-983-8092
bobleehil@comcast.net

Utah Director

Al Matheson
8847 West 2200 South
Cedar City, UT 84720-4829
435-586-9762
citabriair@yahoo.com

Director-At-Large

Alexander King
3716 Coolidge Ave.
Los Angeles, CA 90066-3312
310-397-8900
avking@live.com

Director-At-Large—Native American

James Jefferson, Ph.D.
3258 Highway 172
Durango, CO 81303
970-259-1038
jj1492@q.com

Association Manager

John Hiscock, PO Box 324, Kanab, UT 84741, phone 435-689-1620, ostamgr@gmail.com

Chapter Presidents

Armijo Chapter (AZ)

George Hardeen
PO Box 5242
Page, AZ 86040
928-660-9406
georgehardeen@gmail.com

Mojave River Chapter (CA)

Nelson Miller
13043 Quapaw Road
Apple Valley, CA 92308
760-247-0984
nemiller47@yahoo.com

Tecopa Chapter (CA)

Jack Prichett
857 Nowita Place
Venice, CA 90291-3836
310-895-4747
jackprichett@ca.rr.com

La Vereda del Norte Chapter (CO)

Ken Frye
635 Cherry Street
Del Norte, CO 81132
719-657-3161
Kennruth@gogade.org

North Branch Chapter (CO)

Jonathan Carr
1931 Kennedy Ave.
Grand Junction, CO 81501
970-260-6424
jonathan@sistertrails.org

Nevada Chapter (NV)

Nicole Marie Dominguez
9625 Gondolier St.
Las Vegas, NV 89178
702-374-3812
nicolemdominguez@gmail.com

Salida del Sol Chapter (NM)

Pat Kuhlhoff
14 Duende Rd.
Santa Fe, NM 87505
505-466-4877
pglk@cybermesa.com

Fish Lake Chapter (UT)

Stephanie Moulton
2 North SR 25
Fish Lake, UT 84744
435-683-1000
fishlake@scinternet.net

Red Pueblo Chapter (UT)

Jeff Frey
1386 S. Lee Drive
Kanab, UT 84741-6166

435-644-8471

condor@kanab.net

Southern Utah Chapter (UT)

Al Matheson
8847 West 2200 South
Cedar City, UT 84720
435-586-9762
citabriair@yahoo.com

San Rafael Chapter (UT)

Edward A. Geary
PO Box 1392
Huntington, UT 84528
435-687-2112
eageary@me.com

Tres Trails Chapter (UT)

Leo Lyman
PO Box 461326
Leeds, UT 84746
435-632-7700
lionman011@gmail.com

William Workman Chapter (UK)

William Ramsay
83A Urswick Rd.
Ulverston, Cumbria, UK LA 12 9LJ
david.fallowfield@btinternet.com

OLD SPANISH TRAIL ASSOCIATION

The Old Spanish Trail (OST), one of America's long-distance pioneer trade routes, is recognized by Congress as a National Historic Trail. From 1829 through 1848, traders and pack mules followed the OST on typically a six-week trek from northern New Mexico to Southern California, where woolen goods from New Mexico were swapped for horses and pack stock raised on California's ranchos. Many took the trail – traders, frontiersmen, trappers, families, military expeditions, and Indian guides.

The mission of the Old Spanish Trail Association (OSTA) is to study, preserve, protect, interpret, and promote appropriate use of the Old Spanish National Historic Trail (OSNHT). OSTA promotes public awareness of the OSNHT and its multicultural heritage through publications, a website and interpretive activities; by encouraging research; and by partnering with governments and private organizations. We encourage you to join OSTA, help in trail preservation, and increase appreciation of the multicultural heritage of the American Southwest.

Visit our website: www.oldspanishtrail.org

The OSTA website is the place to go for both general and comprehensive background and recent news on the OSNHT and OSTA. The site contains maps, an overview history of the trail, and a bibliography of relevant books with links for purchases of books and other OSTA merchandise from the Association. There is also a regularly updated news page that contains links to government reports, activities of OSTA members, and other news related to the trail. The web page links to National Park Service (NPS) and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) sites, where public documents and maps related to the OSNHT can be found. Memberships (new or renewal) may be paid on the OSTA website, and donations, both general and for specific projects, can be made through the OSTA website as well.

Spanish Traces is the official publication of the Old Spanish Trail Association (OSTA), a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization, incorporated under the laws of the State of Colorado. *Spanish Traces* welcomes submission of articles, book reviews, and OST-related news. OSTA assumes no responsibility for statements or opinions of contributors. *Spanish Traces* is copyrighted to OSTA in its entirety, but copyright to individual articles is retained by the author. The next deadline for submissions is **November 10, 2016**. All matters relating to *Spanish Traces* should be directed to the OSTA Editor.

Ruth Friesen, *Spanish Traces* Editor, 1046 Red Oaks NE,
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87122
phone: 505.681.3026 email: ruthosta@comcast.net

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On the Cover: *The Whitewater Trail of the Old Spanish Trail, a six-mile retracement segment near Grand Junction, Colorado, allows hikers, bikers, and horse riders to experience the terrain that historic OST travelers saw. It is one of the few parts of the Trail dedicated to recreational use. Photo: Rod Martinez, Desert Photography, presenter at OSTA Conference*



President's Corner

by Ashley J. Hall
OSTA President

As I move into my final year as OSTA President, I reflect on the many interesting and rewarding experiences I have had during the previous three years. I have taken time to review my notes, my thoughts, and the correspondence from fellow OSTA members regarding the activities, priorities, and the progress of the Old Spanish Trail Association, its chapters, and members as we continue to focus our efforts to improve the Association as we move forward.

OSTA's progress is dependent on each one of us being involved in a positive way as we continue to address our mission statement and as we expand and improve the influence of the Old Spanish Trail Association. Sometimes I think how blessed we are to have connections to the Trail, either directly or indirectly. The OST has

been a focal point of our family for as long as I can remember, with my great-grandparents, grandparents, and parents impressing on me the importance of the Trail and having an impact on the Trail's preservation and history.

First, OSTA is very fortunate to have John W. Hiscock as the OSTA Manager at the present time. I take my hat off to all of the former OSTA managers and the able work they performed in helping OSTA reach its present standing among National Historic Trail organizations. John has expertise in law, in the management and oversight of a major National Park Service Historic Site, the Pipe Spring National Monument, and has knowledge and understanding of the administrative, financial, technical, and historical elements associated with the Old Spanish Trail. His expertise, along with the assistance of members like Mark Henderson, Paul Ostapuk, Al Matheson, Jack Prichett, and others, have enabled OSTA to respond to the BLM/NPS regarding the technical aspects of the potential impact of major transmission lines and corridors along the Trail.

Second, it is essential that we continue our efforts to develop four-tier leadership within OSTA—the board, state directors, chapters, and membership—in order to groom and encourage

visionary candidates to fill OSTA board, state director, and chapter president positions. Working to support OSTA chapters is critical to help us grow leadership within OSTA. We need to continue our efforts for chapter members to be deeply involved in making major contributions. Only the continued commitment of us all will allow OSTA to move forward.

Third, the continued development and recruitment of the general OSTA membership remains a high priority. If OSTA is not growing each year, we are setting ourselves up for long-term failure. OSTA does not need to grow by leaps and bounds, but by a modest growth rate within each of the chapters and among our general membership, to replace those who are getting older and may not have the physical capacity to continue to carry a heavy load.

Fourth, OSTA is “...a nonprofit corporation organized to protect, preserve, and interpret the Old Spanish Trail, including all of its related historic routes and branches, with a primary focus on those portions designated in December of 2002, or thereafter, as the Old Spanish National Historic Trail. The Association's purpose is exclusively charitable and educational within the meaning Section 501(c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code.” With the above quote from OSTA Bylaws, it is essential for us to stand a little taller, dig a little deeper and go the extra mile

as we strive to protect, preserve and interpret the OST and all of its branches.

Fifth, I have developed a great respect for current and past members of the OSTA board and the NPS and BLM managers and staff who help OSTA move forward with their continued counsel and financial support. Saying “so long” to committed past board members like Margaret Sears from New Mexico, Liz Warren from Nevada, Lorna Hall as Secretary, Mark Franklin as Treasurer of OSTA, and Judy Nickle as the Membership Secretary, and Dennis Ditmanson, our immediate past Manager, leaves a void that I am sure will be filled by our newly-elected board members.

At the same time, we applaud the continued extra effort by Directors Reba Wells Grandrud (At-Large), Paul Ostapuk (Vice-President), Al Matheson (Utah), our new Treasurer Gary Boyd (Nevada), Vicki Felmlee (Colorado), Paul McClure (California), Earl Fosdick (Arizona), Bob Hilley (New Mexico) and Dr. James Jefferson (At-Large-Native America), and member Mark Henderson as they continue to make a major difference in OSTA! We thank all of the above for their contributions.

Sixth, as I have stated before, I believe that trail activities represent the life-blood of OSTA. Chapter activities allow all of OSTA members to be involved

directly or indirectly in the Association. Our experience in re-marking the OST through Nevada beginning in 2010 to the present has been a tremendous experience. We were able to combine the efforts of OSTA members with civic, historical, governmental, and youth groups, and with the media, with well over 1500 participants representing thousands of hours of service and support. When the Nevada re-marking project is completed this year, there will have been 25 Eagle Scout projects supported by their families, their friends, OSTA members, civic and governmental leaders, community historic organizations, and the media.

Seventh, the continued focus and strengthening of OSTA’s strategic plan provides the structural/functional road map needed to keep us on a pathway of improvement of OSTA’s mission statement, vision statement, and operational components that will enable OSTA to be stronger and successful.

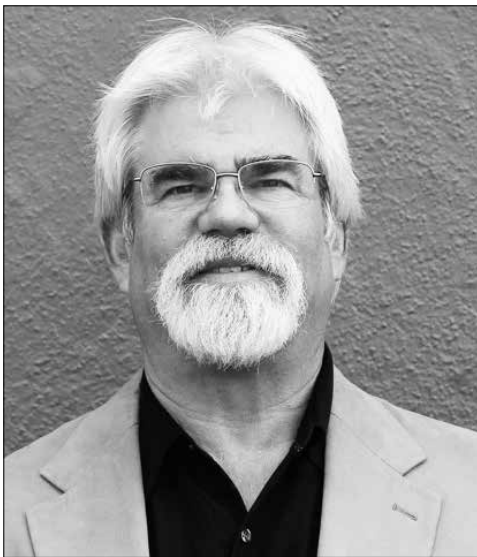
Eighth, it is critical that we continue our efforts to improve our organizational structure by further clarifying roles, functions, and duties of the OSTA officers/board members by developing better job descriptions, shifting certain

duties, and following through with meetings of the various OSTA committees. We are blessed to have Ruth Friesen, *Spanish Traces* Editor, and Chelsea Bodamer, Social Media Director, who continue to help OSTA improve the overall image, information, pictorial, and social media aspects for OSTA membership and the world.

Ninth, we can expand OSTA’s horizons by holding board meetings and conferences in strategic locations in major cities associated with OST states. This would enable the Association to invite history, cultural, research, archaeological, and philanthropic leaders, mostly located in our larger cities like Salt Lake City, Los Angeles, Phoenix, Denver/Boulder, Las Vegas, and Albuquerque, to provide papers, presentations, and lectures on the Old Spanish Trail and related Southwest history.

Lastly, I want to stress the importance of our OSTA annual conferences, with this year’s conference held in Grand Junction, Colorado. For me, the annual conferences, the presenters, trail tours, social events, and related activities build a comradery in our unity of purpose that enables OSTA to move forward each year. ♦

***Join us at the OSTA
2017 Conference in
Barstow, California
October 6-7, 2017***



by John W. Hiscock
Association Manager

The range of personal interests in the Old Spanish Trail and the Old Spanish Trail Association and its endeavors continues to impress me. At the OSTA annual conference in Grand Junction, Colorado, I had yet another opportunity to get to know many members - new and old - and their personal intrigue with the Trail. The energy buzzing throughout the conference was inspiring and invigorating, and added many new ideas and objectives to my work load as your Association Manager.

Many thanks are due to the conference chair, Colorado State Director Vicki Felmlee and her core committee helpers - Jonathan Carr, President of the North Branch Chapter, and Ken Frye, President of the La Vereda del Norte Chapter. Vicki successfully recruited, wrangled, and negotiated monetary and operational donations and assistance from a wide array of partners, including the Interpretive

Association of Western Colorado, Mesa County, the City of Grand Junction, the Grand Junction Field Office of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the National Park Service (NPS), the Clarion Inn, Grand Valley Transit, Desert Ecological Analysis and Research, and the Colorado Riverfront Foundation, and others (I'm sure I've missed some). The presentations were great, including an entertaining and culturally enlightening keynote address from Ute speaker Larry Cesspooch at the banquet. A special field trip and recognition of a newly signed and developed recreational retracement portion of the Trail highlighted the work accomplished under an Active Trails grant from the National Park Foundation and National Park Service, and the many partners involved. OSTA funded the attendance of two college students at the conference - Amado Guzman, in the Ph.D. history program at University of Arizona, and Anthony Graham, in the Ph.D. history program at University of Nevada, Las Vegas - both of whom are now OSTA members.

The conference was preceded by a busy OSTA strategic planning session and board meeting. OSTA's strategic plan is due for revision after a three year interim period. The session reviewed the existing plan, and refocused major strategic goals for the Association. As planned, this session was a start, and further progress on a revised strategy will continue over the

coming months. Information will be shared through your leaders, at the board and chapter levels.

As usual, the board meeting was demanding, with operational, financial, and agency updates. Old Spanish National Historic Trail (OSNHT) co-administrators, Superintendent Aaron Mahr (NPS) and Rob Sweeten (BLM) announced the release of the long-awaited Comprehensive Administrative Strategy (CAS) to guide administration of the OSNHT over many future years (more on that later). Finances of the Association are adequate, if not strong, and the means of improving resources through expanded membership, donations, and other approaches were discussed. In the 2016-2017 NPS partnership and financial agreement year, OSTA faces a 10 percent decrease in NPS support funding (as do all NPS Intermountain Region-supported trail organizations). On the positive side, OSTA was successful in a request to the NPS for year-end volunteer funding support for two needs: topographic maps for field work in Southern California and the border region of Utah and Arizona, and printing of an OSTA-Colorado volunteer recruitment brochure. And, OSTA has also developed and submitted a grant application to the Arizona Strip District BLM for a research and planning project spanning the Utah/Arizona borderlands (no word on award yet). These ongoing funding possibilities are based on project ideas and

Trail Dispatches

proposals envisioned by OSTA leaders and members. You can help. Send your project ideas and proposals to your leaders and me.

Achievements in promotional, informational, and interpretive fronts were also covered. As mentioned, signage and recreational use have been advanced in the Grand Junction area through partnership efforts and the Active Trails grant. OSTA has reviewed and participated in the development of new interpretive waysides being designed and fabricated by the NPS for Koosharem, Utah. And, the NPS and OSTA have designed six - one for each Trail state - OSNHT "Find Your Park" posters for use during the remainder of the NPS Centennial year and beyond. OSTA is funding additional printing of these posters to be delivered to state and chapter leaders, and further distribution to parks, museums, libraries, schools, and other public partners.

Addition of new members and possible creation of two new chapters - a descendants chapter, and a geographical chapter in the Riverside, California area - were discussed. For those interested in such chapters, I would encourage you to contact Director-At-Large, Alex King.

Our next general conference was re-confirmed for Barstow, California in October 2017. Thus far, the conference committee includes Nelson Miller (Chair), California State Director Paul McClure, and me as Association Manager. Please

contact us with your ideas.

During the Board and general membership meetings, recently-elected board members were introduced, confirmed, and welcomed. These include Reba Wells Grandrud as Vice-President, Paul Ostapuk as Secretary, Robert Spurlock as Nevada Director, Alex King as Director-At-Large, Earl Fosdick as Arizona Director (new term), and Dr. James Jefferson as Native American Director-At-Large (new term). Outgoing Board members and staff, Secretary Lorna Hall, Nevada State Director Liz Warren, and Membership Coordinator, Judy Nickle, were thanked by the board and members at the conference banquet.

ALERT: Comprehensive Administrative Strategy

As aforementioned, the Department of the Interior OSNHT co-administrators, the BLM and NPS, have now released a Comprehensive Administrative Strategy (CAS) to guide the administration of the OSNHT over many coming years. This is a critical juncture for administration and management of the Trail and ongoing participation of OSTA as the principal participating volunteer partner in such management. By all appearances and information received, the CAS appears to be proposed by the co-administrators as a substitute for a comprehensive management plan mandated by the National Trails System Act, and overdue for the OSNHT since 2005.

The CAS can be found on the internet at <https://parkplanning.nps.gov/document.cfm?parkID=454&projectID=12591&documentID=74062> (This web link has also been recently e-mailed to all OSTA members).

All members are encouraged to review the draft CAS and make your opinions and comments known. OSTA will submit reviewed and unified Association-wide comments. We invite you to be included in this organizational submission, by delivering your comments to me, as Association Manager, preferably by e-mail at ostamgr@gmail.com, or by mail at Association Manager, Old Spanish Trail Association, P.O. Box 324, Kanab, UT 84741. I am requesting comments for the OSTA submission by Wednesday, September 7, to facilitate compilation and drafting of a unified submission. Please reference whether your comments are general in nature, or, if specific to a particular page in the CAS, a page reference. Be as concise as possible with your comments. Of course, individual members, or groups of members, may also submit their comments independently, as described at the noted website. The deadline for submission of comments to NPS and BLM is Friday, September 16.

Things to Look For

Here is an idea list of things to look for in your review:

- How does the CAS address, or not, ongoing **process** for future

Trail Dispatches, cont. from page 7

changes to Trail management - things like future Trail corridor refinements, inclusion of study routes (such as the Fish Lake Cutoff or North Branch West Fork), addition of more high potential sites and segments, etc.?

- Does the CAS include Trail refinements previously recommended by OSTA - in Mapping Workshops, or otherwise?

- Does the CAS include identification of high potential sites and segments previously recommended by OSTA - in Mapping Workshops, or otherwise?

- Does the CAS include Trail refinements not previously discussed with OSTA? What, if identifiable, are reasons for such?

- How does the CAS address identification and development of Trail recreational opportunities - retracement recreational trails and other?

- How, if at all, does the CAS address Trail informational, interpretive, and educational efforts?

- How does the CAS address relationship with other land management agencies (US Forest Service, State agencies, private landholders, etc.)?

- More

Please send me your comments, and inspire others to participate as well. ♦

LA Archives Bazaar Scheduled October 15

The 11th annual Los Angeles Archives Bazaar will be held on Saturday, October 15 at the Doheny Library on the USC campus. Alex King, OSTA Director-at-Large, says, "I've gone almost every year. It is an amazing one day, 'one-stop shop' where researchers, cultural historians, and the public at large can browse the offerings of no less than 80 different archives, libraries, collections, and organizations of the greater L.A. area all in one place." See details at

<http://laassubject.org/archives-bazaar>

THANK YOU

With OSTA's publication of *Driving the Old Spanish Trail through Utah and Arizona* this past fall, its distribution to OSTA members at that time, and an accompanying call for donations to support such informational, educational, and interpretive publications and media in the future, a number of donations for said purposes have been received.

Our thanks to the following donors:

Susan Doyle (Pendleton, OR),
David Ogden (Richfield, UT),
James Murray (St. George, UT),
Gus Scott (Prescott, AZ),
John Harms (La Mesa, CA),
Ken de Masi (Mesa, AZ),
Ronald Griffin (Las Vegas, NV),
Janet Austin (Diamond Bar, CA),
Terri Koenig (Lake Arthur, NM),
Robert Beers (Las Vegas, NV),
Franklin Morehead (Henderson, NV),
Mary Ramstetter (Golden, CO),
Roberta Holmes,
Elizabeth West (Santa Fe, NM),
Jacqueline Messina (Las Vegas, NV),
Willard & Kay Lewis (Santa Fe, NM),
Augustine and Margaret DeHerrera (Tres Piedras, NM), and
Linda Spitzer (Highland, CA)

THANK YOU to these members for their contributions to this initiative. This account presently contains \$510 in donations. Funds will be used for future development of informational, educational, and interpretive media, including auto tour guidebooks for New Mexico/Colorado and Nevada/California. Your help is critical. Additional donations (with a notation "Interp. Media") may be sent to the Association Manager, P.O. Box 324, Kanab, UT 84741. (Your donations to the research, writing, educational, and interpretive endeavors of OSTA are tax deductible to the extent of the law.)

Chapter Reports

Salida del Sol Chapter

The *Farmington Daily Times* on Sunday June 26 carried an article by Hannah Grover about the new NPS signs going up between Blanco and Aztec, New Mexico. Hannah interviewed Chapter President Pat Kuhlhoff for the article.

Chapter member Mark Henderson led the June 18 field trip on the North Branch of the Trail in the newly acquired Miranda Canyon area. Trip participants Pam and Mike Najdowski report:

Our chapter was privileged to be treated to a special field trip led by Mark Henderson, chapter member and National OSTA Stewardship Chairman. The goal of the trip was to get a sense of the summer route which was used for travel from the Rio Grande area north of Espanola to Taos. A portion of this route followed the Miranda Canyon which is essentially between what is now NM 518 and the Rio Grande. It crosses NM 75 near the small community of Vadito. Nearly all of Miranda Canyon has recently been added to Carson National Forest for permanent preservation.

We began our tour with an orientation at the BLM Visitors Center at Pilar and then headed north to the northern drainage of Miranda Canyon with a walk to the Ponce de Leon Springs, which have recently been turned back to the control of Taos Pueblo. Many local Pueblo members were enjoying the hot springs while we had lunch in the shade.

After lunch we explored the southern reaches of the Miranda Canyon much higher in the Sangre de Cristos Mountains. Mark led the high clearance vehicles on a forest service road traveling west from NM 518 (US Hill—a route developed for the US military). In a clearing at a rough trail junction we were thrilled to come upon a large wooden marker commemorating EL Camino Real that had been placed on July 9, 1967.

The sign reads: “El Camino Real is the oldest road in The United States. Its history is full of drama packed

events and picturesque people. For over 1000 years it served Indian, Spanish, French, and American traders, travelers, and settlers. The first Europeans, Coronado’s scouts under Alvarado, came along this trail in 1540 surveying pueblos to the north. In 1598 Don Juan de Onate sent colonists along this route to “settle Spain’s new acquisitions.” Marker placed by National Society, Children of American Revolution in cooperation CARSON NATIONAL FOREST July 9, 1967

The August field trip will be an overnight at Sky Ute Casino with dinner and a speaker on Friday, August 19 and a field trip led by Rachel Miller and Doug Knudson to the Carracas Crossing of the San Juan River on Saturday, departing from the hotel lobby.

Our October meeting will be held on the 15th of the month and our speaker will be Christine Fischahs, a descendant of Ceran St. Vrain, talking about her ancestor. Location to be determined.

The chapter turned in 168 hours in volunteer time from January to June 30. The chapter is looking for new officers for 2017. If you are interested, call or email Pat Kuhlhoff 505-466-4877, pglk@cybermesa.com.

--Pat Kuhlhoff

William Workman Chapter

Unfortunately, this year no members of the William Workman Chapter attended the annual conference in Grand Junction, Colorado. I think we have been extremely lucky these past few years to be represented at OSTA conferences considering how far we are removed from the Old Spanish Trail. I have sent good wishes from Chapter President Bill Ramsay and chapter members to Vicki Felmler and Ashley Hall for a successful conference. We look forward to being represented at Barstow for the 2017 conference.

--David Fallowfield

California Report

An OSTA/NPS/BLM entourage including Rob Sweeten, BLM; Jill Jensen, Lee Kreutzer, Michael Taylor, NPS; and OSTA Association Manager John Hiscock participated in a five-day tour of the OSNHT from Los Angeles, California, to Cedar City, Utah, in early April. The tour included an evening and most of two days in California, led and joined by California members Alex King, Nelson Miller, Jack Prichett, and Tom Sutak.

Alex King joined the group for dinner at Olvera Street on Saturday evening, introducing Olvera Street, La Iglesia de Nuestra Senora (Church of Our Lady - 1822), and other sites. Alex led the group via a circuitous Sunday route to the Mission San Gabriel, the Miguel Blanco Adobe, the Juan Matias Sanchez Adobe, the William Workman House, and the Agua Mansa Cemetery and Trujillo Adobe at San Salvador de Jurupa. Then we traveled over Cajon Pass to Oro Grande Junction, Point of Rocks, and Barstow.

Nelson Miller and Jack Prichett joined in on Monday and led the group to Punta de Agua/Fork of Roads, Afton Canyon, Soda Springs, Armagosa Springs/Salt Spring (aka Salt Creek)-- where Tom Sutak joined for a distance--Tecopa Hot Springs, Resting Spring, and Emigrant Pass where Nelson, Jack, and Tom bid farewell. When last seen, the BLM and NPS staff with John Hiscock in tow were headed into Nevada, where we understand they were briefly joined by members President Ashley Hall and Director Liz Warren, and then headed further into Utah. The trip was a great opportunity for BLM and NPS OSNHT staff familiarization with the western extremes of the Trail, and meetings between OSTA, NPS, and BLM field offices in Barstow, Las Vegas, Cedar City, and St. George.

At the annual Tamale Festival in Riverside on April 14 OSTA provided a booth. There was a packed park, more than 50 vendors, lines of customers for blocks down the street, and a steady stream of visitors at the OSTA booth. <http://riversidetamalefestival.weebly.com/>

On May 25, Mojave River Chapter President Nelson Miller, BLM's Desert Discovery Center Director Jane Laraman-Brockhurst, and Paul McClure met Dakota Higgins, Field Representative for Congressman Paul Cook, to discuss legislation to upgrade the Desert Discovery Center into an Old Spanish Trail Interpretive Center.

The Old Spanish Trail Association annual conference convened in Grand Junction, Colorado, on July 29 and 30, preceded by a meeting of the Board of Directors the day before. The event included field trips, excellent speakers, and wonderful hospitality. We recognized eight Californians in the group.

--Paul McClure

Nevada Chapter

Since our chapter's project of re-marking the Old Spanish Trail in Nevada is nearing an end, we began searching for a new project. The chapter has been planning a Fremont Camp Site on a small plot of land in Hidden Valley, just south of Glendale, Nevada. However, the land on which the Camp Site was to be located has recently passed into new hands, leaving the chapter to search for a different location.

We have submitted a formal proposal to the Nevada State Historic Parks Division to locate a small Fremont Camp Site in one of its Historic Parks in Southern Nevada. After discussions with parks representatives, we are hopeful that a new location for the Fremont Camp Site can be identified. Our goal in creating this Camp Site is for it to be an educational site where we can learn about Fremont, the use of the Old Spanish Trail, and users' families and descendants. Also, we intend to expand the scope of the Camp Site to include other important uses/impacts on the OST, including the use of the Salt Lake-to-Los Angeles emigrant road, a history of the American Indians of the area, the early fur traders of the West, and the Mormon Battalion who recommended a settlement in Las Vegas in 1848. We will keep you posted.

Many of you may be aware that on May 4, 1844, John C. Fremont and his company stopped at the Las Vegas Meadows/Springs. Here Fremont etched the name of "Las Vegas" and a small line noting the Old Spanish Trail on his map. In 1845, he published his 1844 map that included Las Vegas and the Old Spanish Trail, thus putting both on the national map.

The Nevada Chapter has invited the William Workman Chapter to help design the Fremont Camp Site, which they have agreed to do, thus giving our British OSTA members direct engagement in a project along the OST. The members of the William Workman Chapter are excited.

--Nicole Marie Dominguez

Nevada State Report

This year, the Nevada OSTA Director has continued to work with the BLM Office of Southern Nevada, particularly in assessing the impact of major power line and pipeline projects through Southern Nevada. These projects, which include placing large power poles along the line of the OST through Southern Nevada, would severely impact the route of the OST by destroying the isolation of the trail and encouraging motor vehicle traffic along its traces. Thus far, we have succeeded in requiring mitigation for these projects, enabling installation of large interpretive signs along the route. In appropriate instances, we joined with Nevada's Archaeo-Nevada Society and Clark County's Comprehensive Planning Department to accomplish these goals.

Clark County's Comprehensive Planning Department is also initiating a Rails to Trail Project that joins Goodsprings to Jean, Nevada, via the route of the long-defunct Yellow Pine Railroad. This was a rail line that connected the large Yellow Pine Mine, located in the Spring Mountains behind the town, to Jean, a stop on the Union Pacific Railroad constructed in the early twentieth century between California and Utah. I have been reviewing the interpretive signage planned for this route to ensure the OST is accurately depicted.

--Liz Warren

OSTA Research Committee Plans Action

A major component of the OSTA mission statement is to study the Old Spanish Trail and closely related historic routes. To help meet this goal, the research committee was established to provide support to members, institutions, and others researching the history and location of the Old Spanish Trail and to evaluate, propose, and assist in research studies that will enhance knowledge of the Old Spanish Trail.

At the 2016 OSTA conference in July, the research committee met twice to discuss action items. We are planning to annotate the online bibliography and prioritize what needs to be researched (such as the Fish Lake Cutoff and the West Fork of the Rio Grande and La Placita de los Trujillos). Also, the committee is planning to serve as a peer review body for *Spanish Traces*.

At this time, we are considering creation of a data base that would incorporate known trail locations, travelers, incidents, and dates. Also, during the conference we were tasked with reviewing the BLM Comprehensive Administrative Strategy, which was just released.

Active members of the Research Committee include:

- Tom Sutak, Chair of the Research Committee
- David Miller, Historian
- Alex King, OSTA Director-At-Large
- Earl Fosdick, OSTA Arizona Director
- Ruth Friesen, *Spanish Traces* Editor, ex-officio
- John Hiscock, Association Manager
- Fred Norris, National Park Service, advisor
- Reba Wells Grandrud, OSTA Vice President and Board Sponsor of the Research Committee

New Chapter Forming

The Spanish Town Heritage Foundation in Riverside, California, is forming a new OSTA chapter, the San Bernardino/Riverside Chapter. Alex King has been instrumental in encouraging this formation. The Trujillo Adobe in Riverside, a part of the Agua Mansa and Trujillo settlement, has recently been listed as a high potential historic site in the NPS/BLM's Comprehensive Administrative Strategy document.

"Back to the Trail" Event Planned for October 15

Explore the Old Spanish Trail on October 15 during an urban walk, run, bike, and horseback ride event on the Old Spanish National Historic Trail near Grand Junction, Colorado. The "Back to the Trail" event will be held on a portion of the six-mile Old Spanish Trail re-tracement trail, located just outside of Grand Junction. Participating partners include OSTA, Western Interpretive Association of Colorado and the BLM. For more information, visit www.OSTColorado.org, or look for "Back to the Trail" on Facebook.

Call for Proposals Issued Arizona-New Mexico History Convention

The program committee invites proposals for presentations on any aspect of Arizona or New Mexico history for delivery at the Arizona-New Mexico Joint History Convention in Flagstaff, Arizona, April 20-23, 2017. Proposals for both individual submissions and complete sessions are encouraged.

Proposals may be submitted by e-mail or postal mail to Bruce J. Dinges, c/o Arizona Historical Society, 949 E. 2nd St., Tucson, Arizona 85719, bdinges@azhs.gov; or Robert Torrez, PO Box 1912, Santa Fe, New Mexico 87504, robertjtorrez@gmail.com. Only one proposal per presenter. Include name, address, phone number, and biographical information, along with title of presentation and no more than one page of description. Deadline is September 30, 2016. For more information, visit www.hsnm.org/conference-2/.

Spitzzeri Named Museum Director

Paul Spitzzeri, long associated with the Workman Temple Family Homestead Museum in Industry, California, became the Museum Director there in July. His "Museum Director Musings" will be an ongoing feature on the Museum's blog, found at <https://homesteadmuseum.wordpress.com/2016/07/01/museum-director-musings-the-beginning-of-a-new-era/>

Tour of Cajon Pass Scheduled for November 12 **May Be Postponed**

OSTA had planned to conduct an all-day tour of the Old Spanish Trail through Cajon Pass led by OSTA member Nick Cataldo on Saturday, November 12. However, on August 16, the "Blue Cut Fire" began in the Pass and burned for a week, charring over 50 square miles (37,000 acres). It displaced over 82,000 residents, including Cajon Pass historian John Hockaday. About 105 homes and buildings burned to the ground, including the Summit Inn, a Route 66 landmark, at the top of the pass in Oak Hills (Hesperia), California, where the tour was to begin and end.

Most of the planned route was scorched. Consequently, the tour is being reconsidered. While the fire destroyed most of the vegetation, it has also revealed more of the terrain. But the soil and ash may not be in a stable enough state for a tour to proceed safely or comfortably in the fire area.

An alternative tour is being considered that might include Sycamore Grove, the site of Michael White's cabin on Rancho Muscupiabe, the foot of the Mohave Trail, and other OST-related sites in San Bernardino, Redlands, Colton, and Riverside. This event would be open to OSTA members and non-OSTA members alike.

Please let us know if you'd be interested in attending either tour. Email OSTASoCal@gmail.com and put "Nov. 12th Tour" in the subject line. Further updates about the tour will be posted to OSTA's Facebook page and announced in OSTA's email blasts as they develop.

Tour Leader Nick Cataldo has been a contributing western history writer for the *Tombstone Epitaph* since 1996, the *San Bernardino County Sun* since 1998, and the *Dezert Magazine* since 2011. He is the author of several books.

Undiscovered for 229 years and 10 months: Paso por Aqui

By **Jim Page (JP)**

Armijo Chapter President (2006-2011)

On November 6th they "...were stopped for a long time by a strong blizzard and tempest consisting of rain and thick hailstones amid horrendous thunder claps and lightning flashes." The expedition was forced to seek temporary shelter in Gunsight Canyon.

Perhaps as he had done on August 16, he again set out all alone without them seeing him. He worked his way up the jumble of sandstone debris and into the narrow slot. Stopping where the wall was smooth and vertical, he used his dagger and carefully carved into the Entrada sandstone.

After the storm and flood had cleared they moved just half a league and camped at a place they called *San Vicente Ferrer*.

On November 7 it had stopped raining. The leaders found the ford, and the entire expedition then made their way across the river. Resting overnight near the shadow of Navajo Mountain, they were now free of the daunting obstacle imposed by the Colorado River. They left the "Crossing of the Fathers."

It was November 8, 1776.



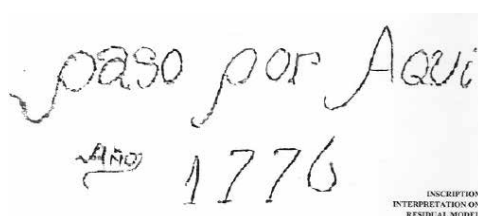
The five-person crew had spent the week removing graffiti along the walls of Gunsight Canyon. That afternoon they retooled and,

carrying only trash bags, followed a line of graffiti leading up a grey talus slope. Nearing the top, they discovered a narrow opening in the sandstone, graffiti covering both sides, imploring them to continue.

They worked their way down the jumble of sandstone debris. JP was out in front and paused to study the graffiti and to make an assessment of the work required on the next trip. Robin and Ann were just behind, Bob and Mike brought up the rear. "JP...here's a 1776 date," said Robin. Everyone gathered at the point where the wall was smooth and vertical. The date almost blended in with the dark patina covering the Entrada's texture. Graffiti dominated the wall.

JP studied the date. Just above it was inscribed 'Rob + Kathi 1994.' Something else was there. Slowly, the 'something' revealed itself from under their graffiti. JP recognized a common 18th century Spanish phrase: *Paso por Aqui* (Passed by Here).

The hair stood up on the back of his neck. He knew. He had read Escalante's journal. He made the connection. He was confident that they had chanced upon an inscription from the Dominguez-Escalante expedition of 1776.



It is September 7, 2006, 229 years and 10 months since Don Bernardo Miera y Pacheco, retired captain of militia, cartographer, and citizen of Santa Fe, probably worked his way up the jumble of sandstone debris and into the narrow slot.

During their 159-day, 1,700-mile-long expedition, co-leader and ecclesiastic Fray Francisco Silvestre Vélez de Escalante maintained a detailed journal of the expedition. *The Dominguez-Escalante Journal - Their Expedition through Colorado, Utah, Arizona and New Mexico in 1776*, edited by Ted J. Warner, translated by Fray Angelico Chavez, was published in 1995. There is no mention of an inscription in Gunsight Canyon.

On January 24, 2007, the Armijo Chapter, Old Spanish Trail Association, began the effort to authenticate the inscription. This would expand the knowledge base of the 1776 expedition and call into question the conventional interpretation of the journal entries of November 6 and 7, 1776.

Following is a condensed timeline of significant events regarding the discovery, authentication, and protection of the inscription.

September 7, 2006 – Discovery of *Paso por Aqui - año 1776*, in Gunsight Canyon, Padre Bay, Lake Powell, by an all-volunteer graffiti removal team (GRIT: Graffiti Removal and Intervention Team) from the Glen Canyon National Recreation Area.

January 24, 2007 – A Memorandum of Agreement between Glen Canyon National Recreation Area (GLCA/NPS) and the Armijo Chapter, Old Spanish Trail Association (OSTA), authorizes the chapter to begin efforts to authenticate the inscription.

February 7, 2007 – NPS issues a "Scientific Research and Collecting Permit" to the Armijo Chapter enabling them to outreach to the scientific community.

February 17-18, 2007 – Western Mapping Co. conducts a night-time laser scan of the inscription. Numerous NPS and BLM staff visit the site.

March 28, 2007 – NPS Superintendent Kitty Roberts authorizes the Armijo Chapter to continue their authentication efforts.

April 13, 2007 – Site visit by Kim Anderson, Ph.D., Lichenologist, Ecologist.

August 3, 2007 – Site visit by Dr. Dorn, Professor of Geographi-

cal Sciences, ASU, who conducts sampling for lead-profile dating.

August 10, 2007 – Site visit by Dr. Sanchez, Superintendent of Petroglyph National Monument and the IMR Spanish Colonial Research Center.

September 6, 2007 – Armijo Chapter receives Western Mapping Company's preliminary 3-D animation and graphic detail report.

November 5, 2007 – NPS issues the following statement: "Studies conducted over the summer indicate that the inscription appears to be authentic. One of the methods involved studying lead deposition on the inscription, while another studied the layers of desert varnish. Based on both of these methods, the inscription dates prior to the 20th century and is likely 200-300 years old."

February 9, 2008 – A NPS Research Permit allows the Armijo Chapter to conduct a comprehensive metal detector scan at the base of the inscription and in the

adjacent small alcove. No metallic anomalies were detected at the panel, but eighteen metallic anomalies were detected at the alcove site.

April 2010 – Western Mapping Company furnishes NPS with their Technical Report 07-3, including a CD with 3D imaging of the laser scan.

November 2, 2010 – Dr. Johannes Loubser, archaeologist and rock art specialist, visits the inscription and nearby graffiti removal efforts.

January 30, 2011 – Armijo Chapter members conduct a comprehensive photographic inventory of the 1776 inscription site.

January 15, 2012 – NPS requests Washington Office funding for 1776 site protection.

August 13, 2012 – NPS indicates that the protective fencing could be in place by October 2012, following completion of the alcove excavation.



Inscription image shows the difference between modern graffiti and the 1776 inscription.

September 14-18, 2012 – NPS excavates the alcove site, focusing on metallic anomalies first discovered by metal detector scan on February 9, 2008. Preliminary information could not link any excavated metal objects with the Dominguez-Escalante presence in the area on November 6-7, 1776.

August 9, 2013 – Site protection funding is approved by NPS Washington Office.

January 21, 2014 – NEPA/NHPA compliance requirements are completed.

September 22, 2014 – Site visit by NPS Historical Architect and NPS intermountain Regional Chief of Cultural Resources.

September 23, 2014 – The NPS archaeological survey report summarized that "...Subsurface test excavations consistently indicated that the magnetic anomalies identified by remote sensing efforts were the byproduct of recent recreational use of the area. No archaeological features or historic artifacts, and thus no expression of the Dominguez-Escalante Expedition of 1776, were identified."

April 17, 2015 – A contract to design, fabricate and install a protective enclosure is awarded to West Point Contractors of Tucson, Arizona.

September 24, 2015 – The proposed October 5, 2015 installation is postponed due to a potential government shutdown. Installation is rescheduled for October 26, 27 and 28, 2015.

October 26, 2015 – Contractor constructs a wooden framework to guide the fence placement during the helicopter delivery of the protective enclosure.

October 27, 2015 – The helicopter delivery by long line is successful. The outer mesh is trimmed to fit the contour of the vertical wall. The fence is cemented into four pre-drilled holes in the bedrock below the inscription.



Completed fence with stakeholders: front row (l-r) Robin Mueller; James Page; back row (l-r) Paul Ostapuk, Frank Talbott, Pat Talbott

October 28, 2015 – Contractor and NPS representatives check the installation and agree that the installation fulfills the requirements of the contract.

February 13, 2016 – An interpretive sign is affixed to the fence. Interviews are conducted at the site on the inscription's history and protection, by KSL, Salt Lake City, Utah. See www.ksl.com/?nid=148&sid=38857666

April 8, 2016 – "1776 Site Visit: A Tribute to Volunteerism, Partnerships and Site Stewards." This NPS sponsored site visit includes several key GRIT volunteers and Armijo Chapter representatives who participated in the discovery, authentication, and efforts to protect the 1776 inscription.

It also obliquely acknowledges a nine-year and seven-month commitment of GRIT volunteers and Armijo Chapter members following their discovery of the inscription on September 7, 2006. ♦

An Early Territorial-era Development Along the Old Spanish Trail: The Abiquiú, Pagosa and Baker City Road

By Robert J. Tórréz

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In the fall of 1859, in the midst of the Colorado Gold Rush around Pike's Peak in central Colorado, new discoveries of gold and silver were reported in southwest Colorado, in the vicinity of present-day Silverton and Durango. This "San Juan Gold Rush" was set in motion by a group of enterprising men that may have instigated this movement, hoping they could profit by improving the rough trails that constituted the Old Spanish Trail and reap the benefits of increased traffic to the alleged gold fields of the San Juan basin. Part of this story revolves around efforts to develop a toll road from Abiquiú, New Mexico, to the San Juan River Basin, a project that may have been the first documented improvements of what we know as the Old Spanish Trail.

During the mid-nineteenth century the United States Government authorized a series of expeditions designed to gather information on potential routes for military roads and sites for military posts, and to collect valuable data on the geography, geology, and mineral resources of the recently acquired territory of New Mexico. In 1859 the New Mexico Territorial Legislature had petitioned the U. S. Congress for \$25,000 to fund one such survey, citing the "well known fact that there exists in abundance, in the mountain region [of New Mexico], gold, silver, copper, iron, stone coal, lead, and other metals, and precious stones."¹ That same year Congress authorized an expedition to explore potential routes between New Mexico and Utah to determine the "practicability of opening a wagon road in the neighborhood of the San Juan between Santa Fe, New Mexico, and the southern settlements of Utah."²

Captain John Navarre Macomb received orders to begin preparations for this expedition on 6 April 1859.³ Captain Macomb was well qualified to carry out the assignment. In 1858 he had surveyed potential routes for a wagon road between Santa Fe and Taos.⁴

Macomb selected Dr. J.S. Newberry, a geologist with experience in explorations of the southwest, and Lieutenant Milton Cogswell to accompany the expedition.⁵ A small detachment of troops under the command of Lieutenant Cogswell provided military escort for the group.

Macomb and his party set out from Santa Fe in mid-July 1859. They traveled northwest to Abiquiú, where they were joined by Albert H. Pfeiffer, agent for the Capote and Weminuche Utes at that site, and Nepomíceno Valdez, the agency's Ute interpreter. Pfeiffer and Valdez guided the expedition north along the Rio Chama and then northwest for several days to a point about 45 miles west of Pagosa Springs in southwest Colorado. At that point Pfeiffer and Valdez returned to Abiquiú while Macomb and his group continued on their own and conducted extensive explorations of the Rio San Juan and its tributaries.⁶

When Macomb completed his explorations through southwest Colorado and northwest New Mexico, he returned to Santa Fe and filed his report, which was not officially published until 1876. It should also be noted that his report makes but faint reference to the possibility of gold or silver in the San Juan region. When he described the southern edge of the "sierra de la Plata," Macomb listed the presence of a dozen or so probable minerals, including "doubtless...in certain localities silver and gold." He then alluded to the name of this mountain range (la Plata, Spanish for silver) to illustrate it was common knowledge there was silver in this region.⁷ Although they were not immediately published, Macomb's findings undoubtedly received close attention and wide circulation in New Mexico. The expedition was no secret, and there would have been much local interest in any information about this largely unexplored region, especially if the region might have potential for gold and silver mining.

In addition to Ute agent Albert H. Pfeiffer, another individual who demonstrated a keen interest in Macomb's explorations was Henry Mercure. Henry

and his brother Joseph Mercure were Santa Fe merchants who were involved with various commercial enterprises in New Mexico since at least 1847. Business license tax records show they conducted business in Santa Fe under the name of “J & H Mercure” and were involved in numerous business ventures. In the spring of 1853, for example, Henry Mercure, Kit Carson, and several partners drove 6,500 sheep from New Mexico to Sacramento, California. They reportedly sold the sheep for \$5.50 a head, culminating what was described as a “most profitable venture.” During this period, the Mercure brothers frequently conducted business with the Indian agencies at Santa Fe, Taos, and Abiquiú and no doubt came to know Pfeiffer through his connection to the Ute Agency.⁸



Henry (Enrique) Mercure,
courtesy José Gabriel Abeyta

Communications between Dr. Newberry, Macomb’s geologist, and Pfeiffer indicate Newberry had sent Joseph Mercure some “specimens” from the San Juan in 1859, presumably for evaluation or assay.⁹ Newberry did not specify the nature of these “specimens” but they must have been significant enough to prompt Henry Mercure and Pfeiffer to conduct their own expedition into the San Juan region. Their journal, which was published in the *Santa Fe Weekly Gazette* issue of 3 July 1860, indicates they set out from Abiquiú at noon, 30 April 1860. The expedition consisted of Pfeiffer, Mercure, Henry Martin, “four Mexicans and three Utah Indians.” They traveled northwest along the Rio Chama, crossed the Chama near present-day Los Ojos and spent the following six weeks generally tracing the route followed the previous year by Macomb. Entries in the journal indicate they “found a mineral supposed to be silver” at vaguely described locations along the Rio La Plata, and gold along the “Rio Mangos” and the Rio Dolores. The expedition returned to Abiquiú on June 19, “all well, but greatly fatigued.”¹⁰

Beginning that fall of 1860, the *Gazette* reported “considerable excitement” at Abiquiú and indicated they had learned from a Mr. John Ward that “gold in great abundance” had been found on the Rio San Juan and its tributaries, and that a large number of men had assembled at Abiquiú and formed a company to prospect the region. The *Gazette* then proceeded to remind its readers of the Pfeiffer and Mercure explorations of the previous spring and the “many gold deposits that came under their observation.” The paper further claimed it was common knowledge there was gold in the San Juan basin, but no “very vigorous efforts” had ever been made to prove the matter once and for all. The enthusiastic *Gazette* expected that the miners gathered at Abiquiú were now prepared to make a “fair test” which would realize everyone’s “most sanguine anticipations.” Pfeiffer and Mercure were praised for generously sharing all they knew about the region with the assembled miners.¹¹

Eruption of gold fever around Abiquiú coincides with the arrival on the scene of Charles Baker, who may have been the source of John Ward’s information about gold strikes along the Rio San Juan. Baker, described by one historian as “a restless, adventurous, impecunious man who was always in search of something new,” alleged he had prospected the San Juan during the summer of 1860, shortly after Pfeiffer and Mercure had conducted their own explorations, and had returned to the gold camps at Leadville with “flamboyant accounts of gold sticking out of the rocks” in the vicinity of Baker’s Peak, near present-day Silverton.¹²

In a letter published by the *Santa Fe Weekly Gazette* of 8 December 1860, Baker indicated he and several companions had found gold along the headwaters of the Rio de Las Animas, 175 miles northwest of Abiquiú. Baker described these gold fields as being “richer than any mines hitherto discovered to the northeast of them” and proceeded to explain that most of this “gold belt” and nearly all of the region’s good agricultural land was located on the southern slope of the Sierra La Plata and therefore not easily accessible from central Colorado. He had decided to come to New Mexico to find a more practical way of reaching this region “from some central point on the frontier of New Mexico,” which explains why he was at Abiquiú,

then the most northwesterly settlement along New Mexico's frontier. Baker indicated that Henry Mercure had provided him the information he needed to test the route Mercure and Pfeiffer had followed earlier that year.

Using Mercure's information, Baker reported he was able to reach the site of his "mines" in ten days, where he claimed to have established the town of Animas City, also known as Baker City. Baker boasted that as many as 500 men were already working there and optimistically predicted no less than 25,000 Americans would be mining and farming the region by the end of 1861. He also expressed the opinion that Mercure and Pfeiffer's route from Abiquiú was the "only good practical road to this district."

Judging by the activity reported in the *Santa Fe Weekly Gazette*, it must have been a busy fall for Pfeiffer, Mercure, Charles Baker, and their associates. The 8 December 1860 issue consisted of several articles, letters, and reports regarding these new developments, which included a report of a meeting held somewhere along the Rio San Juan on October 30 "for the purpose of establishing and locating a town near the Hot Springs (known as Pagoso)..."¹³ The paper published the proceedings of this meeting, in which Pfeiffer was chosen President, and T. H. Dodd as Secretary. W.A. Davidson, D. McShane, H. Young, S.M. Breath, and W. C. Collier were appointed a committee to select and stake out the proposed town site and to report at a subsequent meeting, which was scheduled for the following day, October 31.

Proceedings of the October 31 meeting, as submitted by T. H. Todd as secretary, were published in the same issue of the *Gazette*. Todd reported they had staked out a town site "one mile square of ground commencing above the hot springs, and running one mile south, one mile east, one mile north, and one mile west, making 640 acres of ground and taking in the hot springs known by the Indians as "Pagoso." Another committee drafted a constitution and bylaws that formally established the group as the "Pagoso Town Association" for the purpose "settling the valley of the San Juan, and the valleys of the tributaries of the same, [and] to develop the mining deposits of this country..." Al-

bert Pfeiffer was elected President of the association, Theodore H. Dodd, Secretary, Severo Trujillo, Treasurer, and W.A. Davidson, D. McShane, H. Young, S. M. Breath, and W.C. Collier as Directors of the corporation. The following persons then signed on as members:

Albert Pfeiffer, W. T. Anderson, T. H. Todd, J.W. Doane, H. Young, S. Eddy, N.M. Collier, L. Sterns, D. McShane, J.P. Bonner, S. Williamson, J.J. Easman, W.A. Davidson, Mw. Kendrick, T.G. Hogan, B. Chase, J. Woods, Thos. Reynolds, L. M. Swift, N. M. Baldes, J.C. Peabody, Juan de Dios Rebal, R.B.B. Valdes, Jesus Archuleta, J.L. Gasper, Julian Lucero, A.B. Swift, Nestor Quintana, C.H. Collins, Regus Trujillo [Trujillo], H. L. Merrill, Juan Domingo, W. M. Daggart, W. L. Crow, J. Aldrich, J.R. Crow, Severo Trujillo [Trujillo], W.A. Kendrick, F. B. Fay, L. Osborn, S. Toner, B. Scott, D.R. Campbell, S. M. Breath, W.C. Collier, G.W. Wood, Wm. Reeder, Wm. Sherwood, Martin Brenell, E. B. Howard.

At a subsequent meeting held at Abiquiú on November 30, James McNaner, Henry Mercure, John Ward, and Charles Baker were admitted as members of the town association. James H. Ford and Cyrus H. DeForrest were also admitted on the condition they survey the town site of Pagoso "in such a manner as the Directors may direct."¹⁴

The same issue that carried the *Gazette* report of Pfeiffer's "Pagoso Town Association" also noted a new "mining district" was organized at a meeting held at Abiquiú on November 17, under the title, "Mercure's Gold, Silver and Copper Mines." Its officers, directors, and membership included many of the same individuals who incorporated the Pagoso town site.¹⁵

The sensational publicity of the reported gold and silver strikes along the Rio San Juan quickly attracted the attention of New Mexico's business and political community. At a "stockholder's meeting" held in Santa Fe on 15 December 1860, a committee composed of Charles Baker, Jose Manuel Gallegos, and O. P. Hovey were appointed to develop the "Rules and Regulations" for the "Abiquiú, Pagosa and Baker City Road Company." The committee adopted an Act of Incorporation.

ration, and elected Charles Baker as President, J. M. Edgar, Secretary, and Jose Pablo Gallegos, Treasurer. Henry Mercure, Severo Trujillo and H. Young were appointed Directors.¹⁶

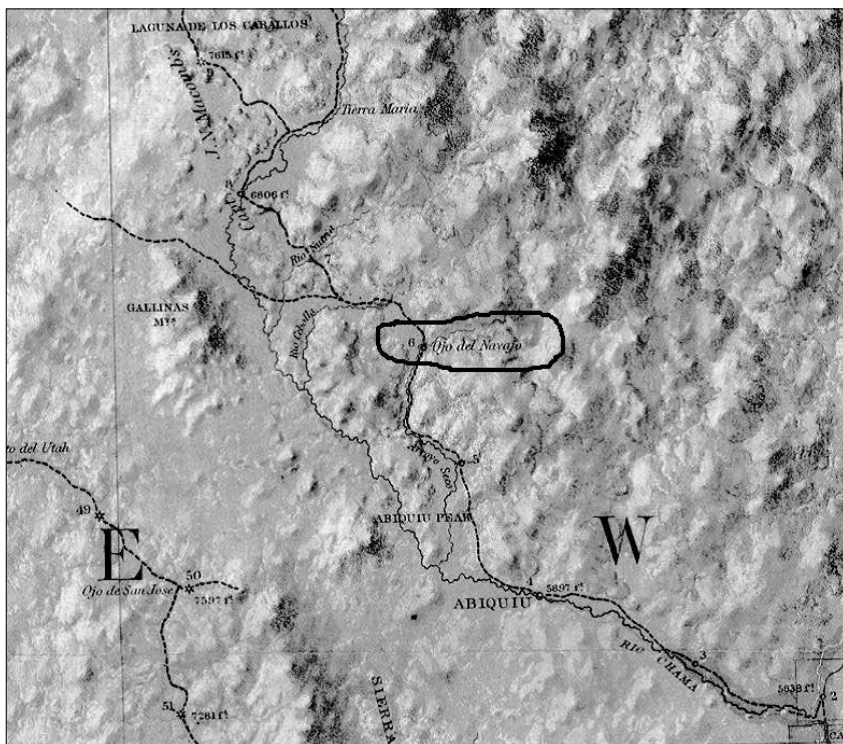
In addition, when the Territorial Legislature convened its 1860-61 session, one of its first pieces of legislation, dated 28 December 1860, officially incorporated "The Abiquiú, Pagosa and Baker City Road Company," granting the company "exclusive power to construct and build a toll road, from the plaza they deem most convenient of Abiquiú, in the county of Rio Arriba, passing through the town of Baker City..." The legislation set the maximum tolls that could be charged for wagons and various types of livestock and cited Mercure, Pfeiffer, Baker, Hiram Young, Thomas H. Dodds, Lafayette Head, Severo D. Trujillo, Jose Pablo Gallegos, Nicolas Pino, O. P. Hovey, Antonio Roival, and Anastacio Sandoval, as principals in the corporation.¹⁷

During that same session the New Mexico Territorial Legislature also created the first San Juan County. In an act dated 12 January 1861, the legislature established a long, narrow county with ambiguous boundaries centered around the "city of Pagosa" in today's southern Colorado, and incorporated what would be a portion of today's northern Rio Arriba and San Juan counties. The same legislation designated Baker City as the county seat.¹⁸ A month later, Henry Mercure was reportedly appointed Assistant United States Marshall and assigned to begin a census of the new county.¹⁹

The corporation must have begun work on its toll road immediately in order to facilitate transportation and access to the new mining regions. By 5 January 1861, the *Gazette* was reporting that a "good road" was under construction from Abiquiú "through the hitherto uninhabited district to Pagosa and Baker Cities" and promoted the route from Santa Fe through Abiquiú as the "natural road" to the San Juan mines.²⁰ Throughout the winter of 1860 and spring of 1861 word filtering out of the San Juan was confident, but by late spring 1861 it was also becoming clear

that the San Juan Gold Rush was not living up to the expectations of its promoters. Late that spring, San Juan miners straggling back to civilization at Canon City in central Colorado were described as "a sad and weary crowd." Most had lost their animals and belongings, surviving with only a few scraps of clothing on their back.²¹ By early summer 1861, the heretofore enthusiastic *Gazette* reported prospectors were finding "much color but no gold," and reluctantly admitted the San Juan Gold Rush seemed to have been a major failure, with desperate and penniless miners reduced to stealing flour from a Mr. Ortiz in Santa Fe.²²

The 1860 San Juan Gold Rush failed for several reasons, which are discussed in more detail by this author in an article published in the *New Mexico Historical Review* and cited in the Endnotes below. No doubt, we must consider that Pfeiffer, Mercure, and Baker, at the very least, embellished their reports. Nevertheless, their stories of gold and silver found an eager audience among men who were willing to assume the financial and physical risks associated with such ventures. We should not, however, fully discount the discoveries re-



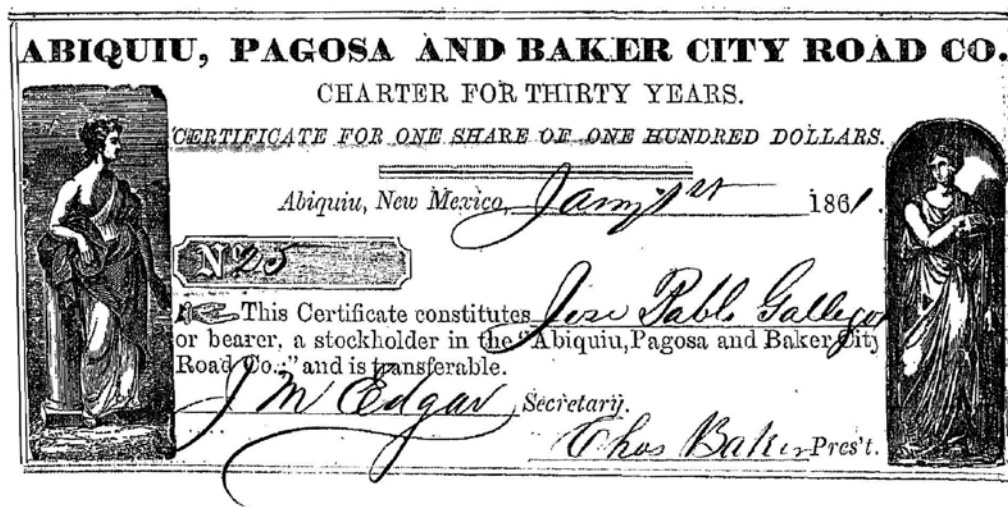
Portion of the Macomb map of 1860 showing location of Ojo del Navajo, where the company toll gate was located.

ported by these men. Present-day Silverton and Durango are located in the vicinity where Animas City was established. Certainly, the mining excitement did succeed in precipitating significant changes for Abiquiú and areas north and northwest of this frontier community. Macomb, Mercure, Pfeiffer, and Baker had all traveled from Abiquiú to the San Juan by tracing the route commonly known as The Old Spanish Trail. This route had been used extensively by traders since well before the Spanish friars Francisco Anastacio Domínguez and Silvestre Vélez de Escalante described it in 1776. However, by 1860, the Old Spanish Trail was still little more than a series of well-worn foot and pack mule paths, incapable of handling the heavily laden vehicles of modern commerce.

Despite its failure as a gold rush, the 1860 excitement succeeded in drawing significant attention to the shortcomings of northern New Mexico's roads and the region's general lack of transportation facilities. The Abiquiú, Pagosa and Baker City Road Company and its stated goal of developing a toll road from Abiquiú to the San Juan region in 1860 may be the first documented effort of organized improvements along the Old Spanish Trail. There had been, however, considerable doubt, at least in this researcher's mind, as to whether Mercure and his associates actually made improvements on the route at this time or had simply organized the company in an attempt to take advantage of the increased travel along the trail.

My opinion, however, changed when I began re-

search on an unrelated matter in the microfilm of the Ayer Collection of the Newberry Library in Chicago, Illinois. In this unlikely, but important, source of documentary material on the history of northern New Mexico, I came across the José María Chávez and Gonzales Family Papers that contain the first evidence seen by this researcher that confirms work on the trail was in fact done by the Abiquiú, Pagosa and Baker City Road Company. The papers include checks from the company treasurer, stock certificates, and receipts for money paid to a number of individuals for work done on the road. While these financial records do not specify what type of work or provide details on the location of the improvements made by this work, they do mention one specific, well-known site along the Old Spanish Trail alluding to where the company's toll gate may have been located. In a report dated 3 April 1861 from "Navajo Spring," William Smyth submitted to Henry Mercure and Severo Trujillo, a "Statement of tolls, etc. collected at this place from 22nd day February up to April 1st 1861." The report shows revenue of \$65.05 received for the period, with 235 men, women, and children, 113 Indians, 35 wagons, 5 carts, 114 pack animals, 18 horsemen, 3 teams of mules, and 87 yolk of oxen that reportedly "passed through." Other receipts show sundry payments made to individuals for their labor during January 1861. One receipt, dated 18 January 1861, shows Pfeiffer and Mercure were paid for tools – nine axes and handles, two half axes, and one-half dozen spades - presumably used by those men the aforementioned receipts show did the work.



Abiquiú, Pagosa and Baker City Road Co. stock certificate made out to corporate treasurer José Pablo Gallegos. Gonzales Family Papers, Ayer 1910, Box 1, folder 39, Newberry Library, Chicago Illinois.

Another receipt, dated 28 January 1861, shows “Enrique Mercure” (as Henry was known locally) was paid \$338.47, “*sobre el trabajo del camino* (regarding the work on the road).”²³

Of special interest in this collection are the five stock certificates for five shares of company stock valued at \$100.00 each made out to Jose Pablo Gallegos. Don Pablo, a prominent and reputedly very wealthy and influential resident of Abiquiú, is listed as the treasurer of the company in the 15 December 1860 charter. His purchase of stock, position as treasurer, and signer of checks disbursing corporate funds, clearly demonstrates he was one of the principal investors in the toll road enterprise.

This admittedly limited documentary evidence shows that there was at least an effort by the Abiquiú, Pagosa and Baker City Road Company to improve segments of the Old Spanish Trail. The extent of work done is impossible to tell with this limited evidence, other than to suggest there were certainly some “pick and shovel” efforts. It would seem that substantive improvements would have required a large labor force and tools and equipment beyond those purchased from Pfeiffer and Mercure. One can also speculate that the limited revenue reported by William Smyth for the five-week period covered by his 3 April 1861 statement would suggest this was an unprofitable and therefore unsustainable commercial venture. One can also wonder what kind of public resistance there would

have been to the collection of tolls along a previously public trail.

One of the last published traces of the company is an advertisement published in the *Santa Fe Weekly Gazette* during March and April of 1861.²⁴ The advertisement, signed by Charles Baker as President of the company, and dated 20 February 1861, from Animas City, gives notice,

to all persons desiring to reach the Sierra Plata Range, upon its southern slope that the above road is now practicable for heavy wagons from Abiquiú to Animas City, many loaded wagons having already passed over it.

A large force of men is now engaged in constructing bridges over streams and completing the road, that portion of it from Animas City to Baker City (140 miles) will be passable for pack trains by the 15th of March, and for wagons soon thereafter.

This Road company was chartered by the last Territorial Legislature, and the stock held by men of wealth and enterprise. The traveling public may therefore rely upon having a first class wagon road, with feed, wood and water throughout its whole length.

By the time Charles Baker published the advertisement in the *Gazette*, reports in the *Santa Fe* and *Denver* papers make it clear that the 1860-61 San Juan Gold Rush was an abject failure. While

Pfeiffer, Mercure, Baker, their associates, and most of the miners that managed to survive the winter of 1860-1861 seem to have found nothing but financial loss and misery in their search for gold in southwest Colorado, it seems clear that as large numbers of men wound their way through the remote outpost of Abiquiú to the unsettled region of the Rio San Juan and its tributaries, their quest contributed to a much more valuable and less fleeting accomplishment.²⁵ Even if the corporation’s improvements were minimal, it was nonetheless a significant contribution to the subsequent private and public efforts which eventually provided dependable wagon roads from Abiquiú to northwest New Mexico and southwest Colorado. These efforts and subsequent public clamor for government intervention in dealing with the Utes and Jicarilla eventually helped shape northern New Mexico and southwest Colorado into what it is today.

Endnotes

Author’s note: Portions of the introductory comments in this essay incorporate a number of elements described in an expanded version of this author’s essay under the title “The San Juan Gold Rush of 1860 and its Effect on the Development of Northern New Mexico,” published in the *New Mexico Historical Review* (July 1988): 257-272.

1. United States Congress, House Ms. Document 36 (Serial 1016), 35th Congress, 2nd Session.

2. United States Congress, Senate, Report of the Secretary of War, 1859. Senate Ex. Document 2 (Serial 1024), 36th Congress, 1st Session.

3. A.A. Humphries to J.N. Macomb, 6 April 1859. U.S. Army Commands, District of New Mexico: Selected Letters Re-

ceived, Record Group (RG) 98, National Archives Microfilm Roll 2 (1859-1860).

4. United States Congress, Senate Ex. Document 1 (Serial 1078), 36th Congress, 2nd Session; F.T. Cheetham, "El Camino Militar," *New Mexico Historical Review* (January 1940): 7-9.

5. J.N. Macomb to J.D. Williams, 28 May 1859. U.S. Army Commands, RG 98, Roll 2 (1859-1860); A.B. Bender, "Government Explorations in the Territory of New Mexico, 1849-1859," *New Mexico Historical Review* (January 1934): 26.

6. J.N. Macomb, *Report of the Exploring Expedition From Santa Fe, New Mexico, to the Junction of the Grand and Green Rivers of the Great Colorado of the West in 1859* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1876), p. 5.

7. Macomb, Report, p. 82.

8. For more on the Mercure brothers, see Robert J. Tórréz, "Enrique Mercure," *Round the Roundhouse*, March 18-April 14, 2003 and "The President of New Mexico," *Round the Roundhouse*, April 16-May 2002.

9. J.S. Newberry to Albert H. Pfeiffer, 17 August 1859. Records of the New Mexico Superintendency of Indian Affairs, 1849-1880, Bureau of Indian Affairs, National Archives Microcopy T-21, Roll 4 (1859-1860). A connection between the Macomb expedition, or at least Newberry and the Mercure brothers, is further illustrated on page 137 of Macomb's *Report*. There, among the fossils named and described by Newberry is "*Deltodus Mercurei*."

10. "Journal," *Santa Fe Weekly Gazette* (SFWG), 3 July 1860. A transcript of the journal can be found in Robert J. Tórréz, "Along the Old Spanish Trail: The Pfeiffer and Mercure expedition of 1860" *Spanish Traces* (Autumn 2104): 8-13.

11. SFWG, 27 October 1860.

12. Virginia McConnell, "Captain Baker and the San Juan Humbug," *The Colorado Magazine* 48 (Winter 1971): 63; Frank Hall, *History of the State of Colorado*, 4 Vols. (Chicago: The Blakely Printing Company, 1895) 2: 192; Chauncey Thomas, "Ouray, The Opal of America," *The Colorado Magazine* XI (January

1934): 17-18.

13. It is tempting to insert a "sic" at this point due to what may seem an incorrect spelling of "Pagosa." However, the "Pagoso" spelling is consistent throughout this particular report and pronunciation of the word as "Pagoso" in Spanish is still common today. For an early report on these famous hot springs, see C.A.H. MaCauley, "Notes on Pagosa Springs, December 1878," Senate Ex. Document 65 (Serial 1831), 45th Congress, 3rd Session.

14. "Pagosa City," SFWG, 8 December 1860.

15. "Mercures Gold Silver and Copper Mines," SFWG, 8 December 1860.

16. *The Charter, Rules and Regulations of the Abiquiú, Pagosa and Baker City Road Company* (*Santa Fe Weekly Gazette*, 1861). Ralph Emerson Twitchell Collection: Territorial Papers, 1861. New Mexico State Records Center and Archives, Santa Fe, New Mexico.

17. *Laws of the Territory of New Mexico*, 1860-1861; "An Act to Incorporate the Abiquiú, Pagosa, and Baker City Road Company," Chapter XXIII, *Local and Special Laws of New Mexico*, 1884: Incorporations. p. 794.

18. "An Act Creating and Organizing the County of San Juan," Chapter XLII, *Local and Special Laws of New Mexico*, 1884: Rio Arriba County. p. 352. This legislation was repealed in the subsequent 1862 session. An interesting aside is found in a letter from "C.W.," published in the 17 January 1861 issue of Denver's *Daily Evening News* under the headline, "News From San Juan." The letter alleged that Charles Baker "and some friends" had spent three thousand dollars to "get a charter" for the toll road from the New Mexico legislature. C. W. did not speculate on the nature of these alleged expenditures.

19. SFWG, 23 February 1861. If Mercure actually conducted the said census, no copy of his report seems to have survived.

20. "The San Juan Mines," SFWG, 5 January 1861.

21. N.A., "Western Experiences and Colorado Mining Camps -Wolfe Londoner," *The Colorado Magazine* VI (January 1929): 67-68

22. SFWG, 1 June 1861 and 29 June 1861.

23. Ayer Ms. 1910, Gonzales Family Papers, Box 1, folders 39 – 42. Newberry Library, Chicago, Illinois. A microfilm copy of this collection can be found at the New Mexico State Records Center and Archives in Santa Fe. The receipt's mention of "Navajo Spring" brings to mind the importance of the "Ojo del Navajo" as a source of water along the Old Spanish Trail. The site is noted on the Macomb map of 1860 [*Map of Explorations and Surveys in New Mexico and Utah Made under the Direction of the Secretary of War by Capt. J. N. Macomb, Top. Eng. – 1806*]. The May 1 entry of the Pfeiffer and Mercure journal cited above tells us the Ojo del Navajo "received its name from the Indians. It is related by them that a Navajo Indian was watching, from the cliff above the spring, a party of Utahs dancing, and approaching too near the edge precipitated to the bottom, near two hundred and fifty feet. Hence the name Ojo del Navajo." This story must have already been a well-known part of the region's oral tradition in 1860 and has been subsequently retold many times. This researcher originally heard the story in the early 1970s from Don José Sánchez, a revered elder with deep personal and historical ties to the Abiquiú-Tierra Amarilla area. Don Isidoro Montaña, another respected elder who used to write local history stories for *The Nora Cooperative News*, a monthly paper published in Chama (more commonly known as the "Nora News") related essentially the same story in his 20 November 1972 column, "Early Day Story of Canjilon People."

24. SFWG, 27 April 1861. It may be noted that the advertisement's mention of bridges may refer to the bridge known as "Baker's Bridge," which crossed the Animas River upstream from Durango, Colorado.

Footnotes, Tórréz, continued

Conference Connections

Photos: Ruth Friesen



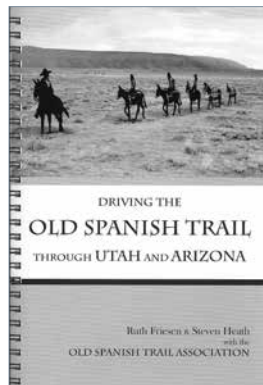
Above, left, Nancy and David Melendez, descendants of the Trujillo family in California, joined OSTA at the conference. Above, right, World War II veteran George Ross, lifelong resident of Tecopa, California, might have been the oldest member attending the conference.

Left, Alex King, genealogist, discusses Old Spanish Trail ancestry with new OSTA members Edwina Valdez Andrews of Sandia Park, New Mexico, and Nancy Melendez of Riverside, California. Edwina and her sister Maria Simonita Valdez of Corrales, New Mexico, are interested in the OST because their parents (both sides) descended from founding families of New Mexico who traveled the Camino Real with Juan De Oñate in 1598 and Don Diego De Vargas in 1696. Their family land grant is near the OST.



25. In addition to the sources cited in footnote 12, above, see R. Copeland Rohrbacher, *The Great San Juan* (Durango: *The Durango Democrat*, December 1901), p. 4; Duane Smith, "Silver Coquette: The San Juans 1860-1875," *Denver Westerners Brand Book XXV* (1969); and C.A.H. McCauley, "Report on the San Juan Reconnaissance of 1877," *Report of the Chief of Engineers, 1878*, p. 1814, for views on Baker's role in the San Juan "Humbug" and his eventual fate. ♦

Robert J. Tórrez was the New Mexico State Historian from 1987-2000.



Guidebook Wins Award

OSTA's "Driving the Old Spanish Trail through Utah and Arizona," authored by Steven Heath and Ruth Friesen, and designed by Ruth Friesen, won first place in book design in the New Mexico Press Women Communication Contest. The entry then went to the national level, where it placed third in book design in the National Federation of Press Women Communication Contest.

If you know of a commercial or non-profit establishment along the Trail who you feel should carry this book for sale, please contact John Hiscock, OSTA Manager, at ostamgr@gmail.com or 435-689-1620.

Ecosystem Change along the Old Spanish Trail over the Past 200 years

By Stephen Stern, Colorado Mesa University

presented at the 2016 OSTA Conference in Grand Junction, CO

The ecosystems through which the Old Spanish Trail pass have undergone dramatic changes in the past 200 years. Ecosystem change encompasses plant and animal composition in an area and includes change in abundance of species and possibly extinction and speciation. Nature is dynamic and ecosystems naturally shift over time; however, changes along the Old Spanish Trail and throughout the west have occurred at increased rates over the past 200 years.

The major driver of ecosystem change over the last 200 years has been human manipulation of the environment. Humans have greatly affected natural processes. Many parts of the Old Spanish Trail would be completely unrecognizable from two centuries ago. They are now urban areas, croplands, areas covered by species unknown on the continent 200 years ago, or, as in the case of the “Crossing of the Fathers” on the Colorado River, under 400 feet of water in Lake Powell. Therefore, while the basic process of ecosystem change is to be expected, the recent extremely rapid rate of change is unusual. The plants and animals that make up these communities do not have time to respond, for example by evolving or migrating. These are slow processes, and too rapid a change can outpace the ability of organisms to adapt. Overall, this has resulted in reductions in biodiversity and drastic changes in ecosystem functioning.

The Old Spanish Trail covers a vast territory but nearly all of it has undergone transformations in vegetation and wildlife in the last 200 years. While the exact timing and processes in these changes have varied by location, they can be generalized in four major events: 1) reduction of key animal species such as beaver and grizzly bear during the trapping era ~1820-1850, 2) grazing expansion from ~1860-1940 leading to an increase in woody vegetation, 3) introduction and expansion of invasive plants leading to annualization of vegetation, and 4) development of greater human

infrastructure including roads, agriculture, and cities over the last 200 years.

Much of the westward expansion in the United States followed trails originally used by trappers.¹ Fur hunters ranged far and wide throughout the west in search of valuable fur-bearing animals, the most important of which was the beaver. While accurate estimates of how many animals were captured in this era are difficult, examples from some expeditions give context to how many animals were taken. The Ashley expedition brought back an estimated 25,000 beaver skins from a four-year expedition to the Green River.¹ Ogden’s four-year expedition to the Snake River area brought back 160,000 pounds of beaver fur.¹ Similar results from hunting occurred in the southwest along the Old Spanish Trail, resulting in local extinction of beaver populations in many areas.²

The removal of beaver not only impacted those animals but also had reverberations throughout the ecosystem. Beaver are known as “ecological engineers” because by building dams they manipulate their environment.³ Dams cause running streams to become slow-moving water, and building dams removes trees from nearby areas. When dams eventually break, these areas turn into lush meadows due to the accumula-



Cheatgrass wasteland

Photos: Lynn Bohs

tion of nutrients from sediment deposits. Eventually, these lush meadows return to forest as woody plants take over.³ By removing this one species, fur hunters not only affected beaver but also altered entire ecosystems.

In addition to beaver, populations of many large mammals were dramatically different in the 1820s than today. Large mammals, such as buffalo, elk, deer, and antelope, were important food sources for fur trappers. For example, Work's party in the Sacramento valley killed "395 elk, 148 deer, 17 bear, and 8 antelope" for food in addition to beaver in one month, although Work himself noted the waste of much of this meat.¹ Grizzly bear were also hunted, largely because of the threat they posed to trappers. Their abundance was remarkable. James Pattie saw 200 grizzly bear in a single day along the Arkansas River, and other trappers reported killing six or more in a single day.¹ This and continued hunting resulted in the extirpation of grizzlies from much of their native range. Not only does this affect predator/prey relationships in ecosystems, but studies have shown that grizzlies are important in nutrient cycling in ecosystems.^{4,5} The loss of these large predators has certainly altered the ecosystem in ways that now, 200 years later, are difficult to assess. Trappers and the settlers that followed both utilized large mammals for food and also brought livestock that would have profound implications for the ecosys-

tem.

Grazing expansion following settlement had significant effects throughout the region and particularly in the valleys. Prior to grazing, these valleys were dominated by perennial bunch grasses, such as Indian ricegrass, needle-and-thread grass, purple 3-awn grass, and galleta. Grazers preferred these grasses to other vegetation, causing the grasses to become less abundant. Overgrazing led to an increase in less palatable woody species, such as sagebrushes, piñon pine, junipers, rabbitbrush, and greasewood.⁶ Woody plants not only received a competitive advantage by removal of bunchgrasses, but they also benefitted from a reduced fire frequency because many woody plants cannot resprout after fire. While the Taylor Grazing Act of 1934 helped to curb the extensive overgrazing that had occurred in the western USA, in many places extensive damage had been done, which enabled invasive, non-native plants to gain a foothold.

The introduction, both intentional and unintentional, of non-native plants has had a profound effect on western ecosystems. Non-native species include some of the most economically profitable plants in the western states, such as wheat, alfalfa, barley, clover, and many other important crops. However, other non-native plants, such as cheatgrass, tamarisk, Jim Hill mustard, goatheads, tumbleweed, and numerous others, have become noxious weeds. These weedy species thrive in areas disturbed by grazing and have greatly transformed ecosystems throughout the western USA.

These weedy species, many of which are annual plants that complete their lifecycle in a single year, have the ability to alter ecosystems because of their unique biological characteristics. Weedy annuals evolved with humans in Eurasia and have adapted for vigorous growth in disturbed habitats associated with agriculture and grazing.⁷ Due to the lack of large-scale agriculture and ranching prior to European settlement, North America had few weedy annual species compared to Europe and Asia. Additionally, Eurasian weeds can outcompete native plants due to the lack of herbivores that have adapted to feed on them. Due to this lack of control from herbivores, non-native plants



Healthy perennial vegetation

can take over large areas, form monocultures, and decrease biodiversity. Most do not provide good grazing and cannot be effectively controlled by grazing since they have such a short lifespan. The lack of an extensive root system can lead to erosion and degradation of the land.

Non-native, weedy annuals have achieved a permanent dominance in many locations. Their short but rapid growth creates fuel for fires, whose increased frequency has killed sensitive native woody plants like sagebrush, juniper, and piñon.⁸ These fires in turn create more disturbed habitat for annuals. The weedy annuals also use early season moisture before it can be used by perennial vegetation. This is enhanced by many of them being “winter annuals,” like cheatgrass and Jim Hill mustard, that germinate in fall rains, grow roots over the winter, and produce seed by early-mid June. Finally, because of the competitive advantages of non-natives, there is a decreased seed production of native grasses leading to an overall decrease in abundance.

To summarize the major ecosystem changes in the past 200 years, early trappers put heavy pressure on large mammal populations. Livestock introduced by settlers led to a decrease of the original perennial grasslands through grazing. This led to an increase in woody vegetation and conversion of grasslands to shrublands and woodlands. Upon the introduction of weedy annual species, perennial grasses could not reestablish and the fire frequency increased, causing a decline in woody vegetation. The frequent fire cycle continues to benefit weedy, non-native species.⁶

Reversal of this ecosystem change is difficult and restoration to a pre-settlement state is nearly impossible. Non-native species are too well established and the seed pool for native grasses has declined. Therefore, controlled burns or chaining to convert woody areas to grasslands usually results in an increase in annual weeds, not reestablishment of native grasslands. Some non-native perennials that can compete with non-native annuals, such as crested wheatgrass or forage kochia, have been introduced to benefit grazing with limited success, and re-introduction is an expensive strategy, particularly with large acreages in the western

USA. While restoration continues to be a goal in the western USA, it is likely that the ecosystem alteration of the past 200 years is now permanent.

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Steven Stern, Ph.D., has been on the faculty at Colorado Mesa University since 2011. He teaches many subjects within the field of biology, and his primary interest is understanding the biodiversity and evolution of vascular plants.

OSTA President Ashley Hall recognizes Vicki Felmlee, 2016 OSTA Conference organizer, for creating an excellent conference.



Photo: Jack Prichett

Distant Treasures in the Mist: The Mystery of the Redoubt Site

By David P. Bailey

presented at the 2016 OSTA Conference in Grand Junction, CO

For thousands of years the Kannah Creek area has been home and refuge first to native groups, then mountain men, explorers, and settlers. The appeal of this small green valley between high desert plateaus, approximately 18 miles southeast of Grand Junction, Colorado, is the cold clear water that flows from the Grand Mesa, situated 5,000 feet above the valley floor. It may seem the perfect place to do an archaeological investigation. However, the usually gentle Kannah Creek can become a channel for rapid snow melt and flash floods.

Over the centuries the creek banks have been stripped of soils and then covered again time after time. The archaeological record is not found in neat stratified layers but is a jumbled mess near the banks of the creek. This can be a curse or a blessing for the diligent researcher when artifacts buried for centuries are brought to the surface.

In March of 2004 I received a letter and newspaper article from Anita Clark detailing the 1961 discovery of a strange relic found on a family hike in Kannah Creek. She said the artifact had been sent off for scholarly study to historian Father Sierra in Pueblo, Colorado, and never returned to her and her husband. The article suggested the relic was a fragment of a 17th-century processional cross from the Dominguez and Escalante Expedition, named for two Catholic priests who traveled through present-day western Colorado in 1776.

The expedition attempted to establish a route from Santa Fe, New Mexico, to Monterey, California, in order to connect with the western Catholic missions. *The Southern Colorado Register* article headlined “Did Colorado’s First Explorers Lose Bronze Relic?” was dated September 1, 1961, and showed a grainy photograph of a strange metal rectangle with intricate designs. The article related that a photograph of the bronze relic was sent to various museums to determine

its origin.

Steven V. Grancsay, Curator of Arms and Armor at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City, said it might have been an applied band on a Catholic processional cross. The highly decorated band would have been placed on the face of a processional cross carried by priests to proclaim their Christian faith. Numerous Spanish colonial paintings and drawings show priests carrying processional crosses on their expeditions in the New World. It was intriguing to think the relic might be the only artifact ever found from the Dominguez and Escalante Expedition. While examining the photograph of the relic, I noticed the bottom half was broken off and hoped we could find additional pieces of the relic where it was originally discovered.



Metal relic

In March of 2004, Anita Clark accompanied former Museum Director Mike Perry and me to the area in Kannah Creek where she found the relic. We used a metal detector to do a preliminary search for metallic artifacts associated with the relic that would shed light on how it ended up in western Colorado. That search yielded nothing from the Spanish colonial period that would solve the mystery of the relic.

In 2005, a new investigation group was formed, called the Western Investigations Team (WIT). The team is composed of historians, archaeologists, scientists, and interns from the Museum of Western Colorado and Colorado Mesa University (known then as Mesa State College). WIT is dedicated to solving historical mysteries through in-depth research aided by the latest in scientific technology. I was made the Director of the Western Investigations Team, and Mesa State College professor Dr. Rick Dujay was named the Scientific Coordinator. One of our goals was to revisit the Kannah Creek relic mystery with better equipment and a larger team.

On June 22, 2006, the team returned to the Kannah Creek area of the 1961 relic discovery in search of other remnants or associated artifacts. On that same day *The Denver Post* ran a front page story about our expedition and featured a photo of the artifact found 45 years earlier by the Clark family. The next day the team, consisting of 22 scientists, historians, and archaeologists, conducted the first official survey of the area.

Several days earlier, the team had created a large grid area — 96 feet by 132 feet — with wooden stakes and recorded the grid coordinates with GPS units. At the center of the grid was the location of the relic discovery. The team conducted a search both with metal detectors and by visual inspection of each corridor within the grid. Unfortunately the team found no other artifacts associated with the relic. We did find an unusual rectangular stone structure during the survey that would become a very significant addition to the unique history of the Kannah Creek Valley.

A few days later I received a call from Cara DeGette, an editor with the *Colorado Springs Independent*.



Redoubt site

I learned that 94-year-old Monsignor Howard Delaney of Pueblo had seen the photo of the artifact in *The Denver Post* and realized that he had the relic in his possession. Forty-five years earlier, when Father Sierra had been sent to Argentina on an eight-year mission, he had entrusted the relic to his friend the Monsignor for safekeeping. Kept in a greeting card box in his file

cabinet for 45 years, the artifact was forgotten until the newspaper article rekindled his memory.

Museum of Western Colorado Director Mike Perry, WIT Scientific Coordinator Dr. Dujay, and I took a 15-hour round-trip drive to pick up the relic in Pueblo and talk to Monsignor Delaney. The relic was brought back for study at the Mesa State Electron Microscopy Laboratory and at the Museum of the West. Pleased that the relic had been found after 45 years, Anita Clark graciously donated it to the museum.

Dr. Dujay tested the artifact at his lab and found the object was cast of pure copper. The fine quality of this copper casting was not typical of the Spanish Colonial Period, which normally utilized iron and bronze for decorative metal designs. Having the actual relic made it easier to discern the symbols, and we found it was not of Spanish origin, but was a decorative element from a Masonic Knights Templar sword scabbard that dated to the mid-19th century.

This created mixed feelings for me because although the mystery of the relic was solved, it was not the important artifact that would have linked the Spanish explorers to western Colorado.

In the fall of 2006, the team decided to investigate the stone structure found during the earlier expedition and look for other possible Masonic artifacts near the site. The team excavated around and below the boulders and found the stones on top actually were part of a wall that tilted inward nearly 40 degrees (below).



Redoubt walls with 40 degrees tilt

When it was uncovered, it took on the appearance of a shallow truncated pyramid (a four sided pyramid with the top cut off). The team investigated the area around the pyramid with metal detectors and found no metallic objects.

After the identification of the Masonic relic, I did extensive research on the history of Freemasonry and discovered that the unfinished pyramid was a major symbol used by the Masons. Masonic researchers believe it stood for King Solomon's chief architect, Hiram Abiff, who was murdered before he could finish the temple, and his master mason secrets were lost with his death. Perhaps the Knights Templar scabbard relic found nearby was connected to the pyramid site. It is well known that the early Freemasons who traveled out west often met at outside locations when no lodge was available. Also, the site is near the Spanish and Ute trails traveled frequently by early mountain men such as Kit Carson, a well-known Freemason.

In early 2007, the team revisited the stone structure site. Dr. Dujay and I carefully excavated the interior of the pyramid structure. Dr. Dujay removed ten inches of dirt and found what looked to be a mid-19th century muffin-style military button. The button was buried too deeply to have been picked up by the earlier metal detection. This type of button got its name because it resembled the top of a muffin. Dr. Dujay tested the object at the university lab and found the button had an iron core and had been brass plated, consistent with 19th-century technology.

I researched military buttons from the pre- and post-Civil War eras and found that the button most closely resembled an 1850s-style military button and was from the same era as the Masonic relic. The thought occurred to me that an unknown group may have excavated the stone structure out of curiosity in the 1850s. I contemplated the idea that important artifacts explaining the significance of the stone structure may have been removed by early treasure hunters. Unfortunately, treasure hunters and looters are not a recent innovation, and sites that could reveal so much information on the past have been recklessly destroyed. The Masonic sword scabbard fragment and military

muffin button may have been from an 1850s military unit traveling through the area. Often soldiers in the United States Army were also members of Masonic lodges, and their swords reflected their affiliation to a particular lodge. The mystery only deepened when residents told of additional stone structures overgrown or in ruins in the area. The team documented and photographed several of these sites from 2007 to 2011, including a 145-foot-long stone wall built into a hillside. In the book *Tales of the Colorado Pioneers* by Alice Polk Hill, I found an 1882 account of a hunting party that looked down from the edge of Grand Mesa and sighted 15 miles of stacked stone fence. This meant that some of the stacked stone structures predated the settlement era of Kannah Creek in the late 1880s. The group interpreted the ruins as game drives created by Native Americans to trap and hunt large game. I wondered if the strange stone structures could have been interpreted as an abandoned colony or village that may have created myths for passing travelers.

On December 3, 2011, the team returned to the Kannah Creek site to attempt to find more definitive answers about the four-sided stone structure. The new search was the result of an interesting iron artifact found in July of that year, and tentatively identified as a wrought iron trigger guard from a wheellock pistol (below) used chiefly in the 16th and 17th centuries.

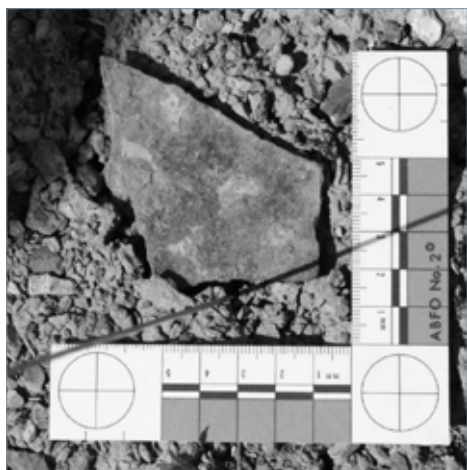


Wheellock trigger guard found at Redoubt site

When the stone structure was discovered, Dr. Dujay thought it looked like a rifle pit, a defensive bunker used to protect riflemen. I began to think that Dujay was probably right and the structure was a hastily built

early defensive fortification known as a redoubt. The site was then officially named the Redoubt Site.

Dr. Dujay, Dr. Susan Longest, and I, accompanied by five Colorado Mesa University students, set out to explore the site. The team set up a grid system around the stone structure and used metal detectors to attempt to find more fragments of the wheellock pistol or any other diagnostic artifacts. Amazingly, two WIT student-interns, Marryssa Russell and Greg Johnson, uncovered curved metal armor-like fragments on a slope below the Redoubt Site. Johnson also found an L-shaped Spanish colonial style nail and a mysterious iron billet typically used by Spanish colonial blacksmiths for stock iron.



Spanish Colonial armor fragment found by the WIT team

The team was excited by the finds but we tempered our enthusiasm until the artifacts could be tested. Another interesting find at the Redoubt Site was the discovery of five campfires in a straight row, indicating a military style encampment. An important question was, what era did the camp represent? I wondered if this was an unknown Spanish colonial military encampment that had slipped through the cracks of history.

After the expedition, Dr. Dujay and his student interns returned to the university laboratory and used the Leica 3D microscope to examine the metallurgic properties of the artifacts under extreme magnification to create micrographs indicating in what era the metal had been manufactured and the efficiency of the cast-

ing methods. The micrographs indicated significant deposits of carbon slag and other impurities typically found in 16th- and 17th-century casting.

On March 7, 2012, Dr. Dujay and I held a press conference at the CMU Electron Microscopy Lab to discuss our finding on the artifacts discovered at the Redoubt Site. The team announced the metal armor fragments, wheellock trigger guard, and iron billet were consistent with metallurgy from the 16th and 17th centuries. In May and June of 2012, Dr. Ken Kosanke, a noted scientist with a Ph.D. in physical chemistry and post-doctoral work in nuclear physics, offered to do additional testing on the armor material found at the Redoubt Site. Dr. Kosanke used an Energy Dispersive X-Ray Florescence (EDXRF) machine at the CMU lab to determine the metallurgic makeup of the artifacts. The machine bombards the artifacts with X-rays, which give off energy within a certain spectrum and identifies metallic composition.

The artifacts were compared to previously published metallurgy tests of 16th and 17th century armor and proved consistent with their findings. The iron billet had one final surprise, a faint Spanish colonial quinto tax stamp. Spanish colonial metals were stamped at the time to show the quinto, or “fifth” tax had been paid to the King of Spain. The design of the crown in the tax stamp matched others from the 16th century. The team seemed to have found proof that an unknown early Spanish expedition traveled to present-day western Colorado.

Two well-known Spanish colonial expeditions through western Colorado were led by Juan Rivera in 1765, and Fathers Dominquez and Escalante in 1776. However, there were many expeditions not officially sanctioned by the Spanish government that looked for rich mines and lucrative trade.

Our metallurgic testing showed the Redoubt Site artifacts predated the known Spanish colonial expeditions by about two hundred years. Southwest lore is full of lost conquistadors and expeditions that disappeared without a trace. The team had discovered fragments of armor, a wheellock pistol trigger guard, and a stamped

Spanish colonial billet. But historical quests are never easy to solve, even with substantial evidence.

Several archaeologists have suggested that what we discovered might have been a Ute trading site. The Utes could have gathered old armor fragments and iron remnants after the Pueblo Revolt in 1680 and traded the iron at a campsite that may have predated the stone structure. The campfires washed clean of their charcoal remnants by flooding may have been from a later military exploration. The design of the Redoubt stacked stone structure, shaped like a truncated pyramid, and in close proximity to a Masonic relic, could have been evidence of a mid-19th century outdoor Masonic lodge.

We still need further evidence to unravel this centuries old mystery. Perhaps the Redoubt mystery could be solved by the discovery of a new artifact or by finding crucial Spanish colonial documents. The answer could be very close, at an obscure research library, or over the next hill, like a distant treasure in the mist. ♦

David Bailey has worked at the Museums of Western Colorado for 24 years. He has served as a documentary film consultant, and is currently the Director of the Western Investigation Team (WIT), a joint historical and scientific research group with Colorado Mesa University.

OSTA Honors Trail Advocates Robb and Chenoweth



William Chenoweth, above, and Margaret Robb, right, are tireless Old Spanish Trail advocates.

Photos courtesy Beacon Senior Newspaper (Chenoweth) and Grand Junction Daily Sentinel (Robb)

Margaret Robb and William Chenoweth, with others, researched the Old Spanish Trail and realized that sections of the trail passed through their home town of Grand Junction, Colorado. They began the work, along with Earl Heusser, the Honorable James Robb, and Jack and Kathryn Nelson, to persuade Congress that the trail, sections of which pass through six states, deserved recognition via the National Historic Trails System. The Old Spanish Trail was designated as a National Historic Trail in 2002.

At the OSTA banquet at the 2016 conference, Margaret Robb and William Chenoweth were honored. Their tireless efforts in preserving the trail did not end in 2002. Indeed, their voices continue to be heard, loud and clear, for educating the public about the Old Spanish Trail as well as our precious deserts, rivers, and canyons.

OSTA presented Chenoweth with a stained glass piece featuring a mule in a desert terrain. Robb was unable to attend, and she will receive her award later.

**Join us at the OSTA
2017 Conference in
Barstow, California
at the historic Harvey House
October 6-7, 2017**

A Line in the Sand

By Vicki Felmlee

*presented at the 2016 OSTA Conference
in Grand Junction, CO*

A line in the sand. When we look at our Old Spanish Trail on the ground, in the field, on a map, that's kind of what we're seeing. A line in the sand. It's really odd how much that line means to us as we talk about it, read about it, walk it. Some of us pursue it as amateurs stumbling about learning as we're going. But some find ways to obtain college degrees with it, make their living with it.

When we first came up with our theme, "Most Arduous, Least Respected," it was meant as no disrespect to the researchers and scholars who have worked for decades on the Old Spanish Trail. It was to get your attention, and to talk about not only the North Branch—and what so many people in our area are doing—but what your Association is about, where it is going, how it's working for that line in the sand.

We know the recent history of the trail, the genesis of the push to get the trail listed as one of the National Historic Trails, the folks who helped do the pushing. We will honor those individuals tonight at our banquet—one of them, Bill Chenoweth, sits with you today. Jim Robb, Jack and Kathryn Nelson, Carlos Sauvage, Earl Heusser—they just happened to live here in Grand Junction, I knew all of them from the time I



Photo: Jack Prichett

Vicki Felmlee organized the 2016 OSTA conference, and gave this presentation under the topic "Digging Deeper."

was a young college student. Over the years I came to refer to them as the Rough Riders because of their almost fanatic interest in the OST and their relentless push to get it recognized.

Now, nobody has suggested that others within OSTA, which had already been in existence for several years, did not have the original idea for national recognition. It was simply that the Rough Riders had the wherewithal, the time, the energy, and the contacts to help make it happen. Still, it was an almost ten-year effort before success, and I think it's important, very important, to note that these people were as committed to the complete six-state region the trail encompasses as anybody sitting here today. They were committed to all aspects of our trail system, not just the one in Western Colorado, and they worked hard to ensure

that all of the various routes were recognized, with room to recognize more.

Here are the salient words from the Act: The Old Spanish National Historic Trail, an approximately 2,700-mile-long trail extending from Santa Fe, New Mexico, to Los Angeles, California, that served as a major trade route between 1829 and 1848 ... including the Armijo Route, Northern Route, North Branch, and Mojave Road.

Is that the sum of it all? That the Old Spanish Trail is recognized only by those years, and only for commerce that had to begin in Santa Fe and had to end in Los Angeles? Why did the law expressly mention those years - 1829 to 1848? And why the emphasis on commerce? What about the adventurers, the explorers, and yes, the ne'er-do-wells who left the "civilizations" of Santa Fe and Taos and headed north? The Acts for a few other trails do mention dates of travel, but do they have to be as judiciously researched only around those dates?

If research and study and consideration have these restrictions, what else is there? I would be so bold as to suggest that if that's the case, well, we're done! We know everything we need to know about that narrow 20 year period, about only commerce involving blankets and horses and mules—well, what else is there?

Are there questions about the

usage of the North Branch? That word “trade” seems pretty broad, and I’ve always been puzzled as to why blankets, horses, and mules are the only items included, since we know that there was so much more. Fur trapping, and the exploitation of Native Americans and their crafts, flourished in Western Colorado, and archaeological evidence of travel for whatever reason for decades before and travel for decades after throughout the region is impressive and growing.

Our time and attention to this line in the sand is not only about maps, geography, or when and where. We’re talking about people: Why were they here? What did they do? Why did they do it? How did they live? How did they die? How did some get lost, and some found?

The North Branch, like all of the Old Spanish Trail, has history involving Native Americans going back thousands of years. If you haven’t seen Dr. Jefferson’s display about culturally modified trees, take a few moments to look at that. The Native Americans who did this were on those trails. They had no concept of the white man’s time in years or decades. They had no maps. But they were as aware of that line in the sand as we are today.

What did they see decades ago as they traveled? David Miller showed us in vivid detail, comparing their 19th-century versions of Snapchat—sketches and paintings and drawings—to present-day pictures.

Can research be fun? If the folks involved with Fort Uncompahgre are any indication, yes, it can!

Jon Horn gave us a glimpse of new insights he is discovering on Cochetopa Pass, important validation of those early travelers. What else is he going to find?

More recent Western history was made as the railroad and military were tasked to figure out what the United States had won after the Mexican American War, and how to settle it. Where they camped and deciphering their charts, diagrams, and diaries tell us about how they shaped the West for the tens of thousands of white settlers to come.

I want to say something about OSTA, your organization. It has evolved, it continues to evolve, and we embrace all of our national trails. We are not exclusive, rather inclusive, sharing research, and ideas. Your organization is a member of the Partnership for National Trails, and we’re proud of that

*Thank you, Vicki,
for taking the time from your
life to create an
informative conference
with your team, and for
helping us learn about
the Old Spanish Trail in
western Colorado.
Well done!*

involvement. While our hearts will always be with OUR trail—and each state, each chapter, embraces those unique allegiances to their own sections—we respect and find great pleasure in what others are doing with their own trails. Jack Prichett mentioned OSTA’s renewed call for preservation and being a proactive voice for the trail. Not long ago, there was a proposal in Utah to carve a road into a pristine canyon to remove landscape boulders in a pristine canyon. It just so happened the Old Spanish Trail went right through that canyon. Because of OSTA’s involvement, that plan was scrapped. We can all say, “We did that.”

We’re working with a private land owner here in Mesa County to arrange an archaeological survey on their land. It’s never been surveyed before—what will we find? We don’t know.

If—and I just say if—we as OSTA members or simply an informed, interested public had strictly adhered to those dates and that specific activity as stated in the Act, it’s possible, indeed likely, that much of what you have heard yesterday and today would never have happened. No studies, no research, no field trips, no discoveries.

When you draw a line in the sand, you confine yourself. But follow the line in the sand, and who knows where the journey will take you. ♦

Vicki Felmlee is the Colorado Director of the Old Spanish Trail Association. She is the owner of TCS Marketing Group, Inc.

Seeking Truth

By Jon Nelson

*presented at the 2016 OSTA Conference
in Grand Junction, CO*

My name is Jon Nelson, also known in certain circles as son of Jack Nelson. Interestingly enough, I grew up on land that was once part of the Jurupa Land Grant, owned by Louis Robidoux in Riverside County, California. Jack graduated with a BA in history from the University of Redlands. He then moved over to the University of New Mexico to continue his work on the fur trade and the opening of the American West in the nineteenth century. Deciding that New Mexico was not the best for my mom, Katherine, they returned to Riverside, Mom continued to teach, and Dad went back to work on his Masters at Redlands. He finished his thesis on Louis Robidoux in 1951. Growing up in the tradition, I attended the University of California and graduated with an AB in History, with a concentration on 19th Century American West. Several years later I was in Gunnison working in a master's program with an emphasis on early American Religious History. My thesis, *Tongues in Zion, Glossolalia in the Early Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, was completed in 1982. Years later, after a teaching position here in Colorado, and working in retirement, I was back to the Robidoux Brothers and their impact on the fur trade in Western Colorado.

I must admit that one of the ways

to visualize the historian's task is to think of him or her as a searcher of the truth, and Truth as an elusive mistress. She is there somewhere, and as the Truth, she keeps moving and hiding, waiting to be found out, nailed down... and recorded. In historiography, the study of historical research, a class we all had to wade through during our first semester of grad school, we kept looking for this mistress.

Think of history as an eye-witness account of an event with an explanation—so that the reader can understand the event, realize the times in which this event took place, and form an opinion that draws more understanding of the times and events. It works like this: remember the last presidential debate? I watched it, heard what was said, and understood the event as it unfolded. Well, think of two of us watching the same event; what did we see? Each participant had a different understanding of what occurred, and from that experience we drew emotion and told others of the event. Well, since we both saw the debate, knew what happened, we both know the truth, right?

If each of us wrote down what we saw and felt, then dug it up 30 years later, would we both be able to recall what happened and how we felt? Would our writing reflect the truth? Yes and no. Now 30 years later someone comes across the writing and uses our feel-

ings and recording of the event to explain to others what happened; is that explanation accurate? It depends. The bare bone facts stand on their own merit without any interpretation—that is called a primary source, the most accurate reflection of the event. Along comes another writer some years later, looks at the recorded events, takes our written record of the event (which is laced with opinion and emotion) and now claims that the new written record is accurate and true. That written record, re-written by another, has now created a secondary source, close to the truth, but not the true recording of what happened. This is important, as scholars take that re-written event as truth and add another layer of opinion on top. Another scholar comes to the scene, uses several re-written interpretations and claims he has found the truth. The larger question is who is correct.

An example is the Army officer who ran into Antoine Robidoux transporting furs to St. Louis in two-wheeled carts. Some scholars have taken that to mean that Antoine was able to move carts along the North Branch. Is that true? It depends. We know from written accounts that Antoine had oxen as well as mules that he used to move fur from his trading post in Delta to Cochetopa Pass. We have an account of Robidoux leaving his cart at the top of the pass and hitching his oxen up to continue the jour-

ney on to Taos. The problem with all this is twofold—first, the Army Officer saw Antoine on the Santa Fe Trail in Eastern Kansas, not the San Luis Valley, and secondly, he did keep a cart hidden near the top of Cochetopa Pass. Scholars have drawn the conclusion that because Antoine used carts and had oxen as well as mules, that he must have been able to use that method of transportation to move furs and trade goods over the North Branch. Then another scholar takes the event, the conclusion, writes it up as the truth (all a secondary source), and others take it as reality.

The Primary Source

“Cottonwood Fork, September 6
Marching this morning in a dense fog, about 7 o’clock before the caravan, -as I thought- I soon discovered, like specters, the dim outline of a seemingly endless column of wagons which had glided ahead of me; nine miles it took me to get in front, on the well-beaten road.

The breeze now rattles merrily overhead through the tall cotton woods - which shade my tent; the light clouds of the broken storm fly like shattered fleets before a gale; now and then are heard distant cheers, or unearthly yells and volleys of whip-cracks from the Mexicans, who are driving their overworked mules up the steep bank at the ford.

I find Mr. Robidoux here, with

a dozen light horse carts; he has a trading house three hundred miles beyond Santa Fe.” Cook, *Scenes and Adventures in the Army*, pg 242 ff.

Now the Secondary Source

The scholar who used this reference used it in this way: “By the early part of the 1840s, and possibly years before, Robidoux was using wheeled carts for transportation of goods to the Colorado Fort. Lieutenant Philip St. George Cooke met Robidoux in the mountains headed toward Fort Uncompahgre on September 6, 1843. He noted, ‘I find Mr. Robidoux here, with a dozen light horse carts...’” The problem is that Cooke met Robidoux on the Kansas plains near Council Grove, not in the San Luis Valley he alludes to in his statement.

This dilemma becomes even more difficult when scholars don’t do their homework and take the secondary source as “truth,” claiming an event that didn’t unfold as the secondary scholar claimed. Like a rumor that circulates through a crowd, the truth becomes more elusive and remote, the mistress is now exposed as she enters the room, leaving confusion in her wake.

How does all this relate to “Digging Deeper on the North Branch of the Old Spanish Trail?” [the topic of this section of presentations] As searchers for the truth we are constantly looking for answers, and in this case, many of the questions cannot be answered. This is why:

1. Many of the players of our drama are not literate. Remember the creation of the public schools in the late nineteenth century was a response to the lack of education and a primary result of the burgeoning progressive movement that began after the Civil War. As a whole, the fur trappers didn’t read or write, hence there is little primary source material on the subject.

2. Our stage was controlled by a variety of state players.

With the Louisiana Purchase of 1803, the United States was able to double its size with territory stretching from the Mississippi River to the Rocky Mountains. The lower border of the United States became the Arkansas River, stretching from the reaches of present Lake County in Colorado to present-day Oklahoma and Arkansas. The addition of new territory brought trappers and traders into the region, with St. Louis being the hub of activity.

In the early part of the nineteenth century, the Santa Fe Trail was established, with commerce moving across the Kansas plains, crossing from the United States into New Spain in the area of southeastern Colorado. Bent’s Fort (Fort William) was established in 1833 on the north side of the Arkansas River as the center of Bent, St. Vrain Company’s trading empire. Trade was established with the Cheyenne and Arapaho Indians, first for buffalo robes and later for beaver pelts from the rich streams of the Rocky Mountains. Bent’s

Fort provided American merchants an opportunity to trade with Santa Fe once Mexico gained independence from Spain. The fort was the only permanent outpost that was not under the control of the Mexicans or the Plains Indians.

The Adams-Onís Treaty of 1819 between the United States and New Spain codified the border between the United States and New Spain. The Treaty settled border disputes, giving the United States land from the Arkansas River and its headwaters on the east spine of the Rocky Mountains north to the 42nd parallel going west to include the Oregon Country. In the region of New Mexico the local government required trappers to become naturalized citizens of Mexico if they wanted to trade or trap on the western slope of Colorado west to the Green River and north into the Uinta.

In 1821 the citizens of New Spain overthrew Spanish rule and declared independence. Life changed in New Mexico with the revolution, as American traders were allowed to move into the area for fame and profit. By 1824, Taos became a trading hub, with trappers moving into the San Luis Valley over into the Elks and further southwest into the San Juan Mountains.

The shifting of state control, with fur trappers doing their trapping best to make a living, made for variable conditions here in the west. One example: you have groups of trappers (the Robidoux

boys included) cleaning out the Gila River drainage starting as early as the 1820s, if the Apache Indians didn't kill them, or their furs weren't confiscated by Spanish, and later Mexican, authorities on their return to Santa Fe or Taos.

This led to individuals, Antonio Robidoux included, becoming Spanish or Mexican citizens for the purpose of conducting business in the area. The other solution was to smuggle their furs out of the area to avoid any inspection and move them east to St. Louis to trade. Realize that the response to these conditions went further when the trapper/trader married a local lady, bought property, and became an elected official in the New Mexican territory.

Both Antoine and Louis Robidoux followed this route during our drama, with Louis later moving to Alta California in the 1840s with money to buy a rancho (one can assume he re-created his Santa Fe lifestyle during this time, as not only was he prosperous, but became one of the early county supervisors in San Bernardino, California, after the Mexican War).

3. The time period was short, a mere 20-30 years. This is a cultural quandary. Take the concept of Manifest Destiny (a theme invented by an historian looking for a trend)—that series of events lasted three times as long as our period of inquiry.

4. Our players did things that made sense for solving their problems at

the given moment in time. Look at the Rivera Expedition at the end of the eighteenth century. In 1765 Rivera traveled as far as the big bend of the Dolores River with the goal of exploration, learning about the various native inhabitants, and seeking for silver. A foundation was laid with the legends of “the city of gold.”

Ask yourself how Rivera knew where to go and search for his Teguayo. Communication was passed down through oral tradition and limited written histories, the Legend of Teguayo (pronounced “tewaYO”).

By using local folks who had been involved in trading with the various native populations, Rivera found the big bend of the Dolores River, and the Navajo-Uncompahgre Trail which led him north into the Delta Gateway. Why did Fremont, Marcy, and the boys who were looking for a route to stretch rails westward travel the North Branch of the Old Spanish Trail?

By having on hand fur trappers (who later outsourced to American explorers as guides), folks knew the trail, which was established over centuries of native inhabitant foot traffic, later mule, oxen, and horse traffic (who knows, they may have even had signage like we do today), the route was clear and well established. Using the historical perspective, the signage of the day can be seen even today, by searching for the various petroglyphs that were carved into the canyon walls all over the Great

Basin, for example, the Wastewater Canyon Route up to Fort Uinta for example. [Editor's note: see Dr. James Jefferson's culturally modified trees for further elucidation on this.]

Their travel made sense and was an easy way to solve the problem. Using these concepts makes it easier to understand the hows and whys of our regional history.

The final dilemma is that as searchers we don't take into account the lives and attitudes of the actors in our drama. We tend to take our own life experiences and use them as a guide when looking at events in the past. That coloring, intentional or not, helps to explain personal interpretation of past historical events. We look at time and space differently today than 30 years ago because of technology and our own natural personal biases. The searcher for the truth must walk away from this, peeling back layers of cultural bias to search for the truth. That personal bias or strongly held opinion keeps our thought process channeled in a direction that keeps us from learning where the elusive mistress is currently residing.

What we know about the Robidoux Family

There were six Robidoux brothers: Joseph, Francois, Isidore, Antoine, Louis, and Michel; sons of Joseph Robidoux, who came to St. Louis with his father (Joseph Robidoux) from Canada in 1770. On September 20, 1824, Antoine set out

from Ft. Atkinson on the Missouri River, near Council Bluffs for Santa Fe. (*James Kennelly Journal*: "Robidoux Party started for St. Afee today.")

Fall/Winter 1824: *Missouri Intelligencer*, April 29, 1825:

"William Huddart who went to Sante Fe in one of the trading companies last summer has just returned, having left Taos on the 12th of January last. He gives the following particulars: On the 24th of August he, in company of fourteen others, left Taos for the purpose of trapping beaver, and traveled west thirty days. On Green River the company separated, and nine ascended the river. Our informant was among those who remained; and in a few days they accidentally fell in with five other Americans, among whom was Mr. Rubideau. Two days after this, a large party of the Arapahoes (sic) attacked them, killed one person by the name of Nowlin, and robbed the others."

By the mid-1820s Antoine Robidoux established a small fort on the banks of the Gunnison River a short distance below the mouth

of the Uncompahgre River. The Indians of western Colorado, Utah, southern Idaho, southwestern Wyoming, and of much of the remainder of the central portion of the corridor received their first regular taste of northern Indo-European civilization by the establishment of the fort on the Gunnison. (Wallace, Antoine Robidoux).

By late 1844 Antoine abandoned his fort on the Gunnison, Fort Compogera (sic.) and returned to St. Louis. For almost 20 years the Fort served as an outpost, trading pelts for prized items both to the native peoples and the fur trappers. Fort Uncompahgre was linked to Antoine's other outpost, Fort Uintah in present-day northeastern Utah.

The Northern Branch of the Old Spanish Trail was a well-established route from Santa Fe, moving north into the San Luis Valley of southern Colorado. Once over the gentle Cochetopa Pass, the Trail moved downstream to the Gunnison River. Trappers and traders continued down the Gunnison using Indian routes over into the Uncompahgre Valley. This route was well traveled down the

OSTA Conference attendees enjoyed a chuckwagon meal at the reconstructed Fort Uncompahgre in Delta, Colorado.



photo: Paul McClure

Uncompahgre to the Fort, hence following what would become the Gunnison River down to the Grand and farther west into the Great Basin. This Northern Branch of the Old Spanish Trail brought traders from Santa Fe, New Mexico, to Los Angeles, California, through Delta to exchange pelts, Mexican blankets, and buffalo robes for cash and to bring horses and mules from California.

Williams, Joseph: *Narrative of a Tour From the State of Indiana to the Oregon Territory in the Years 1841-2*. Cincinnati, 1843. pg 81-85

“July 27th. We started from Rubedeau’s Fort, over the Wintey River, and next crossed Green and White Rivers. Next night we lay on Sugar Creek, the water of which was so bitter we could scarcely drink. Here two of Rubedeau’s squaws ran away, and we had to wait two days till he could send back to the Fort for another squaw, for company for him.

“August 1st. We camped under a large rock, by a small stream, where we could get but very little grass for our animals. Next night we lay under the Pictured Rock, and being sheltered from the rain, slept very comfortably. Next day we traveled over rough roads and rocks, and crossed the Grand River, a branch of the Colorado, which runs into the Gulf of California, at the head thereof. Next day crossed another fork of Grand River, and came to Fort Compogera, below the mouth of the Compogera river.

“August 14th (Sunday). I preached to a company of French, Spaniards, Indians, half breeds, and americans, from Proverbs xiv, 32: ‘The wicked is driven away in his wickedness: but the righteous hath hope in his death.’ I felt the power of the word, and I believe some of the people felt also. I spoke plainly and pointedly to them, and felt as though I would be clear of their blood in the day of eternity.

“Next day we started to go through New Mexico, which is a long distance out of our route, to shun the range of the Apahoc Indians; and at night we camped on a small creek. Tuesday morning, we started, and crossed Union River; and next day, crossed Lake River, and lay that night on a small creek. Here are good, clear streams of water; but rough, hilly roads- rocky, sandy, and gravelly; good grazing for our animals all the way.

“August 19th. We could see snow on the mountains. We had a very cold rain. Next day we came to Rubedeau’s wagon, which he had left there a year before. He hitched his oxen to it, and took it along. This morning my moccasins were frozen so hard I had to thaw them by the fire before I could put them on. Here we had reports of Indian hostilities having commenced near Sante Fe, in New Mexico. Rubedeau sent on an express to see whether it was so, and found it to be a false report.

“Sunday, 20th. The frost was like a little snow. My blanket, which I

used for a thens-cloth, being rained on the night before, was now frozen quite stiff and hard. We left this beautiful plain, which lies between two mountains, with a fine stream of water running through it... We are now on the waters of the Del Norte river, which falls into the Gulf of Mexico, and are passing the North Mountain. We are now traveling down Tous Valley, which leads down to Tous (a Spanish village) and Sante Fe. This is a beautiful valley, about eighty or a hundred miles long...”

One can assume, a dangerous statement, that Antoine and Louis Robidoux were smart business men who grew up in a trading and trapping family (St Joseph, Missouri, was named for their brother Joseph), and were able to use their native talents to survive and prosper. These two brothers established the first Anglo business enterprise on the western slope of Colorado. Their income over a 20-year period was enough for Louis to move his domicile to California, walk into the political establishment, and become a prominent citizen. Antoine was more of a rambler, leaving New Mexico to travel and guide explorers over the west, ending up being wounded in the Battle of San Pasquel during the Mexican War. We know that Antoine alone has been called “the Kingpin in the Colorado River Fur Trade” by Joseph J. Hill in 1930. That, my friends, is quite a historical legacy. ♦

Jon Nelson is the Vice-President of the OSTA North Branch Chapter.

Director-at-Large Report

by Dr. Reba Wells Grandrud

The months since my last report in February have been busy ones as I completed a three-year Director-at-Large term. This board position was created in 2006 and was filled for six years by James Jefferson, Ph.D., a member of the Southern Ute Tribe, Ignacio, Colorado. “Dr. J” aided OSTA’s quest to involve and learn from Native Americans, the earliest users of the historic Trail. The value placed on the role of Native Americans led the Association in 2015 to create a second At-Large position—Native American Director at Large—and asked Dr. J to continue to serve there as a board member.

My OSTA service since 2013 has been focused on two tasks. The first is continuing to serve as OSTA Liaison or Representative to the Partnership for the National Trails System (PNTS).

The Partnership connects member not-for-profit trail organizations and Federal agency partners to further the protection, completion, and stewardship of the 30 National Scenic and Historic Trails within the National Trails System. As of 2016, the Partnership has 34 members and 8 affiliate organizations and “works in close collaboration with the five Federal agency partners (National Park

Service, Bureau of Land Management, US Forest Service, US Fish & Wildlife Service, and the Federal Highway Administration) who have jurisdiction over the trails.” (www.pnts.org)

My second concentration is on Leadership Development, an attempt to help identify a pool of interested, active, qualified individuals who would consider serving on the OSTA Board of Directors, as chairs/members of OSTA committees, and/or on PNTS committees. I am pleased that Jack Pritchett, president of the Tecopa Chapter, has been a member of the Partnership’s most active Advocacy and Policy Committee; Vicki Felmlee, a longtime community activist and trail advocate, was recruited as Colorado Director in 2015, (and spearheaded in late July 2016 a most successful annual conference in her home town of Grand Junction); and former California Director Alex King agreed to be a candidate on the 2016 ballot and was duly elected as Director-at-Large, and already has fostered the creation of a new OSTA chapter in San Bernardino, California.

Work with OSTA has paralleled to some extent my volunteer service with the Partnership. In addition to continuing as PNTS Secretary (working with the Executive Committee, the Leadership Council, and the Board), I am serving on the PNTS Leadership Development

Committee and am a member of the Strategic Planning Strategy Group 5 focusing on growth and developing a larger and more diverse membership. The Partnership has been involved in strategic planning since early 2015 and expects to complete the process at the February 2017 PNTS meeting in Washington, D.C. The other strategy groups are: 1.) Stability: build stability to thrive; 2.) Marketing and Communication: raise visibility of the partnership and the national scenic and historic trails system; 3.) Sustainability: develop sustainable revenue streams; 4.) Operations/Services: establish programs/services to best support PNTS members. You may agree that even a cursory look at these five planning groups shows the same needs exist in our own OSTA strategic planning. We expect to be updating that plan in the near future.

Please contact me or John Hiscock, our Association Manager, if you are interested in becoming more involved in Partnership activities or in any aspect of the Old Spanish Trail Association. Service on a committee is a commitment for a specified period of time and can be in your area of interest—you might even have a suggestion for a new committee that should be established. Currently, OSTA has the following committees, each with a board sponsor: Education, Interpretation, Research, and Stewardship. ♦



Photo: Jack Pritchett

Ph.D. students in history Amado Guzman, on left, and Anthony Graham chat with Dr. Reba Wells Grandrud at the OSTA conference. Guzman is studying at the University of Arizona in Tucson and Graham is at the University of Nevada Las Vegas. They won scholarships to the OSTA conference. We hope they continue to be involved with the Association.



Larry Cesspooch Presents
Ute Horse People and the
Old Spanish Trail



Dr. James Jefferson, OSTA Native American Director-at-Large, presents a traditional Ute gift of tobacco to Larry Cesspooch "Whitebelly," after his presentation at the OSTA conference, (upper left). Cesspooch presents the creation story to OSTA members. His company, "Through Native Eyes Productions," produces short documentaries telling others' stories.



Photos: Jack Prichett

Old Spanish Trail Association Membership Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone: _____

E-Mail Address: _____

Type of Membership _____ Quantity _____

\$5 of each membership supports your local chapter. Indicate your desired chapter affiliation: _____ or none: _____

Please include ALL information requested above.

Memberships run for twelve months and include three issues per year of our journal, *Spanish Traces*. If you would like to receive *Spanish Traces* electronically only, check here ____ and make sure your email address is legible.

Membership Types

Individual	\$25/year
Family	\$30/year
Sustaining	\$50/year
Student	\$12/year
Institutional	\$30/year
Life (single or couple)	\$250
Corporate	\$100/min

Pay online at www.oldspanishtrail.org
or mail your check to:

Judy Nickle
OSTA Membership Coordinator
6267 S 157th Way
Gilbert, AZ 85298

Email John Hiscock with questions at
ostamgr@gmail.com