

SPANISH TRACES

VOLUME 25 + NO 3 WINTER 2019



Happy Holidays . . .



and Best Historic Wishes

From the Board and Staff
at the Old Spanish Trail Association

A MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTION TO OSTA MAKES A GREAT GIFT!



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 a typically 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.

| 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 Old Spanish Trail-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. All matters relating to *Spanish Traces* should be directed to the OSTA Designer/Editor (Kitty Nicholason, kitty.n@bresnan.net).

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WINTER 2019

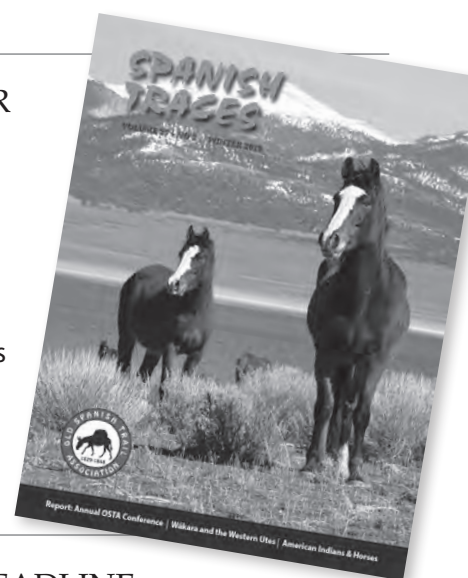
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ON THE COVER

Wild Horse Mesa,
Costilla, New Mexico.
Lake Band. Photo by
Judy Barnes

BACK COVER

Steel plate silhouettes
created by Al and
Barbara Matheson.
Photo by
Nelson Miller



SPRING 2020 DEADLINE

We would love to receive your comments, suggestions, and ideas for future issues. The deadline for submissions for the Spring 2020 issue is March 15, 2020. Send to Kitty Nicholason, kitty.n@bresnan.net.



LOS SENDEROS / Moving Forward

By Lynn Brittner, Executive Director

The National Park Foundation has just granted funds to the Old Spanish National Historic Trail Association (OSNHTA) for the purchase of over one hundred highway signs. These signs will mark the historic route of the trail in New Mexico, within Taos and Rio Arriba Counties. Initially drafted by The National Park Service, the sign plan then went to Taos OSTA members as well as local community members for final review and is now ready to move forward into the next phase of the signing process — jurisdiction approvals. Several of the community members are descendants of the Old Spanish Trail and have offered to volunteer their time towards this project. The area that is now present-day Taos and Rio Arriba Counties was historically imperative as information centers where guides could be hired to navigate the Old Spanish Trail, through vastly varied and often complicated terrain. These guides also helped to establish positive relationships with various tribes along the entire length of the trail.

With the growth of tourism in Taos County these signs will provide increased visibility for the trail to the public and local community members. The

purchase and installation of these signs is another way OSNHTA is helping to fulfill its mission to preserve and promote our valuable historic resources. Volunteers in the Taos community are committed to matching their time to oversee this project, and once we have jurisdiction the process will go forward with fabrication and installation.

In the community of the San Luis Valley, La Verada del Norte Chapter recently worked with the National Park Service staff to host a focus group meeting at the Ft. Garland Museum. After a recent series of site visits in the San Luis Valley, steps to initiate the process to interpret the Valley resulted in a community workshop. Cory Donnelly and Carol Clark presented ways to explore design and interpret ideas for the San Luis Valley in relation to the OSNHTA routes and resources. The overall goal of the workshop was to work with local chapter and community members to discover ways to attract new visitors and continue to engage local residents.

Questions from the workshop inspired ideas from the

approximately twenty community members who attended, as well as Rob Sweeten from the BLM. Ideas included installing tri-lingual signs — in Spanish, Ute, or Apachean — along with english; silhouettes (with interpretation); and community murals. Map exercises inspired volunteers to mark areas on maps that have the most historical significance. The workshop was inclusive and accomplished the goal of creating an experience in which San Luis Valley residents shared their sense of place and connection to its history. Many ideas were suggested for ways to provide education regarding heritage, memory, and identity. The NPS staff will take the result of this workshop and incorporate the ideas and suggestions into a document that will strategize how the San Luis Valley can be best interpreted and what the timeline will be. As this process moves forward, we will work together to identify and seek funding. In the meantime, OSTA will be working together with all the chapters to continue moving forward. ♦



Focus group meeting at the Ft. Garland Museum



*On the Old Spanish Trail in
Crestone, Colorado: Cory Donnelley,
Carol Clark, Lynn Brittner,
Rob Sweeton, and Kristin Van Fleet,
landscape architect Intern for NPS.
Photo by Al Matheson*



PRESIDENT PATHWAYS

By Paul Ostapuk, OSTA President

As a long-time OSTA member and now the incoming President, I am often asked about my interest in historic trails.

The basic answer I give is that historic trails give us meaning. It is recreation with a purpose! I am fascinated with the mix of history that merges with the recreational potential.

The National Trail System Act had the vision 50 years ago of growing recreational opportunities for an ever-expanding population. I want to be part of that success — seeing the public appreciate and experience our wonderful Old Spanish National Historic Trail corridor and the depth of its cultural heritage.

The National Trail System Act also recognizes the valuable contributions of volunteers and nonprofit trail groups such as the Old Spanish Trail Association. It encourages federal land managers to engage volunteer citizens in the planning, development, and maintenance of trails. What that means is that an organization like ours gets a seat at the table! We

have an important role to play in regards to national trails.

Through time eternal, foot paths and trails have shown the way forward and allowed human cultures to integrate across the landscape. Historic trails are uniquely relevant. In addition to documented travel, these trails chronicle the various cultural interactions, the struggles and the politics of the day.

Historic trails help define who we are as a nation. They provide a window to our past combined with a vision for the future. To that end, it is important to preserve historic trail corridors and their resources.

Recreation is an essential component of our personal lives. The human spirit needs opportunities to explore, to play, and to savor the world's natural wonders. These are important aspects of being human. Our bodies need exercise and trails can provide a healthy path to follow. Realizing this, some doctors actually prescribe the medicine of walking on trails for their patients.

Our minds need exercise too. We need context to experience empathy and grow awareness. Historic trails can provide that means. They enable a connection to the past where we can acknowledge the struggles of past cultures and preserve these stories before they are lost. Historic trails can give us important perspectives. They can keep us

grounded in a complicated world. It's no wonder our Descendants chapter is growing so fast.

Building support for historic trails has its challenges though. Far too often the modern world gives little respect for historic events but I believe, working together, we can change that.

Thank you for your volunteer efforts!

One of the Association's strengths is our diverse membership! Every member has unique talents and important perspectives. It is my hope to build on that strength — improving the means for sharing our successes and working together to build capacity and expand our influence.

Hard-working OSTA chapters are important ambassadors for the trail. They deserve our support and recognition. The value of our volunteers is a hard thing to tabulate. Each year we strive administratively to count our many volunteer hours, the miles we drive, and the dollars we expend supporting the nonprofit cause. Tracking these activities across the whole general membership and at the chapter level can be difficult, so we ask your help in documenting your activities for each government fiscal year. The time you spend supporting the trail when multiplied across our membership rolls provides a powerful voice to Washington D.C. that says we, the

Old Spanish Trail Association, care significantly about national trails and the National Trail System Act.

If you are reading this article, you have demonstrated a passion for the Old Spanish Trail. If you are not already affiliated with a chapter, I encourage you to take that action today. Every dues-paying membership has an opportunity to earmark a \$5 payment to the chapter of their choice to support local activities. You can send an email to our Executive Director to indicate your chapter affiliation.

If you are a Life Member, thank you for your great passion

and support! But because no annual dues are collected for these memberships, I encourage you to make a donation today to a chapter of your choice.

As OSTA President, I want to serve our membership needs and expand opportunities to connect the public in meaningful ways to the trail, our passion and our stories.

I want to work strategically with our agency partners. We need to push progress regarding trail development and interpretive projects. We need to accelerate the placement of highway and historic route signs. We need to expand

the ways of sharing interpretive information in a digital world. We need to create new opportunities for the public to experience and appreciate the landscape along the trail corridor.

In summary, we need historic trails. They are ribbons across the landscape that connect us in both time and space. Historic trails can lead us into the future. They can expand our possibilities.

Thank you for being a member of our association, for your support and your many diverse volunteer efforts. It matters a great deal and it is making a difference! ♦



Thinking about giving to the Old Spanish Trail Association?

We have several opportunities for you to help your trail - research, preservation, education!

- The Pat Kuhlhoff Education Fund
- General fund for research, preservation
- Publications
- Remember us in your Estate Planning

Visit ostastore.com today

All donations are tax deductible within the guidelines, regulations, and requirements of the Internal Revenue Service. Always seek the advice of your accountant or financial planner.



LIVING ON THE TRAIL

I first learned of the OST when my husband and I moved to Parowan, Utah, three years ago. I saw the Original Old Spanish Trail sign on our street (Old Highway 91) and immediately did my homework. Being that I'm an archaeologist and an avid history buff, I was very excited to learn that I now lived on the OST! We live right down the street from Heritage Park, which was one of the main camping sites on the trail due to the natural spring. This is one of our favorite stops on our walks.

I then joined OSTA to learn more about the trail. Back in the

early 1990s we used to explore the Mohave Trail when our children were young. I realize I just aged myself. I was again pleasantly surprised to learn that the Mohave Trail was part of the larger OST.

I really enjoyed the conference, learning so much and meeting so many interesting people. I look forward to a long relationship with the trail and with OSTA.

Karleen Kalar
Parowan, UT

PRONUNCIATION

Getting to the Fall issue of *Spanish Traces* a bit late, perhaps, I still want to register an objection to the pronunciation box, top of page 29.

For JORNADA/S the initial syllable is supposedly pronounced, in Spanish, as "hawr," but not in my experience. Closer would be "hoar."

I'll note that I was born in New Mexico 94 years ago, and live now on a street called "Real del Norte," a few blocks from Jornada Road in Las Cruces, New Mexico.

Yours,
John P. Bloom



*Ever wonder how the
Old Spanish Trail came to be?
Who traveled on it?
Where did they come from?
Where were they going?*

Our Research Committee explores all of these questions - and more! Join us - We're looking for volunteers to help us.

- Find sources of information
- Review journals, articles
- Refer expert resources
- And much more!

Contact Tom Sutak, Research Committee Chair at ostarescom@gmail.com today and let's get started!

CHAPTER REPORT

Mojave River Chapter

By Nelson Miller, Chapter President

We had a very successful Old Spanish Trail Day this year on Saturday, October 5. This was the seventh year we have held this event. The California legislature has recognized the first Saturday in October as California Old Spanish Trail Day!

Over 600 people attended our celebration at the Desert Discovery Center in Barstow, CA. We had 23 booths, including mule packing; Navajo Churro Sheep; weaving and spinning; OST Night Camp; Big Horn Mountain Men; children's games and rope making, mural coloring, and art show; desert animals and safety; adobe brick making; blacksmithing; native plants; homestead gardening; bread making; archaeology exhibit; National Park Service Information; and Old Spanish Trail Association information.

In addition, there were demonstrations by the Chemhuevi Bird Singers and dancers, introduced by Charles Wood, Chairman of the Chemhuevi Tribe; a Mariachi Band; Folklorico dancers; bluegrass music; and of course a piñata for the kids. Our focus is to educate kids of all ages about the Old Spanish Trail, the Mojave Desert, and this period of California History.

This year we also had an Art Show with participation from Barstow Community College and Excelsior K-12 Charter School.



The Big Horn Mountain Men (BHMM) organization is dedicated to promoting interest and understanding in the art of buckskinning, as well as the legal and safe use of muzzle-loading firearms.



Corn Husk Dolls



We hope to make this a continuing event with even greater participation next year.

A huge thanks to our partners and sponsors: Jane Laraman Brockhurst with the Desert Discovery Center; Rose Bearshear with the BLM Barstow Field Office; the City of Barstow; and the Mojave River Chapter of the Old Spanish Trail Association.

Save the date of Saturday, October 3, 2020 and come and join us next year! ♦



Desert Animals and Safety



CHAPTER REPORT

Descendants and Travelers of the Trail

By Conchita Marusich, Chapter President

The Descendants and Travelers of the Trail Chapter were very active in helping with the Travelers of the Trail conference that just took place in Cedar City, Utah in October. As president of the Descendants and Travelers of the Trail Chapter, I joined the conference planning committee in March of 2019. We had a great group of people working on the conference. Stephanie Moulton, Utah state Director and president of the Fish Lake Chapter, was the chair of the conference. We were joined by Nelson Miller, president of the Mojave Chapter, who had organized the successful OSTA conference in Barstow in 2017; Lynn Brittner, OSTA Executive Director; and Paula Mitchell, the special collections librarian at Southern Utah University. It was a fun group to work with as we filled in all the speaking slots and organized field trips that would take our members to important Old Spanish Trail locations near Cedar City.

Lynn Brittner and I came up with the idea of offering a silent auction at the conference. What better way to have some fun and raise money for our organization?

Gerry Van Iwaarden, president of the Southern Utah Chapter, started us off by providing a case of wine sold by

the Paiute Cedar Band. You can find these wines called Twisted Cedar Native American wines on the internet. Our next item was a replica of the captivating silhouettes of the OST traders traveling the trail.

Al Matheson made a special desktop-sized maquette for our silent auction, basing it on the many life-sized silhouettes that he has produced and installed along the roads of Utah.

Stephanie Moulton donated a two-night stay in a 2-bedroom deluxe cabin at the beautiful Lakeside Resort that she and her husband run. And long-time OSTA members Lorraine and Kenn Carpenter donated an important book titled *Westward America* by Howard R. Driggs.



I was looking forward to helping with the silent auction but could not attend the conference due to an unexpected surgery. But Elaine Martinez, secretary of the Descendants & Travelers of the Trail Chapter, was at the conference and helped Lynn Brittner oversee the silent auction, which was very successful and raised nearly \$1,000. A big thank you to Lynn and Elaine — plus to everyone who donated items and to all who had fun participating in the bidding.

The last way our chapter participated in the conference was through a Power Point slide show titled “In Our Own Words.” This presentation is based on profiles written by the members of our chapter about their ancestors who traveled the trail. Many of these profiles are currently shown on the Old Spanish Trail Association website oldspanishtrail.org/profiles. Elaine Martinez, who led the Power Point, was joined by chapter members Lisa Valdez Bonney, Mary Anne Pentis, and Nancy Melendez, who talked about their ancestors. A big thank you to our members who came to the conference and shared their research and their stories. ♦

The silent auction included a case of wine called Twisted Cedar sold by the Paiute Cedar Band.

OLD SPANISH TRAIL ASSOCIATION Annual Membership Meeting

By Nancy Melendez / Photos by Kitty Nicholason

CEDAR CITY, UTAH
OCTOBER 12, 2019

MINUTES

40 members in attendance.

The meeting was called to order by President Paul Ostapuk at 4pm.

ELECTION RESULTS

OSTA Executive Director Lyn Brittner announced the election results as follows:

PRESIDENT

Paul Ostapuk

TREASURER

Reba Grandrud

ARIZONA DIRECTOR

Earl Fosdick

NEVADA DIRECTOR

Glenn Shaw

NEW MEXICO DIRECTOR

Melinda Arviso Celinda

DIRECTOR AT LARGE/CONFERENCES

Nelson Miller

DIRECTOR AT LARGE/NATIVE AMERICAN LIAISON

Nathan Strong Elk

With the election of current OSTA Secretary Paul Ostapuk to the Presidency, the Secretary position is vacated. Nancy Melendez was appointed as Secretary through October 2020.



*Executive Director
Lynn Brittner*

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

- Traveled to Nevada to begin preparations for the 2020 Annual Conference.
- Planned and executed the Spring board meeting in Santa Fe, New Mexico.
- Continued work on the Pat Kuhlof Education Fund, the Old Spanish Trail Board game, and Old Spanish Trail Traveling Trunk.
- Planned and attended the Mission San Gabriel Wayside sign rededication in California.
- Presented the Old Spanish Trail game to over 700 children at Old Spanish Trail Day at Aztec National Park.
- Attended the OCTA Conference.
- Worked with Judy Barnes, a member, working with the Taos/Costilla community supporting their efforts to save Spanish Barb horses. Plans are being made to create a new Chapter.
- Along with NPS visited the San Luis Valley to make plans for a focus workshop in Ft. Garland

FINANCIAL REPORT

6/1/18 through 5/31/19

INCOME

NPS	\$ 85,000
Pat Kuhkof Fund	3,000
Memberships	10,000
Grants	6,600
Retail sales	1,600
Total Income	\$ 108,000

Total Expenses	\$ 102,000
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Net Gain	\$ 6,000
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MEMBERSHIP REPORT

There were 311 paid memberships during the fiscal year. Investigating automatic renewal by a credit card on file to facilitate easy renewal process.

CHAPTER REPORTS

- **New Mexico** — no report
- **Colorado** — OSNHT signs going up in San Luis Valley
- **Utah** — Story Road Utah app notes Old Spanish National Historic Trail in its mapping of historical sites in Utah
- **Arizona** — Strip Grant continues to interpret Old Spanish Trail, re-enactment trail rides and campouts were held. Potential Phoenix area event with first families and Descendants and Travelers of the Trail.
- **Nevada** — Repair and replacing obelisks across the Old Spanish Trail in Nevada in collaboration with Boy Scouts who're entering the GIS locations for each marker.

- **California** — Old Spanish Trail Day events held on first Saturday in October as designated by California legislature by Mojave and Agua Mansa chapters. El Pueblo de Los Angeles hosted an Old Spanish Trail Day (Olvera Street). All three California chapters have submitted sign locations through the NPS system. Members of the Mojave chapter helped the Utah Chapters in the planning of the "Travelers of the Old Spanish Trail" conference given in October in Cedar City.
- **Descendants & Travelers of the Trail Chapter** — (Internet chapter): Members of the chapter assisted the Utah chapters in the planning of the "Travelers of the Old Spanish Trail" conference given in October in Cedar City.

OPEN DISCUSSION

- The OSTA Stewardship Committee is looking for volunteers.
- Life Members need an annual reminder to pay their extra chapter affiliation dues.
- Legacy Fund will be rolled out soon.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:50pm.



President Paul Ostapuk



Annual OSTA Conference

Southern Utah University / Cedar City, UT October 10-13, 2019

By Nelson Miller, OSTA Director-At-Large/Conferences

If you weren't at the conference this year, we're sorry we missed you. We had an outstanding conference with over 80 people attending. The wide variety of presentations included Bicycling the OST; Silhouettes and Signage; Iron County Sign Program;

Jedediah Smith; GIS Mapping; Sulphur Mustang Herd; Images of the OST; OST: A Trader's Route into Ute Country; Recreation and Development Strategies; Ute Prayer Trees; Dominguez-Escalante Expedition; Ute Perspectives; Descendants Chapter



KITTY NICHOLASON

Hunter Conference Center provided comfortable and modern headquarters for OSTA's annual event.

Stories; OST Trek Documentary Film; OSTA Stewardship; Where is Mt. Misery?; and OST Through Southern Paiute Eyes.

A great big **thank you** to all of the presenters and field trip leaders, **especially Al Matheson, who gave three presentations** — including a last minute fill-in — and guided a field trip!

In addition to the presentations, we had five field trips, including an Open House at the Frontier Homestead Museum; a special presentation on the Golden Spike at Southern Utah Museum of Art; a field trip to Mountain Meadows; a presentation at the Old Spanish



Edward Geary, an OSTA member from Huntington, Utah enjoyed the many displays in the halls. Geary is also a member of the Emery County Historical Society.



Al Matheson making one of his three presentations



Nelson Miller presented Al Matheson a recognition award at the Cedar City Conference which read: In grateful appreciation of Al Matheson for your silhouettes honoring the Old Spanish Trail and those who traveled it and your invaluable service to the "Travelers Along the Old Spanish Trail" conference.

Trail Archives at the Gerald R. Sheratt Library; and Along the OST and the Wolfskill Boulder.

Also, thank you to the terrific Conference Committee, which included Stephanie Moulton, Conchita Marusich, Paula Mitchell, Lynn Brittner, Al Matheson, and Nelson Miller. Everyone worked hard and made significant contributions, especially Conchita, Paula, and Lynn. Southern Utah University was an excellent facility and the food was tasty.

SAVE THE DATE

Thursday-Sunday, October 8-11, 2020.
Come and join us in Las Vegas for the Conference next year! ♦



Nathan Strong Elk gave a joint presentation with Lynn Brittner about the stories told by the Ute Elders and how they view the land and with it the Old Spanish Trail.

Nathan works to preserve language and traditions within the Southern Ute community in Ignacio, Colorado.



Leo Lyman spoke to a packed house Friday morning about Jedediah Smith's exploration of the western part of what became the Old Spanish Trail. Leo has been both a student and teacher of the Old Spanish Trail for over 50 years.



Dr. James Jefferson signed copies of "Native American Prayer Trees of Colorado" by John Wesley Anderson for Al Matheson and Frank Nichols. Dr Jefferson wrote the book's dedication.

Frank is owner of Iron Springs Resort, where conference attendees enjoyed a memorably delicious meal Saturday night.





Traveling History

By Paula Mitchell, Special Collections Librarian / Gerald R. Sheratt Library at SUU
Photos by Kitty Nicholason

Liane Brown, fiber artist and member of the Old Spanish Trail Association's education committee, has created a 'traveling trunk' to house items to take to classrooms of 4th and 5th graders, educating them about the history of the Old Spanish Trail.

Partnering with the National Park Service and expanding on their idea of taking a cardboard box of materials into the schools, Liane designed a trunk about 24 inches by 16 inches made out of leather, hand sewn, with antler buttons, and complete with a label that is representative of the Old Spanish Trail logo.

The trunk is filled with different items that provide children with activities and representations of trade items that traveled the Old Spanish Trail trade route. For example, there are weaving boards and yarn so children could participate in a weaving activity. There are also some raw wools and dyeing material so children could dye and spin the wool into yarn. Animal curios are included that represent the animals found along the trail. Also included is a guidebook and lesson plans to help organize student activities.

When speaking to Liane about the trunk, she stated, "...it's an old little link to learn about the Old Spanish Trail." ♦



At the banquet Gary Lee Strong Man Tom (Educational Director, Piute Indian Tribe of Utah) an accomplished native flutist, shared Paiute traditions in traditional regalia, stories, and played music on a variety of flutes.

There was a silent auction, and at the banquet there was a lively live auction.

A maquette of one of Al Matheson's silhouettes was auctioned. The full-size silhouettes are cut from A-330 steel plate with a plasma torch. They are then ground, fabricated and mounted. To date 117 silhouettes have been installed on 17 sites (not counting single installations), with 20 more silhouettes on order. The maquettes are reserved for OSTA use and member purchases.





Southern Utah Museum of Art

By Emily Ronquillo, Manager of Marketing & Communications

Photos by Kitty Nicholason

On Saturday, October 12, SUMA hosted the opening reception for its Fall 2019 exhibitions, *A World Transformed: The Transcontinental Railroad and Utah, Compendium*, and *Leviathan*. This event

invited Friends of SUMA members and Old Spanish Trail Association members for an exclusive first look at the exhibitions and an opportunity to mingle with curators and artists. ♦



Part of the Beverley Taylor Sorenson Center for the Arts, on the campus of Southern Utah University, Southern Utah Museum of Art is free and open to the public.



Dr. Robert Bailey, art historian from the University of Oklahoma, shares the concept and process behind Compendium.



OSTA Vice President Dennis Brown and Daniel Davis, curator of A World Transformed: The Transcontinental Railroad and Utah, discuss the exhibition and history of The Golden Spike.

Musician Eli Wrangle provides live entertainment during the opening reception.



A light brunch spread was provided by SUU Dining Services.



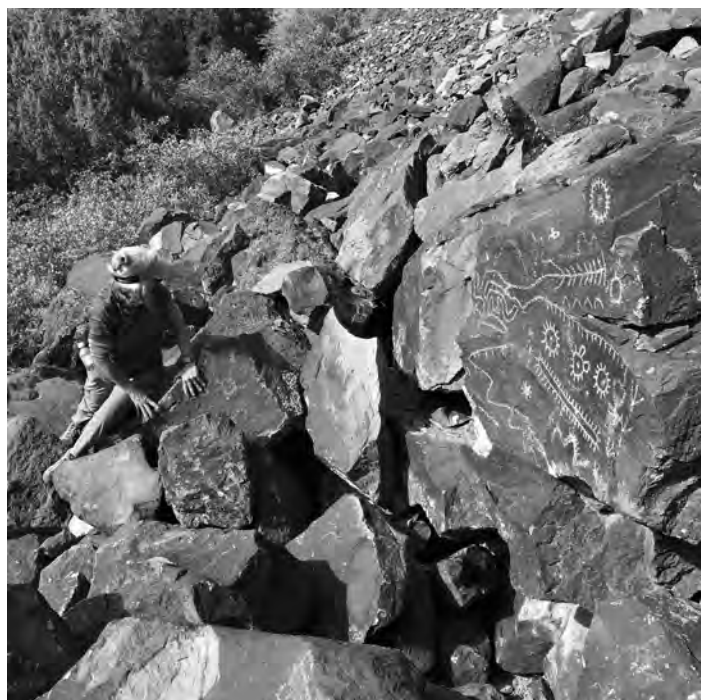
Field Trips

Photos by Paul Ostapuk



Al Matheson led a field trip to view various Old Spanish Trail locations near Paragonah, Utah (Little Creek Canyon) and Summit, Utah (Braffits Canyon).







Iron Springs Resort Historic Sculptures

By Frank Nichols

Photos by Kitty Nicholason

The Iron Springs area is relevant to the Old Spanish Trail because it is a natural funnel through the hills, and as such includes eleven historic trails that pass through, beginning with the Native Americans on their annual pine nut gathering at Indian Peaks to the northwest. Iron Springs is the valley drainage, the source of which is the confluence under Cedar Breaks National Park. The cut through the hills exposed a deposit of iron ore which was discovered by Mormon pioneers on their way to California. That find resulted in its immediate settlement.

The statues celebrate the history of Iron Springs and the travelers along the trail. First is the Native

American; then Father Escanlante in 1776; the pioneer woman represents the first non-native resident (Ellen Johnson Nelson), who with her husband lived in a dugout on the stream bank and was assigned to herd livestock for the Iron Mission in 1856; the iron miner represents those who labored with iron ore from the discovery and goes on even today; and the sheepman represents the fallback occupation to mining that also goes on to this day.

Created by local artist Jacob Dean, each is crafted with iron and sited under a structure created with original steel guide beams uncovered locally. The title of the artwork is “They Came This Way” and was installed March 16, 2019. ♦



“Native American”



“Pioneer Woman”

SAVE THE DATE



OLD SPANISH TRAIL ASSOCIATION

PROTECTING, INTERPRETING AND PROMOTING THE OLD SPANISH NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAIL

2020 National Conference
October 8-11, 2020 / Las Vegas, Nevada



"Let's meet in Las Vegas!"

T H E M E
"Builders of the Trail"

Linking the efforts of Santa Fe Traders, Native Americans,
Explorers, Military Units and Individual Families
and those who traveled with them to build the Old Spanish Trail.

oldspanishtrail.org



American Indians, Horses, and the Old Spanish Trail

By Celinda Reynolds Kaelin / Photos by Judy Barnes

"EL CONQUISTADOR!" His small, bright eyes glisten in his grey-blue face as he shyly peers around his dam's hind legs. It's doubtful that he understands the great responsibility that comes with his large, new name, or even that the fate of his entire mustang herd possibly rests on his tiny shoulders. His extended family numbers over 150, and his sire, Blue, is one of the dominant stallions whose grey-blue "grulla" coat proves their Spanish heritage (grulla is Spanish for crane, and perhaps referenced the color of the sandhill crane, *Grulla Canadiense*).

Blue's coat, however, tells a more troubling story. It bears the coup marks of brutal encounters with two-leggeds. Black splotches, resembling the spots on an Appaloosa, signify many of the vicious blows he received during the roundup to relocate him to the mustang herd at Wild Horse (San Pablo) Mesa. Now, his mustang family faces a new threat. If they



El Conquistador

cannot find legal protection as Heritage Horses, they will have no defense from two-leggeds who have been illegally rounding them up and selling them for slaughter.

Spanish Mustangs are direct descendants of the horses that Spaniards brought to the new world in the 1500s. The Spanish crown decreed that Columbus bring these wonderful animals to the Americas on his second voyage, and subsequent Spanish *entradas* onto the mainland followed suit. The highly prized,

hot-blooded Colonial Spanish horses bred and prospered in North America.

Progeny of this coveted Spanish stock can still be found on Ute lands on the Uintah-Ouray Reservation in Utah. In fact, when the Spanish Mustang Registry was established in 1957, they used two stallions (Buckshot, a grulla, and Ute, a red dun) from the Ute reservation as foundation sires. The Ute herd is not unique. Spanish Mustang herds can be found all along the 700-plus miles





Blue, the grulla

of the Old Spanish Trail.

Language authorities state that "Northern Uto-Aztecan [ancestors of the Ute] appears to have 'arrived' from a homeland in northern Mexico some 5,000 years ago, moved into the area of the southern Sierra Nevada/Mojave desert, and diverged into four branches (Hopic, Tubatulabal, Takic, and Numic [Ute]) about 3,000 years ago ..." This early timeline was probably one of many Uto-Aztecan northward migrations. Most archaeologists agree on their distinct cultural markers around 500 A.D. This lengthy presence, then, would explain why the Ute are one of the few North American tribes who don't have a migration legend. Instead, their oral tradition says that they were created here.

Prior to European invasion, Ute lands included all of Colorado, most of Utah, and northern New Mexico. As you might guess, the state of Utah is named for the Ute. Contact with the Spanish in New Mexico probably came in the early 1600s and contact with the horse was probably coeval. We

have documentation that by 1637, they had become accomplished horsemen. Governor Luis de Rosas reported from Santa Fe that year that his troops had a pitched battle with *mounted* Ute warriors, killing many of them and taking 80 prisoners. *This is the first written documentation we have of North American Indians possessing horses.* Navajo and Pueblo Indians, living in close proximity to the Spanish, most likely had the earliest horse contact. However, a Spanish law enacted in 1555 specifically states that "...no license be given for them [Indians] to have horses, except to the principal chiefs, for if the Indians become accustomed to them many will learn to ride and will want to set themselves up in time as the equals of the Spaniards." Quality of life, rather than equality with Spaniards, was probably the motivating factor, however, when a band of Utes attacked in 1659 and drove over 300 Spanish horses into their mountain stronghold along what would become the Old Spanish Trail.

Comanches, renowned

horsemen of the plains, were originally a part of this vast Ute-Shoshone Nation. According to contemporaneous Spanish documents, the Comanche split from their linguistic cousins in the early 1700s, after an altercation at an Abiquiu trade fair. Comanches enjoyed an on again, off again alliance with the Ute, and raided Taos and northern New Mexico for the next 60 years, stealing horses and capturing slaves. The Comanche then returned to Taos for rescatas where the horses and slaves were exchanged for corn, beans and squash -- often trading them back to their victims. By 1716, the Comanche and their Ute allies had stolen almost all of the horses in northern New Mexico. We will probably never know how many of these horses broke loose from their captors along what would later become the Northern Branch of the Old Spanish Trail as they were driven northward toward Ute lands.

Almost 800 Comanche were encamped at Taos for a trade fair in 1761 when the Spanish and their Ute allies attacked, killing 400 warriors and capturing 300 women and children. Only 36 Comanche warriors survived the assault. Their Ute adversaries made off with more than 1000 Comanche horses. Since it was traditional for each Comanche to travel with at least three horses, this leaves over 1000 horses loose and unaccounted for after the Taos battle. These horses could also very well be the ancestors of the Wild Horse Mesa herd. And this is only one of dozens of



This horse, named Lightening, is a prime example of a Spanish stallion.



Lightening has a long mane and tail, and a thick neck, making him a very elegant horse.



This fence is by the Old Spanish Trail.

Spirit of the Wild Horse Foundation

SPIRIT OF THE WILD HORSE FOUNDATION is located in the San Luis Valley on Wild Horse Mesa (also known as San Pedro Mesa) in Costilla County, Southern Colorado. There are approximately 175 wild Mustangs living on the mesa and another 200 Spanish horses that roam the Brownie Hills by the Rio Grande twenty miles to the west. The name "Mustang" is a corruption the Spanish word *mestena*, meaning group or herd of horses and originated from the horses brought by the Spanish during the 16th century.

Judy Barnes, director of the foundation, recently had DNA testing on some of the horses to establish their local heritage to further determine them as living descendants of the original Spanish mustangs brought along the Old Spanish Trail. DNA testing on fifteen of the horses from the mesa was done by The University of Kentucky and found that at least 66% or higher were of pre-1800s Spanish lineage. DNA testing on wild horses establishes local heritage and can prove that they are the living descendants of the original Spanish mustangs brought along the Old Spanish Trail for trade between New Mexico and California.

For more information on the HERITAGE HORSE tours go to SpiritofTheWildHorse.org or contact Judy Barnes at spirit.of.the.wild.horse@gmail.com.

similar battles where horses were stampeded during the frenzied fighting, setting them loose to form their own wild herds.

The Ute Nation enjoyed a healthy tradition of liberating Spanish horses well into the 1840s. An amusing story along these lines is provided in the *Utah Historical Quarterly*, VI (Oct. 1933). According to this article, an enterprising Ute Chief named Wálkara struck deep into northern New Mexico, rounding up a sizeable herd. He had partnered an 1839 horse raid with Peg Leg Smith, garnering almost 5,000

Blue, his band,
and the other
stallions and
their bands of the
Wild Horse Mesa
herd provide
an important
link to the living
history of the Old
Spanish Trail.

horses. Now, he and his small band of warriors drove their stolen horses along the Old Spanish Trail all the way to the Colorado River with the New Mexicans in close pursuit. Unfortunately, this newly liberated herd stubbornly refused to enter the frigid water or swim its frothy currents:

Before the Mexicans reached the Colorado crossing they were met on the trail by a tall

and slender young Indian, battle-weary, begrimed, and hanging precariously from his saddle. He and a few tired warriors were driving a small part of the stolen herd, and appeared overjoyed at meeting the Mexicans. They were a part of Wálkara's band, the Indian confessed in fair Spanish. They had shared in a bloody rebellion, at the crossing, against the cruel and tyrannical Ute chieftain. In this mutiny, the spokesman declared, he had lost three of his own best men. His little group, however, had managed to escape, and with a part of the stolen horses. Would the Spaniards please reward him for battle losses in their behalf? And, for the return to them of at least some of their horses? Generously the grateful owners cut the herd in behalf of dark-skinned Robinhood, and then turned back toward their homeland.

What they did not know was that the Indian from whom they had purchased back their horses was the very thief who had driven them to the Colorado — notorious Wálkara himself.

Horses came to define Plains Indian culture, and the Ute Nation provided the first equine pipeline outward from Spanish New Mexico. Later, in the 1700s the Comanche Nation followed suit and Spanish horses came to dominate Plains Indian culture, as well as giving the French in Louisiana ample herds.

Progeny of these Heritage Horses are found all along the Old Spanish Trail. Their breeding was generally discriminate, as even today a quarter horse mare trying to join the herd will be ostracized. In the past, First



Photo courtesy
Edward S. Curtis

Nations designated certain Elders, known as Twisted Hairs, for the important work of selective breeding of their horses and dogs. These Elders fashioned their hair in a distinctive phallic-type, twisted knot on their forehead which announced their special work and allowed them to travel safely among all First Nations. Evidence of their effectiveness can be seen in most of the First Nation horse herds where the mustang blood is clearly visible. Science has shown that DNA alone is not always a definitive reference point for Spanish bloodlines, as the “overall variation of blood types in the Colonial Spanish Horse in North America is greater than that in most other single breeds.” In addition to DNA, conformation and coloring should also be used in determining their ancestry.

Blue, his band, and the other stallions and their bands of the Wild Horse Mesa herd provide an important link to the living history of the Old Spanish Trail.

Something about seeing these mustangs still roaming free and wild sparks our imagination. They conjure visions of painted warriors, riding at breakneck speed, driving thousands of horses while pursued by a Spanish army. Barren dust from their frenzied flight still marks their course. These ancient trails stitched the arid deserts, grassy plains and rocky mountains of the plains along with the sun-washed shores of the Pacific Ocean into one, great American nation. ♦

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Wákara and the Western Utes on the Old Spanish Trail

By Sondra G. Jones

PRESENTED AT THE OLD SPANISH TRAIL
CONFERENCE, 2019 / CEDAR CITY, UT

Wákara — also known as Walkara or Walker — was the dominant Native American presence on the western half of the Old Spanish Trail from the mid-1830s to 1855. With his home base in central Utah, he and his band of raiding adventurers ranged hundreds of miles every season, raiding and trading for Paiute captives, and then selling them to traveling Mexican traders and later Latter-day Saint pioneers in Utah. He also stole large numbers of horses in southern California (and sometimes from settlers and other Indian raiders along the way), as well as extorting tolls, bribes, and gifts from any travelers he encountered on “his” trail.

His exploits as a Ute raiding and trading chief are the best known and most flamboyant on the Old Spanish Trail, but he was hardly the first Ute to take advantage of the trail, nor the last. Many historians date the origins of the Old Spanish Trail from 1829 because this was

when Mexicans and Americans first traveled its entire length. However, Spanish and Mexican traders had been using the eastern half of the trail since at least 1777, and by 1800 central Utah had become a significant destination. By the early 1800s Spanish traders were regularly conducting business with Timpanogos Utes in Utah Valley (Lake Utes or *Come Pescados*). Until Jedediah Smith blazed the western half of the Trail from central Utah to Southern California, central Utah *was* where the well-used Trail led.

A contraband trade with southern Ute bands and Comanches along the northern border of New Spain had flourished since the early 1700s, and was an important — if illegal — commerce for traders on this northern frontier (northern New Mexico and southwestern Colorado). Despite laws against trading guns to the Indians, the trade was profitable enough for more than a few hardy souls to flout the laws. This even included the guides and interpreters who led Fathers Dominguez and Escalante deep into northern and western Ute country in 1776. When the explorers insisted on continuing onward, on a trail that

led through what was then the dangerous Yamparika Comanche country (northwestern Colorado and the Uintah Basin), out came the guns and ammunition the interpreter-guides had hidden among their baggage for the purpose of surreptitiously trading with the Utes.

Spanish officials tried to control or interdict the illicit trade, but were generally unsuccessful. The 1765 expedition of Juan de Rivera and 1776 explorations of Fathers Dominguez and Escalante opened new routes for Spanish traders, allowing them to push into the previously unknown Ute country in western Colorado and central Utah. These routes would become the eastern portions of the Spanish Trade Trail — and opportunistic traders were quick to exploit it.

As were the Utes, for they were also smart and opportunistic.

The southern Utes had long understood the value of trading with the Spanish settlers and their Pueblo Indian neighbors. This commerce not only brought them the textiles and cultivated foods they could not make or grow themselves, but now brought them the horses and weapons they needed to hunt

more effectively and better protect themselves from aggressive enemies who were also trading for horses and weapons. They also wanted other luxury goods carried by the traders including metal tools, pots, beads, and “frufraws” for their women. Weather and geography pretty much determined where and when the traders would appear with their commodity-laden mule trains, and Ute bands soon began to shift their own nomadic circuits so they could meet them.

By 1800 traders were coming on a predictable annual schedule into Ute country, and the expectant Utes waited for the mule trains to appear with their own accumulated trade goods, including tanned hides, a few pelts, salt, jerked meat,

and occasionally Indian captives (usually women and children). It is no coincidence that between the 1780s and 1810, the number of “Yuta” slaves baptized in what is today New Mexico, shot up. By Yuta, the record keepers meant both Ute and especially Paiute children. The trade goods might also include a few fur pelts, but what the Spanish traders really wanted, especially in central Utah, were captive women and children. The trade in Indian slaves was lucrative because labor was in high demand in frontier Spanish settlements — and slaves were about the only thing the Western Utes had that was valuable enough to lure Spanish traders that far from home. Unlike the southern Colorado Utes, Western Utes did not produce

large numbers of beautifully tanned buckskins (for which they were famous), nor did most Utes want to bother doing large-scale trapping. (This was why Mexican, American, and British fur traders did their own trapping, giving rise to the mountain man and rendezvous culture.)

We know some of this because of early Spanish court records. For example, around 1803 Manuel Mestas had all of his horses and mules stolen by Comanche/Shoshone raiders in northwestern Colorado. Believing the thieves were Timpanogos Utes, he returned the following year with a company of armed men. He went to Utah Valley where he found some of his horses mixed in with the rest of a large herd of Ute horses. Although the Utes argued

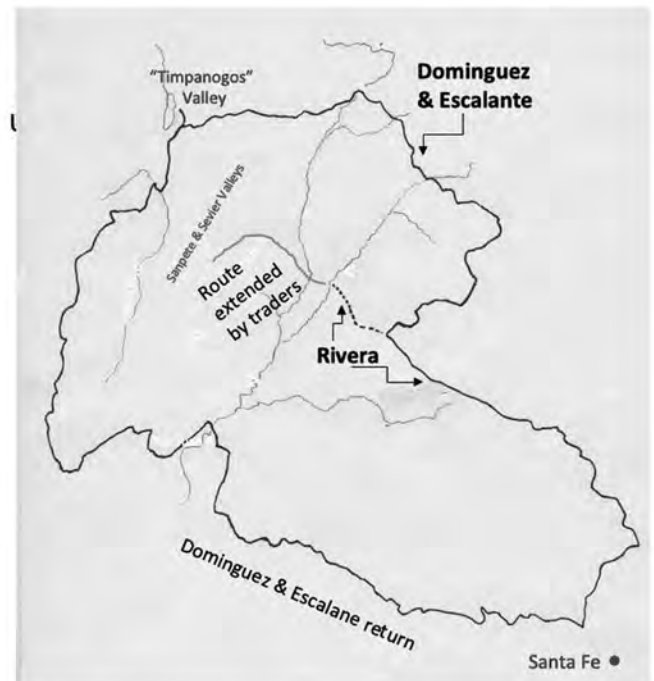


Father Dominguez and Timpanogos Ute guide, by Keith Eddington

Juan de Rivera seeking trade and source of silver - 1765

Fathers Dominguez & Escalante – 1776

Seeking a route to Monterrey, California
(*Indian Guide: Silvestre, a Timpanogos Ute*)



MAP: The exploration of the West by Jedidiah Smith, map compiled by Maximilian Dörbbecker. Creative commons, from Wikipedia article, "Jedidiah Smith"

MAP: U.S. Park Service, National Historic Trails (15th), available online.



Jedidiah Smith blazed the western half of the Spanish Trade Trail in 1826, again in 1827



Jedidiah Smith, drawn by a friend, from memory, after his death in 1831.

Note to Editor: This image appears all over the internet and in his various biographies, and is available in several different archives, and appears in most biographies. Don't believe there is any kind of copyright or permission-required.

First trek to CA: 1826-1827
Second trek to CA: 1827-1828



Antonio Armijo blazed southern trail 1829-1830

Dec. 6, 129 Crossing of the Fathers

This crossing will become known as the "Ute Crossing" -- new route for Utes traveling to the Navajo and Hopi

the horses should belong to them because they had stolen them from the Comanche and were fair plunder — Mestas repossessed the horses at gunpoint and headed home. But, he lost the herd again when they were stolen in south-central Colorado — this time, by Kiowa raiders.

Ten years later another group of Spanish traders went to Utah Valley, this time hoping to trade for furs. The news of an abundance of beaver in the Rocky Mountains had recently triggered a fur rush, and they wanted get a jump on the Ute market. But the Timpanogos Utes didn't have furs to trade, they had *captives* — and that was the only thing they wanted to trade, as they had done "on other occasions." When the Spanish traders (purportedly

refused, Utes attacked the camp and killed (and probably stole) some of their horses and mules. The traders promptly packed up and hightailed it south into Sanpete Valley where they encountered Sanpitch Utes. When they tried to trade with them, they were chased off with threats of angry violence (the unmounted and poorly armed Sanpitch may have become targets of slave traders). The luckless traders continued southeast along the trail to the Green River crossing, where they encountered another band of Utes waiting to trade. Chief Guasache offered the Spaniards a dozen captives. Fearing a repeat of the Utah Valley debacle, they agreed to the exchange. Unfortunately, after they arrived home and tried to sell their slaves,

they were promptly arrested for illegally trading with the Indians. Or at least, this was the story they told the judge to justify why they had these illegal Indian captives.

Archaeological evidence also exists to substantiate that Spanish traders were regularly traveling up what would become the eastern half of the Old Spanish Trail, as well as along other central Utah cutoffs and side trips such as those to Utah Valley, Fish Lake, and Grass Valley.

Then in 1826, fur-trapper Jedidiah Smith blazed a connecting route from central Utah to southern California, followed by another trek to California in 1827. Two years later (1829-1830), Juan Antonio Armijo explored a southern route from Santa Fe through northern

Arizona and southern Utah, crossing the Colorado at Crossing of the Fathers. This crossing was a well-known access point between northern Arizona and southern Utah; it was already becoming known as Ute Crossing because the Utes — now in possession of horses — were beginning to use it to head south to trade in Navajo and Hopi country. By the mid-1800s, and after Southern Paiutes led Utah pioneers like Jacob Hamblin along the route, it became known as Mormon Crossing.

Within a few years an increasing number of traders, with increasingly large caravans of pack mules and sheep herds, were ranging the full length of the Old Spanish Trails and their various cutoffs.

The full Spanish Trail soon became both a blessing and a curse to the Utes through whose land it wound. Disadvantages included damage to and appropriation of resources along the trail — especially after the number and size of caravans increased. It was especially disastrous for the Paiutes, who were not only displaced from important springs and food resources, but quickly become easy prey — by raid or extortion — of certain predatory Ute bands as well.

However, at first the disadvantages seemed to be offset by the benefits of having access to desirable commodities. Utes — as well as Paiutes — took

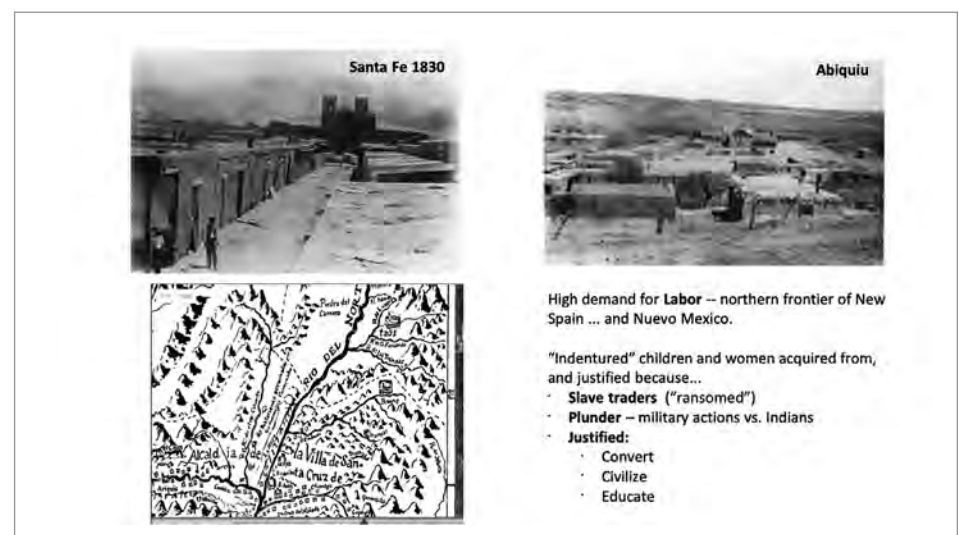
advantage of direct trade, but also begged or demanded gifts or simply stole livestock, justifying this as a fair toll because the route went through their territory and the travelers and their stock were using (and abusing) their natural resources. Paiutes exploited the trail by scavenging through trash discarded by travelers or traders along the Trail.

One of the most opportunistic and successful Utes during the 1830s and especially during the 1840s was the entrepreneurial Wákara. More than any other western Ute leader, he was able to parlay the Old Spanish Trail into his own ticket to prosperity.

Wákara was the son of an active Timpanogos Ute slave trader whose kinsmen summer-camped in Utah Valley, near the southern mountains. Wákara's father had engaged in regular slave trading with a prominent Mexican slave trader named Pedro León Luján. Don Pedro León was a respected

member of his Abiquíu (New Mexico) community, an Indian fighter and a commander in the local Mexican militia where he fought against the Navajo and Apache — but never against the Utes. Even during times of Ute unrest he successfully made his fortune with annual treks through Ute country into central Utah to trade for Paiute captives.

During a spate of particularly violent Timpanogos politics, members of a rival faction assassinated Wákara's father. In return, Wákara and his kin-brother, Arapeen, took bloody revenge on the perpetrators and then made a hasty retreat into Sanpete and Sevier Valleys. It was a good move because — as we've noted — this was the terminus of the Spanish Trade Trail until 1829. Even after the route was blazed southwest to California, some Mexican traders, like Don Pedro León, came only as far as the Sanpete and Sevier valleys.



PHOTOS: Santa Fe, New Mexico, c. 1880 (McNitt Collection, New Mexico State Archives); Abiquíu, New Mexico, c. 1870 (New Mexico State Archives) MAP: Excerpt from a 1778 map of the Upper Rio Grande settlements, drawn by Bernardo de Miera y Pacheco, mapmaker for Dominguez and Escalante. Note location of Abiquíu (Abiquíu).



Issues:

Poverty
Birth rate
Inability to raise all children
Orphans
Need for trade goods
Horses – Guns – metal tools
Textiles – agricultural foods



- **Stealing children**
- **Coercing:** Trading at the point of a gun
- **Justifying:** “They will have a better life”

Ultimately, Wákara would develop a wide-ranging “subsistence” circuit. During the summer he camped along the Spanish Trade Trail, demanding gifts and tribute from passing travelers, stealing or trading with Southern Paiutes for Paiute children and women, and eventually camping in Sanpete or Sevier valleys where he could rendezvous with Mexican slave traders like Don Pedro León.

In the late fall he led his band southwest into Southern California where he stole large numbers of horses to drive back up the Spanish Trail, usually arriving sometime in the spring when he could put them to pasture near Utah during the annual fish festival, before exchanging them within the other bands or driving them further north or east to

emigrant outfitting posts. Some evidence exists that he may have occasionally added a bison hunt to his extended itinerary, before returning to south-central Utah to gather up more captives and collect more fair-use tolls.

The Indian slave trade had long been a major aspect of trade on the Old Spanish Trail, and Wákara took full advantage of it. There was a high demand for domestic and field labor in the settlements of the Upper Rio Grande as well as in the increasingly important textile manufacturing business. Not that they called them slaves — slavery was illegal in Spanish, Mexican, and (most) western American territories. The accepted fiction was that these native captives were “indentured servants” or “adopted foster children” who were supposed to serve for a set

period of time (which Hispanic masters often forgot to tell their captives). During this time they worked to pay off the cost of their “ransom” from their Indian captors. Catholic fathers — and later Latter-day Saint officials in Utah — also justified purchasing and then adopting or indenturing Indian children as the best means to convert them to Christianity and assimilate them into their ideas of western civilization.

This didn’t bother either the Spanish or American settlers, because indenturing and bonded servitude had long been an accepted system of labor in Europe, New Spain, and colonial America. Spain had incorporated a variety of feudalistic systems to control native labor and colonize its possessions in the New World; and, in England’s American colonies, nearly 75% of all immigrants had

come as indentured servants (or convict labor) during their first hundred years — after which black slavery replaced most indenturing. Nor did the practice of indenturing unprotected children end there--the practice of selling, indenturing, apprenticing, or hiring out orphaned or indigent children remained a common practice in Britain and the United States well into the twentieth century. So the practice in the American Southwest — New Mexico and even Utah — was not a cultural anomaly. Neither was the idea of buying and selling Indian captives a problem in the United States where it was still legal to buy or sell Black African slaves, even in Utah Territory.

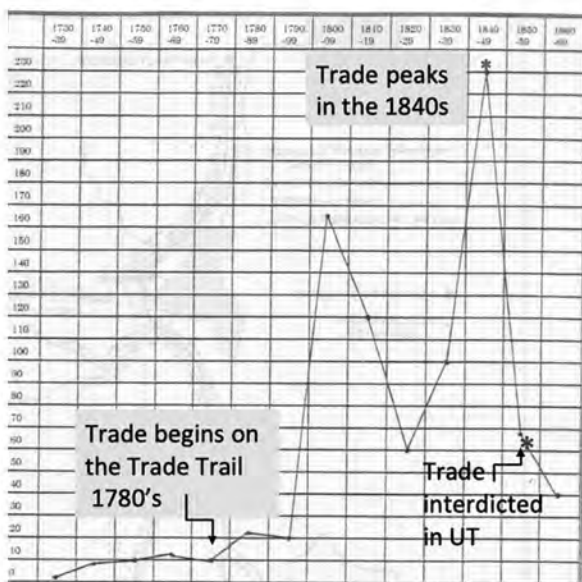
Wákara, his father before him, and kinsmen like Arapeen, Ammon, or Sanpitch, all become

willing participants in the Indian slave trade. They stole or extorted Paiute children from their parents, or traded with local Paiutes for children they acquired from even more distant bands. And sometimes parents or relatives simply gave away children they couldn't take care of. Life was hard in the Great Basin. Birth control was unavailable, and parents couldn't always care for all of their children. Sometimes extra or unwanted children were even left to die. So, selling children to others — whether to other Paiutes, Utes, or non-Indian traders — offered a chance for survival for both the child and the family that sold them. Latter-day Saint pioneer Jacob Hamblin described weeping Paiute parents who had been forced to sell their children

to other *Paiutes*, because they had nothing with which to feed them. The Paiute purchasers wanted them to trade with the Utes — for the profits they brought and to preserve their own children.

However, neither the slave trade nor bonded servitude was anything more than horrific. And Wákara — and the other Ute slave-traders — were hardly bastions of charity and kindness. Wákara's merchandise were just that — merchandise. None of the traders appear to have cared about their captives except for the profit they could make from them. They were in it for the trade goods they could acquire, as were the Mexican traders who sold them in California or New Mexico. Indian slave trading was a bloody, awful commerce.

Indian Captives Traded in Spanish/Mexican Frontier (New Mexico)



Paiute and Goshute children were the target of traders ... and settlers



- Mexican traders arrive at predictable times and locations
- American trappers and traders as trade partners and partners in "crime"
- Mormon settlers: a new source of commodities

Journals, diaries, and court records are replete with descriptions of the abusive treatment of these captives. For example, Brigham Young testified in 1852 that,

"Indian Walker has been in the habit for years of trafficking in Indians. He has never been here with his Band, without having a quantity of Indian children, as slaves. He offers them for sale, and when he has an offer that satisfies him in the price he sells them; and when he cannot get what he thinks they are worth, he says he will take them to the Navaho Indians or Spaniards, and sell them, or kill hem, which I understand he frequently does. "I have seen Walkers slaves so emaciated, they were not able to stand upon their feet. He is in the habit of tying them out from their camps at night, naked and destitute of food unless it is so cold, he apprehends they will freeze to death. In that case he will give them something to sleep on, lest he should lose them. This is the general character of the Utah Indians."

Ute slave traders sometimes insisted traders or settlers buy their captives — or else — just as they had in 1813. For example, in 1847 Charlie Decker saved the life of a Shoshone war captive by giving a rifle to a band of Utes that was torturing her to death. In another instance, Arapeen dashed a young child's head on

a rock when settlers refused to buy her. One of Don Pedro León's trader's also explained how they had been forced to trade. On one occasion, Arapeen and his men had ridden into their camp, tossed some children onto the ground, and taken five of their horses. He told the Mexicans that if they "had a mood to trade he would trade and if he had not, he would trade any how." He also related how several Utes had stolen and eaten some of their horses, and when confronted, gave them a couple of children in payment.

However, the slave trade came to an abrupt end in 1852 after Don Pedro León and his companions were arrested, tried, their slaves and property confiscated, and they were expelled from the territory. Within a few weeks the Utah legislature had passed a new law forbidding Indian slavery . . . but allowing the *purchase* of Indian children into indentures.

The 1851 trial sent a chilling message to all other Mexican traders: Mexican trade on the Old Spanish trail was henceforth to cease. Period.

Of course this was a problem for Wákara, who derived a significant amount wealth from the Mexican trade. The immediate response by Wákara and other Ute raiders was anger and frustration that the door had been slammed shut on their lucrative trade. While they could still sell a few children to Latter-day Saint settlers, they bought fewer and paid less. Their anger exploded during the brief

but violent "Walker War" — an uprising led primarily by Arapeen and other Utes while Wákara wintered among the Hopi — although it would be Wákara as the Western Ute "talker" and perceived war chief, who would negotiate a gift-rich peace the following spring.

Of course Wákara was an enterprising man, and he had a diverse portfolio. Slave trading was not his only business. Another source of goods lay in exploiting the trail itself. By the 1830s, the old tradition of friendly gift exchange with visitors and travelers had morphed into an aggressive expectation of substantial gifts. These were essentially use-fee tolls. Traders and explorers had always carried a large number of Indian trade goods when they passed through Indian territory, and by the 1830s, their memoirs, letters, and journals are replete with examples of Utes demanding — or at best, *expecting* — gifts or tribute, in order to trap in, or travel across their country. Wákara became especially adept at manipulating the old gift-giving racket.

In the 1830s William Hamilton described how Utes attacked his party when they refused to "pay" for the privilege of being in their country. In 1844, John C. Frémont encountered Wákara and described how the chief and his band were headed toward the "Spanish trail to levy their usual tribute upon the great California caravans." He also described how

Horse Raids in Southern California

- Wákara: the “Greatest Horse Thief”
- ...and his band of raiders, the *Los Chagaunosos*
- Begins as an alliance with old mountain men
- Evolves into Ute enterprise



“They conduct their depredations with form and under the color of trade and toll for passing through their country.” In 1848 George Brewerton and Kit Carson encountered Wákara and his band, again on their way to levy “their yearly tribute” on the Spanish trade caravans, a toll “which the tribe exact as the price of a safe-conduct through their country.” About the same time, Gwinn Harris Heap described how Utes in Colorado also harassed them and demanded “use fees” for free passage. Even in the mid-1850s Utes continued to demand tribute. The former mountain man Dick Wootton expected he would have to pay for “formal permission to go through [Ute] country,” but the Uncompahgre Utes in Colorado tried to *raid* his herd of sheep first, before finally approaching him to demand several hundred

pounds of flour, ammunition, and other goods for the right to pass unmolested.

Wákara also allied himself with some of the more larcenous American fur traders, especially the notorious Tom “Peg-Leg” Smith. Peg-Leg Smith had been crippled in 1827 during a fight with Indians in North Park, Colorado. After he amputated his foot (with the help of a companion), he was doctored by Utes through the winter in Uintah Basin. Apparently, having a peg-leg did not slow him down, and he continued to trap and trade furs. Following Jed Smith’s example, he took his furs to Southern California in 1829; however, he disliked the prices paid, and ended up stealing several hundred horses and herding them back up the newly blazed Spanish Trail. These he sold for a good profit in Taos.

Five years later, he made the trip to southern California again, this time with his friends Jim Beckwourth and Wákara, along with a band of Timpanogos and Sanpitch Ute raiders.

Once again the Californians were reluctant to pay what the traders felt was a reasonable price for their furs and Indian captives so, while Smith and Beckwourth remained in town dickering, Wákara and his men rounded up some 600 head of horses and headed back along the Trail. Smith and Beckwourth left shortly thereafter — accessories after the fact if not direct collaborators — and rejoined the successful Utes. Smith and Beckwourth sold their share of the horses at Bent’s Fort, a trading establishment recently set up on the Santa Fe Trail.

In 1839, Wákara and a band of 150 Utes again joined Peg-

Leg Smith, Beckwourth, and four other Americans, for another California raid. Beckwourth later claimed he scouted ranches while Wákara, Peg-Leg, and the others pulled off the largest horse raid ever seen in southern California. They struck nearly every major rancho and purportedly stole as many as five thousand horses. After the main body of men and horses negotiated Cajón Pass and continued up the Spanish Trail, Wákara and some of his Utes remained hidden at a spring where they knew their pursuers would stop to rest. Then, while the Mexicans slept, the Utes drove off their horses as well.

Both the mountain men and Wákara's Utes were discovering new ways to profit from the Old Spanish Trail. This was especially true after the fur market collapsed in 1840, when large-scale horse-stealing by former trappers and Indians became endemic — especially by Utes, but also by some independent Paiutes and Mohave as well. Indeed, by one report, Wákara even stole horses from other Indian horse thieves along the trail. By 1850 these raiders had become notorious figures in southern California — and Wákara and his horse-stealing Utes were especially prominent.

It would be after the 1839 escape that Wákara and his Ute raiders began to conduct their own raids in southern California. From 1840 through the early 1850s, Wákara and his band grew infamous in California as the *Los*

Chaguanosos. He led annual winter raids in California, stealing horses from rancheros and missions, including San Luis Obispo and San Miguel missions, and then driving them back along the Old Spanish Trail. Wákara and his men, as well as other Indians and a diverse collection of American horse thieves, would devastate California's southern ranches and missions well into the 1850s, and the Utes remained prominent in tales of Old California, second only to the notorious Mexican bandit, Joaquín Murrieta.

Wákara died in January 1855, less than a year after he had negotiated the end of the Walker War. However, his legacy of using the trail lived on. Beginning in 1865, another displaced Timpanogos Ute named Black Hawk led Timpanogos, Sanpitch, and Sheberetch Utes in a years' long raiding war against central Utah settlements, stealing cattle and driving them eastward on the Old Spanish Trail. From Castle Valley he drove them either south along the well-worn trail to sell to the American military in Santa Fe, or headed north to exchange cattle for the latest war-surplus weapons at Fort Bridger.

But that is another story.

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Ultimately, it would be the raid-chief, Wákara, who came to epitomize the way in which all the Utes along the trail, but — especially the Western Utes —

were able to adapt the trade route to their own benefit. Thanks to the Spanish Trail bringing traders and trade goods, the once timid and poverty-stricken Western Utes of Escalante's 1776 journal, had by 1800 become aggressive, well-armed, and horse-rich equestrians. Especially under Wákara's lead, these Utes grew prosperous by supplementing their traditional hunting, gathering, and fishing, by expecting — or demanding — gifts from travelers and occasionally stealing livestock, even as they also used the Trail to facilitate profitable forays into large-scale slave trading and horse stealing.

It would be for this flamboyant exploitation of the Old Spanish Trail that Wákara would best be remembered. ♦

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*People* and the award-winning *Don Pedro Leon Lujan: The attack against Indian Slavery and Mexican Traders in Utah*.



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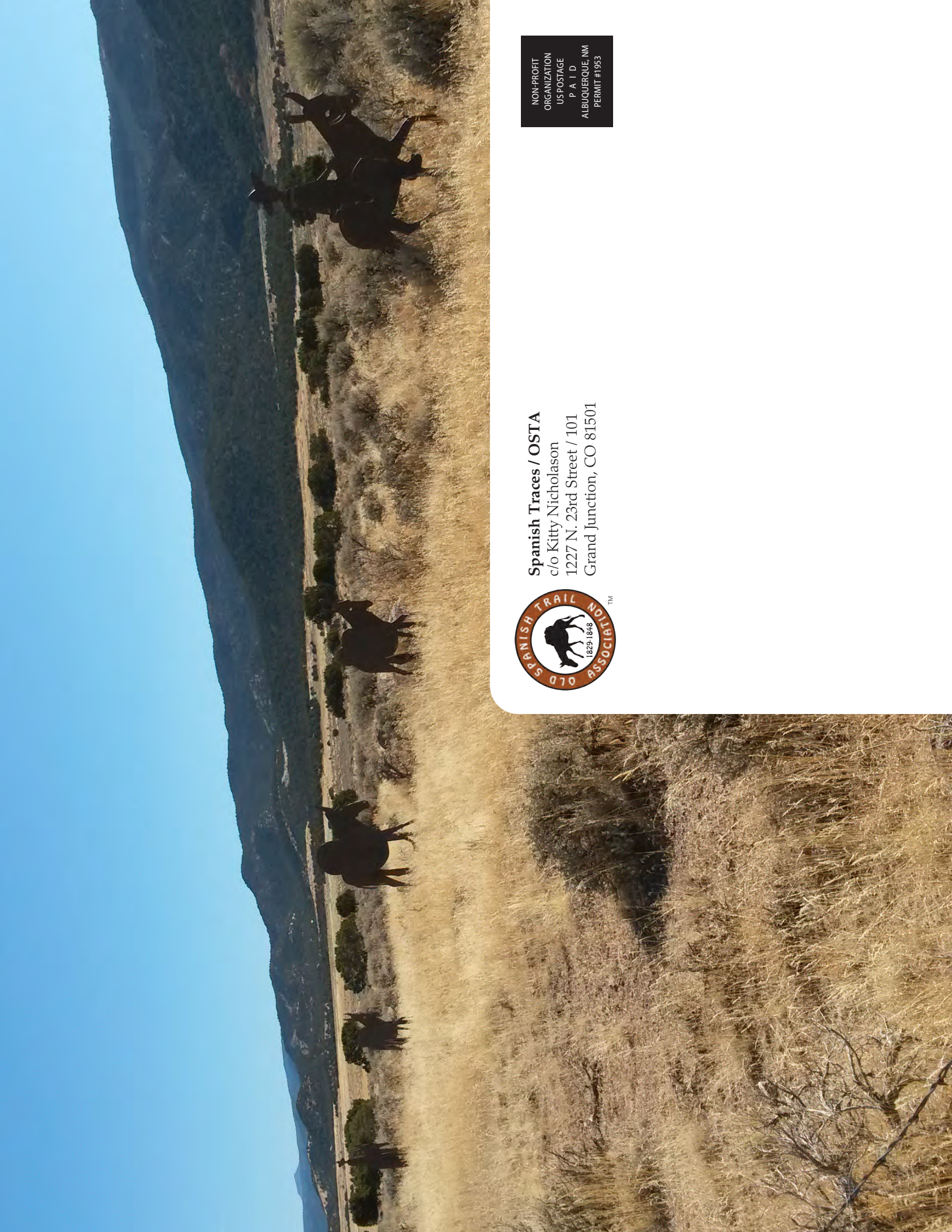
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Mark Franklin set up an impressive display of books at the OSTA Annual Conference in Utah. He and Lorraine Carpenter look through a book on the Father Garces expedition, while Karleen Kalar peruses "The Southern Utes: A Tribal History" by James Jefferson, Robert W. Delaney, and Gregory C. Thompson.

The very successful sales of OSTA books at the conference was one of the best, earning \$2,317.49.



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