

SPANISH TRACES

VOLUME 28 ♦ NO 1 ♦ SPRING 2022





ESCAPE EXPLORE *EXPERIENCE!*

SAVE THE DATE

for the 2022 OSTA Conference to be held
in Page, Arizona, October 20-23, 2022.

Page borders the Navajo Nation and is located next to Lake Powell, the Colorado River and a network of historic routes that included travel by Dominguez-Escalante in 1776 and Antonio Armijo in 1829. This is your chance experience the unique beauty of this historic landscape and network with friends – old and new. The venue will be at the beautiful Santa Fe style Courtyard Marriott Conference Center.

*Come help us celebrate the special 20 Year Anniversary of the
Old Spanish National Historic Trail.*

Registration is expected to open June 1.



We encourage you to join OSTA, help in trail preservation, and increase appreciation of the multicultural heritage of the American Southwest.

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 Trail (OST), Old Spanish National Historic Trail (OSNHT) and closely related historic routes.

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 Executive Director (Lynn Brittner, ostamgr@gmail.com).

CONTENTS

SPRING 2022

- 2 Los Senderos | Executive Director
- 4 President's Perspective | OSTA President
- 5 A Look Back | *Spanish Traces*
- 6 Chapter Report | Agua Mansa
- 7 Chapter Report | North Branch
- 9 Chapter Report | Descendants & Travelers of the Trail
- 11 OSTA Updates
- 12 Featured Historic Site: San Miguel Chapel
- 18 Trail Tales | The Disappearing Old Spanish Trail
- 21 Historic Inscriptions on the Spanish Trail in Utah
- 25 The Trail Through Native Lands
- 28 North Branch of the Old Spanish Trail
- 38 Conference Itinerary & Registration
- 44 OSTA Board | Chapter Presidents

ON THE COVER

Buckskin Gulch, Utah

Photo by George Hardeen

A potential field trip during the OSTA Conference.



SPANISH TRACES CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

We would love to receive your comments, suggestions, photos, and ideas for future issues. The deadline for submissions for the Fall 2022 issue is **July 1, 2022**. Send to Lynn Brittner, ostamgr@gmail.com.



LOS SENDEROS

Students on the Trail

By Lynn Brittner, Executive Director

The chapters of the Old Spanish Trail Association were created shortly after 1994, with the concept to organize a chapter in each county through which the trail passed. Today, there are ten chapters, including three in California. Along the 2,700 miles of the rural and braided trail, chapter members have been using their talents to help visitors find the route and understand its stories. Some members have worked on exhibits, written handouts or marked and mapped the trail routes. Others have developed interpretative presentations or focused on the protection of key trail sites and segments through a stewardship program, which sometimes trains interns. Many have given tours and talks to visitors and local groups.

Chapters have done much to make the trail a resource valuable to many, but especially to school groups. Field trips along the Old Spanish Trail have allowed students to better understand the pathways of emigration for American Indians, settlers, and traders throughout the early to late nineteenth century. The educational programs that have taken place throughout the years and throughout the trail have helped to shape the memories of students who participated in these field trips.

Frequently, when we reflect on our past school experiences, many of us remember the times when we went on a field trip. Field trips provide

students with a variety of new encounters in new environments, and allows them to explore in a way that is utterly different from traditional classroom learning. We know that students who have been exposed to many different educational experiences do better in school. Outdoor learning, for instance, offers massive benefits to students. It can help de-stress, boost and improve concentration, increase academic performance and personal development, as well as bring historical topics to life.

This was the intent of our chapter members who were able to get students out of the classroom and on to the trail. They helped students access tools and environments that are not available in a classroom to better solve the problems they see in the world around them. Thanks to you all who created these multisensory learning experiences and created enthusiasm during your Old Spanish Trail trips. As the pandemic is winding down, I hope we can work together to continue these experiences. Hosting school field trips and school visits are an important tool for meeting our goals of education!

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Lynn Brittner". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Lynn" and last name "Brittner" clearly visible.

Clockwise: 1. Young students at Historic Fort Uncompahgre on the Old Spanish Trail Interpretive Center. 2. Nelson Miller, Director at Large/Conference and Events, near the OST, Desert Discovery Museum. 3. Al Matheson, Utah Director, with students near the OST in Washington County. 4. Nicole Marie Dominguez, Nevada President, with her students, north of Las Vegas along the Trail.





PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

By Conchita Marusich, *President*
Old Spanish Trail Association

Dear OSTA members,
Spring has arrived here in Napa, California, and with it brings the hope for renewal and new beginnings. Likewise with the Old Spanish Trail Association (OSTA), we are experiencing an excitement and surge in energy as we approach our 20th anniversary celebration of becoming the Old Spanish National Historic Trail in 2002. While we search for new ways to take us into the future, we recognize how much we owe to those who were the pioneers in our early days of OSTA.

Our members are coming up with some wonderful ideas to celebrate our first 20 years as a national historic trail. Chris Miller, OSTA board member and Executive Director of Fort Uncompahgre Interpretative Center in Delta, Colorado, is helping to organize, "Where the West Comes Alive" plein air painting and photography workshops. In partnership with the Museum of the West and the Ute Museum, these workshops will take place on the Old Spanish Trail from June to August and culminate in an art show and sale in September. As an avid photographer, I am very tempted to travel to Colorado to take one of these workshops on the trail.

Additionally, members of the Descendants & Travelers of the Trail Chapter, led by chapter president, Deborah Trujillo Terracino, are currently working on a special 20th Anniversary edition book highlighting the stories of their ancestors who traveled the Old Spanish Trail. The book will include profiles currently showcased on the OSTA website as well as new profiles, additional

photos, articles and more information about the chapter descendants. This special edition will be a wonderful way for the descendants to honor their ancestors through sharing the adventures and challenges they experienced traveling over the Old Spanish Trail.

Another important OSTA event to mark on your calendar is the OSTA conference that will take place on October 20–23, 2022 in Page, Arizona, surrounded by the scenic beauty of red rock canyons and spectacular vistas. The 20th anniversary celebration will be one of the main themes of the conference. Paul Ostapuk and his tireless conference committee have been busy lining up interesting speakers, field trips, entertainment events, and much more. I urge all of you to attend this exciting conference to learn more about the Old Spanish Trail and the history behind our national historic trail.

We encourage you all to think of your own ways to contribute to OSTA's 20th anniversary. We want you to have fun and help us celebrate this important part of OSTA's history. Please brainstorm with your chapter and let your creativity flow. We look forward to hearing about your wonderful ideas as they start to germinate and grow into stories and events. We will keep you posted about the 20th anniversary celebration as it becomes more finalized.

See you on the Trail,

- Conchita Marusich

SPANISH TRACES 25 YEARS AGO



By Paul Ostapuk

The big news reported in the 1997 spring issue of *Spanish Traces* was that Congress passed a major parks bill that contained a directive to the National Park Service (Section 402) to study the Old Spanish Trail. Sen. Ben Nighthorse Campbell (R-Colorado) whose home in Ignacio, Colorado, lies near the Spanish Trail, introduced the bill with Rep. Joel Hefley (R-Colorado).

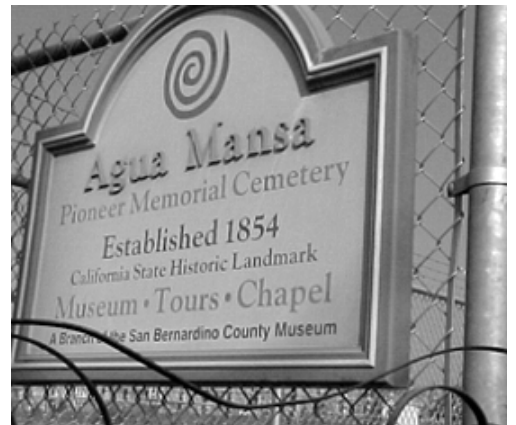
President Bill Clinton signed that bill into law on November 12, 1996. Section 402 directed the NPS to report to Congress within three years on the Spanish Trail's eligibility as a National Historic Trail.

Eligibility centered on three basic criteria:

1. The trail must have been established by historic use and be historically significant, and its location known.
2. It must be of national significance by its influence on American culture.
3. It must possess well-preserved sites for historic interpretation.

The other big news in that spring issue was that OSTA President Ron Kessler announced his goal to establish a local chapter in each of the twenty-eight counties crossed by the Old Spanish Trail.

AGUA MANSA



By Nancy Melendez, Vice President

Agua Mansa Chapter has submitted two applications for site certification by the National Park Service on the Trujillo Adobe and the Agua Mansa Cemetery. NPS had already designated these properties as sites of “high potential.” Our chapter formed relationships with the owners of each property through collaboration and offering programming and activities at the Trujillo Adobe and the Agua Mansa Cemetery that would tell the story of the Old Spanish Trail. Thanks to these working relationships, the property owners of the Trujillo Adobe and the Agua Mansa Pioneer Cemetery completed the site certification applications, which now rest with the National Park Service. Agua Mansa Chapter eagerly awaits word from NPS!



Clockwise: 1. Trujillo Adobe, Riverside, California, c. 1909. 2. Agua Mansa Cemetery grounds, Colton, California. 3. Sculpture honoring Lorenzo Trujillo at Agua Mansa Cemetery, with descendants Darlene Trujillo Elliot and Nancy Melendez, 2016. 4. Trujillo Adobe, c. 1990. Photos courtesy of author.

NORTH BRANCH

By Chris Miller

The North Branch is somewhat at variance with the concept of the Old Spanish Trail being a commercial caravan route to California between 1829 and 1848. The trail went through Ute Country along the Continental Divide. Cochetopa pass is a 10,067-foot mountain pass with rich human history. It connects the San Luis Valley and the Gunnison Valley, and the towns of Saguache and Gunnison. There is another pass a few miles north called North Cochetopa Pass (or simply, North Pass). North Pass is located on the main vehicle route along State Highway 114, and slightly lower in elevation.

The Interpretive Association of Western Colorado (IAWC) is working with the Gunnison National Forest to create and install Old Spanish Trail interpretive signs along Hwy 114 heading north from Saguache and the San Luis Valley.

One sign board will be located along Highway 114 on North Pass. The second interpretive sign board will be located on Cochetopa Pass. The third sign will be located at the Gunnison Ranger District Office located in Gunnison. The Interpretive Association has been working with Coreen Donnelly, NPS, Santa Fe, New Mexico, to create a map that identifies the trail alignment through this area from Saguache to Montrose and onto Fort Uncompahgre, located in Delta, Colorado. OST North Branch is still working on the OST CDOT sign plan for Montrose, Delta and Mesa County. NPS had to resubmit a new plan with additional signs.

There are also some exciting events happening this year at Fort Uncompahgre, which operated between 1829 and 1844, when this area was Mexico. In celebration of the upcoming 20th



First Artist Camp at Fort Uncompahgre 1995, Ute Indians and Artist.



Top to bottom: 1. Trading at Fort Uncompahgre 1832 by Alfred Rodriguez 2. Alfred Rodriguez painting Trading at Fort Uncompahgre 3. New signage for Fort Uncompahgre Interpretive Center

Trail Anniversary, on December 4, 2022, Fort Uncompahgre will be hosting two “Back to the Trail” field trips, on Saturday, April 30 and October 1. The field trips will be hosted by Jon Horn of Alpine Archeology Consultants, who were hired by BLM and Forest Service to do most of the OST Trail survey throughout Colorado. The field trips are free to the general public.

Fort Uncompahgre has also teamed up with the Ute Indian Museum and the Museum of the Mountain West. The three museums and a private parcel located along the Uncompahgre River will host a Plein Air Painting & Photography Workshop on the Old Spanish Trail, June, July, and August, with an Art Show & Sale in September.

The Fort also continues to host over 2,200 fourth graders annually on school tours learning about the history of the trader and trapper period along the Old Spanish Trail.



DESCENDANTS & TRAVELERS OF THE TRAIL

By Cecelia Peña, Vice President

Descendants and Travelers of the Trail Chapter

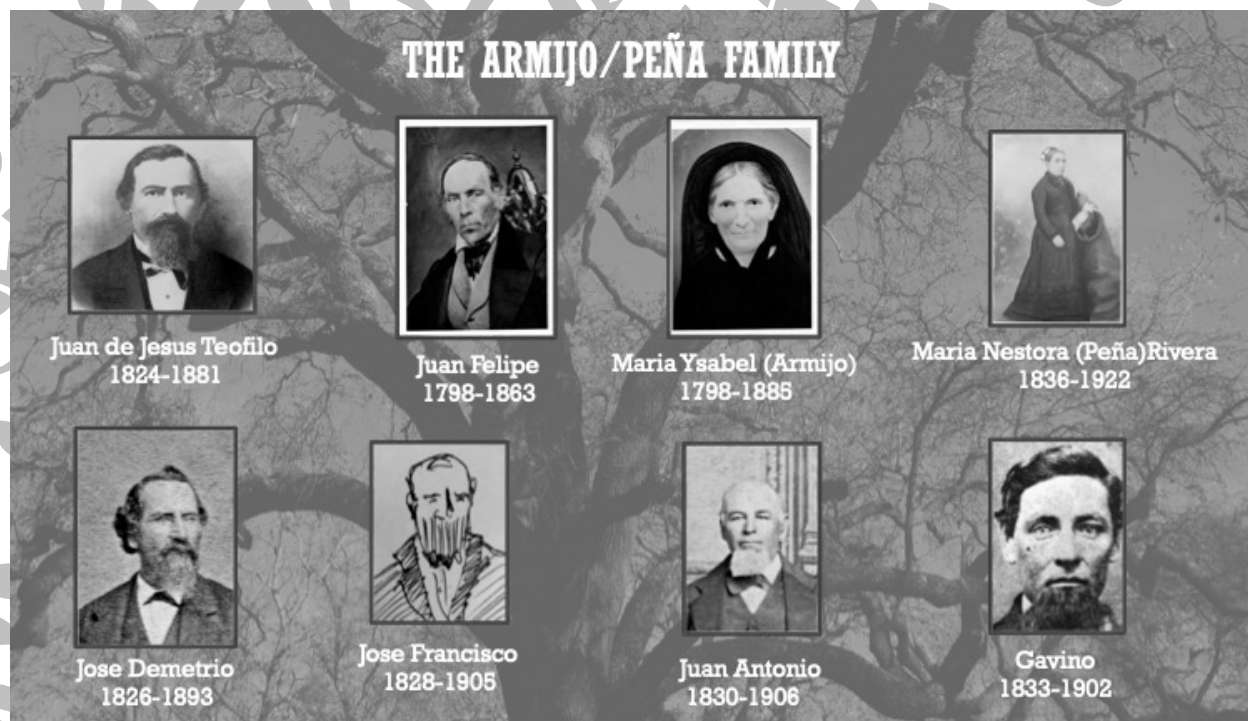
Our Descendants Chapter has been a virtual chapter from the beginning, with members in six states, the UK, and Australia. It was natural for us to utilize Zoom initially for our meetings. We are now developing presentations to the public during these Covid times.

In January, our Descendants Chapter gave an evening Zoom presentation on Wednesday, the 26th, and an encore on Saturday, the 29th. It was my turn to tell my story.

2022 marks 180 years of Peña Adobe History and 181 years since my Peña family traveled the

Old Spanish Trail from northern New Mexico to its terminus in Los Angeles with the Rowland-Workman Party in 1841. They then traveled northward to the area that is now called Vacaville, halfway between San Francisco and Sacramento, with the gold fields beyond.

Vaca, for whom Vacaville is named, and Peña, as they are known here, were business partners. The families are shown on Donald Rowland's trail list as "Juan M. Baca y familia." Vaca's family included his eight children, my great great grandparents, Juan Felipe and Ysabel Armijo/Peña, and their six children.



For the Descendants Chapter, our stories are not just what happened on the trail. We have the luxury to talk about our travelers' lives before, during, and after, what they did next and why that matters. That's why we call ourselves the storytellers of the Trail!

It seems to me that we often think of history in terms of a series of events. As I delve into these people's lives, putting my and their pain aside, I see that my family's history is really only them living their lives. They responded to the many challenges of their day, not as victims, but as participants. I dare say, as influencers.

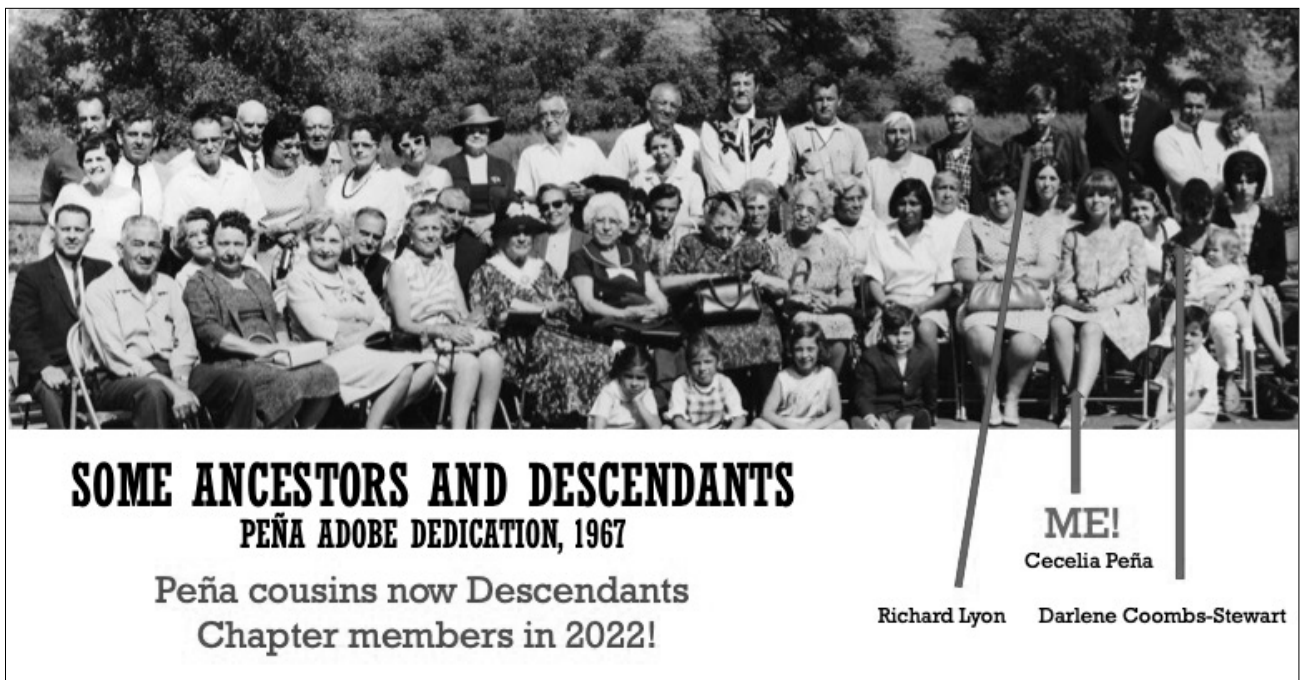
How did their race, ethnicity, and nationality affect the family's' opportunities, choices, and experiences? How was it different for the women? And, how long ago was it really when my own father was not only born in the adobe (1904),

but had the two youngest Peña travelers as his godparents? This is what my story is about.

Today, the Peña Adobe is the oldest restored structure in Solano County, California, historical landmark #534. Besides the adobe, the family preserved sixteen books: two prayer books, four and a half school books in English. The rest, all world literature, in Castilian Spanish. Most are still in print.

The Peña Adobe Historical Society, established in 2004, is staffed by volunteers and committed to preserving the adobe and its history. It is open the first Saturday of the month February through November. Private tours upon request.

For information, contact penaadobe@gmail.com, www.penaadobe.org, www.facebook.com/PenaAdobeHistoricalSociety



Peña Family Reunion, 1967. Descendants Chapter members: Richard Lyon is a descendant of Jesus; Darlene and I are in Juan Antonio's line.



THANKS FOR THE MEMORIES

By Alva Matheson

My wife Thelma and I have been asked to accept an assignment as Military Liaison for the Church of Jesus Christ, of Latter Day Saints at Barksdale/ Keesler AFB In Louisiana, reporting in early May, 2022. That assignment necessitates that I resign my position as Utah Director of The Old Spanish trail Association, and commend my responsibility to the capable hands of Mrs. Paula Mitchell, Southern Utah University Special Collections Librarian. Paula has a long association with OSTA and she presently

oversees the National and Historic Trails Library founded by OSTA at Southern Utah University, the archival center for our association. We will miss our many friends, and not a few silhouettes, and the capable leadership of Lynn Brittner in keeping the OST a viable segment of our history. Thelma and I expect to return to the Old Spanish Trail and continue our journey into the historic past with the best trail keepers in the world.

- Alva Matheson
Friends from the beginning, Friends to the last.

IN MEMORIAM

Charles Carter Hawk "Corky," age 77, passed away on February 3, 2022. He was born in Pueblo, Colorado, and raised in Denver. Corky earned his bachelor's degree at Yale University and his Juris Doctor at the University of Michigan in 1969. He served as Attorney and Counselor of the Supreme Court of the United States. He practiced labor law in Michigan, retired and moved to Taos, New Mexico, where he designed and built his home. He was a fine and gifted carpenter who furnished his home with beautiful Spanish Colonial furniture which he made.

He was an historian and archeologist. He belonged to the Taos Historical Society, Taos Archeology Society, Anza Society, and Old



Spanish Trail Associations. His passion was to explore, identify, walk and map old roads and trails and write extensive and detailed journals of his findings, which he shared with other archeologists. He received numerous awards, both local and state, for historic preservation including for this outstanding contribution to preservation for New Mexico's cultural heritage.

WHAT'S NEW AT SANTA FE'S "OLDEST CHURCH"—POINT OF DEPARTURE FOR THE OLD SPANISH TRAIL?

By Julianne Burton-Carvajal, Ph.D.

PREFACE

As a counterpart to Spanish Traces' Winter 2021 update on San Gabriel Mission, terminus of the Old Spanish Trail in Los Angeles and one of California's most important mission sites, the following essay summarizes recent enhancements at the comparatively modest place of worship that marks the Trail's opposite extremity, where countless residents of northern New Mexico initiated their westward journey.

In the early 1600s, simultaneous with or more likely preceding the official 1610 founding of La Villa Real (royal municipality) on the northern side of the Santa Fe River, San Miguel Chapel was constructed as an ermita—an outlying chapel for the worship of a particular devotional figure by a particular group. Archangel Michael, its Old Testament patron, was the warrior Prince of Heaven, charged by God prior to creation with justly expelling the forces of evil from Heaven. Overseen by Franciscan friars, the Chapel was most likely constructed by and for Christianized Meso-American Indian families, brought north from today's central Mexico by Spanish officials to provide skilled assistance during and after construction of Santa Fe's requisite parade grounds (plaza de armas), government buildings (casas reales), and associated church with friary (iglesia y convento).

Destined never to attain the status of a mission or parish church, San Miguel Chapel was the centerpiece of the service district, Barrio de Analco, where trades were plied, crops were raised, people of color were lodged, Indian raiders approaching from the south were buffered and, later on, the capital city's entertainments were

concentrated. Destroyed and rebuilt twice, most recently in 1710, the Chapel served as an infirmary for friars (period unspecified), a military chapel (prior to 1760), an oratory for the Brothers of the Christian Schools who were brought from France in 1859 to establish a "college" for boys, and a site of daily Mass for the all-male student body St. Michael's High School until 1968, when the Brothers developed a modern, co-educational campus south of town.

A mere stone's throw from the Santa Fe Plaza, San Miguel Chapel served as a convenient stopping-off place across this entire time span. Whether departing or arriving, travelers could enter to say a prayer, light a candle, or make a vow either in anticipation of, or in gratitude for, a safe journey. From the 1600s to the advent of travel and transport by rail in 1880, the ample open spaces surrounding the Chapel saw the loading and unloading of countless pack mules and wagons—most recently on September 28, 2019, when OSTA members Pat and Ron Rundstrom of Española brought their team and their gear for a day-long demonstration as part of the inaugural Barrio de Analco Fall Festival.

San Miguel Chapel in Santa Fe's Barrio de Analco ("District on the Other Side of the River") has a four-hundred-year history. Its enviably elevated site oversees a convergence of three National Historic Trails: El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro (The Royal Inland Road, 1598–1880), the Santa Fe Trail (1821–1880), and the Old Spanish Trail (1829–1848). Owned and stewarded since 1859 by the Christian Brothers, an international teaching order founded in France,



San Miguel
Chapel, Santa
Fe, New Mexico.
Photos courtesy
of author.

the Chapel was the centerpiece of St. Michael's College (later High School) campus for 110 years—until the Brothers occupied their current campus during the 1967–1968 academic year.

From the 1950s into the 1970s, Christian Brother Anthony Gabriel—born and baptized in New Mexico as Francisco C de Baca—oversaw a museum in the annex attached to the south side of the Chapel. For fifteen years of the present century, a commercial gift shop leased to a concessionaire occupied that space. During the Covid-19 pandemic closure of 2020–2021, that ample rectangular area paralleling the nave was transformed into a History Center with three ancillary display areas.

When vacating in January of 2020 as per contract, the departing concessionaires removed lighting fixtures as well as pre-fab panels covering the longest wall, exposing an unsightly patchwork of surfaces and gaps. On a visit to the forlorn space soon afterward Taylor Gantt, president of St. Michael's High School at the time, authorized Chapel Director Dave Blackman to have walls and cupboards repainted, carpeting replaced, partition and defunct air conditioner removed, a lockable pocket door installed, wiring updated and track-lighting added prior to the creation of

a new History Center according to a plan that had been evolving since 2019.

In addition to patching and repainting slat-walls and cupboard doors, conservation expert Don Sena supervised restoration of the exposed long wall using traditional adobe construction techniques and materials, then hand-finishing it with a reflective coat of lime plaster. When initially rebuilt during the thoroughly documented reconstruction and re-roofing of 1710, that was the Chapel's south-facing exterior wall.

“

Now, its luminous, hand-contoured surface silently enhances the largest room in the annex—a 312-year-old artifact on foundations dating back to the early 1600s.

During the last half of 2020 and the first half of 2021, curatorial modifications were carried out in three contiguous spaces: minor in the nave, major in the hallway and in the annex. Black-and-white photographs from the 19th and early-20th centuries—framed at the initiative and expense of a former docent who placed them throughout the nave—are now grouped together in a dedicated space, with explanatory labels for each cluster. Don Sena, direct descendant of renowned local blacksmith and Chapel benefactor Bernardino de Sena (1684–1765), obligingly repainted the walls and woodwork, refinished the floor, and installed track lighting for the new Hallway of Historic Photographs.

In the nave, he patched gaps in the walls and also spruced up an adobe brick “alcove” to the left of the main entrance. According to interior excavations in 1955 by a pair of leading archaeologists, that alcove was the base of one of the two symmetrical bell towers added during the 1710 reconstruction but entirely absent from the pictorial record. The most striking change in the sanctuary is apparent upon entering the Chapel through the main doors. Thanks to readjustment of multi-headed light poles

concealed behind flanking half-pillars, the massive carved and painted altar screen at the far end of the nave, completed in 1798, is fully illuminated at any time of day or year.

After careful deliberation and consultation, a number of items added to walls of the nave over the years were selected as key artifacts for display in the incipient History Center. Inviting attention at close range, each of them helps fulfill the promise of “Treasures of 400 Years”—subtitle on “Welcome to the History Center” signage facing the Chapel’s southwestern entrance.

The reclaimed gift shop space has three entrances, two fully accessible, and three display areas. Visitors entering from the Hallway of Historic Photographs pass a colorful montage of announcements for “Community Outreach Activities” on their right—concerts, lecture series, awards ceremonies and other special events to be reinitiated once the pandemic subsides. The thirty-foot-long windowed wall on the left features a dozen devotional artworks and liturgical furnishings “Made for San Miguel Chapel” during recent decades.



Eschewing museum-style formality, the u-shaped History Center at the far western end of the room was designed as a metaphorical memory-book, informal and dynamic. Conceptualization, planning, and installation phases sought to create a supplementary space that would be accessible, engaging, and informative for all categories of visitors.

Visitors to the new History Center during the first “Hour with the Historian-Curator” session, photographed by Thomas Dodge on October 6, 2021.

Eight titled display panels occupy fifty linear feet. As owners and stewards of the Chapel since 1859, the Brothers of the Christian Schools warrant a stand-alone panel in tribute. On the other side of the exterior door are two guest exhibition panels, designed to change at least twice a year in order to showcase, and sustain, community interest.

Themes of the six remaining permanent display panels are:

- Depictions of Archangel Michael
- Franciscan Missionaries as “men of the cross”
- Native Meso-American polities allied to Spanish forces prior to and after the 1521 conquest
- Barrio de Analco as a National Register Historic District since the mid-1970s
- Uses of the Chapel over the centuries
- Preservation and conservation through community support.

At the top of each display panel, a single-word query in red letters—Who? Where? What? How?—offers anyone capable of reading those words a choice of which panels to visit.

“Two- and three-dimensional artifacts invite visitors to wander from panel to panel, beginning and ending wherever impulse may lead.”

A painted Pueblo-style prayer stick in the shape of a cross with a sword-like tip, devotional sculptures in contrasting Hispanic New Mexican and French traditions, maps across centuries and cultures, period and contemporary photographs, and book

jackets showcasing foundational scholarship all exemplify the goal of accessibility through variety.

Display panels, which can be viewed in any order, may prompt new questions. How has the Chapel survived the centuries? What do depictions of Archangel Michael have in common? What are the guiding principles of education espoused by the Lasallian Brothers of the Christian Schools, a teaching order active in over eighty countries worldwide? Why include a late 17th century painting of Aztec Emperor Moctezuma II, or the early 16th-century woodcut of King Carlos I of Spain, or examples of hand-painted maps that combine indigenous and European symbols? What subtle threads lead to 16th century German artist Albrecht Dürer, Spanish court painter Francisco Goya, pioneering American photographer Timothy O’Sullivan, New Mexico’s first art historian and conservator of exemplary Hispanic popular arts Elizabeth (“E”) Boyd, not to mention a possible self-portrait by Bernardo Miera y Pacheco, “renaissance man” of New Mexico’s colonial era?

Visitors who seek answers to such questions can find them on labels and text panels provided throughout. The medium-blue background was chosen to evoke the uniquely colored robes of New Mexico’s Franciscan missionaries; elsewhere, the order was consigned to gray homespun. The looping motif that frames each text panel recalls the rope belts (cintures) worn by the Franciscans as another visible sign of their vow of poverty. When putting finishing touches on the Chapel’s interior in 1710, woodcarvers devised a similar cord-like motif. Modifications made during 2020 and 2021, when the Chapel was generally closed to visitors, have created a circular pathway that did not exist in previous decades. Many visitors now navigate that circuit (nave to altar-rail to hallway to annex to History Center to nave) at least one and a half times.

Leaving the History Center via steps leading up to the nave, visitors position themselves near the main entrance to contemplate the elaborate

1710 inscription carved into the great beam that supports the choir loft, after viewing side-by-side Spanish and English reproductions of that inscription on display in the History Center. Then they take another stroll down the center aisle for a more informed look at the pair of anonymous buffalo-hide paintings from the colonial era suspended on opposite walls and reproduced in the History Center for close-at-hand viewing. Prominent Pueblo-style rainbow and cloud motifs on one of the hides, along with other elements, evoke the acute longing for moisture in our arid, drought-prone Province of New Mexico. Long considered a depiction of St. John the Baptist, this hide commemorates San Roque /Saint Roch of Montpellier, victim of plague and protector of pilgrims, instead.

After contemplating the History Center's 3x6-foot reproductions of the Chapel's two most precious artifacts—a baroque statue of a young Archangel Michael from the early 1700s, and a more conventionally heroic oil-on-canvas rendering from the mid-1700s—visitors regard them from the altar rail with a deeper understanding of their respective attributes. They discern the slender silver sword held aloft by the carved, gilded, silver-helmeted Archangel Michael, occupant of the altar screen's niche of honor. They deduce that the open, empty left hand would have once held the scales of justice. They crane their necks to glimpse the severed heads of a pair of cherubic “fallen angels” carved in relief on his crimson pedestal—an explanatory economy that manages to avoid arousing revulsion in the viewer.

Looking toward the uppermost rectangular canvas, visitors locate the hilt and fragmentary blade of the Archangel's “flaming sword” in the upper left-hand corner, and the painter's inscription at lower left, indicating that he created the painting “for the devotion” (i.e., at the request) of donor Manuel Sáenz Garvisu. Like the gilded statue imported from the Viceroyalty of New Spain, this vigorous one-dimensional figure wears the garb of a Roman centurion, as is characteristic of most depictions of

Archangel Michael across the ages.

Experts date this painting of the Archangel, likely created for permanent display at San Miguel Chapel, to the mid-1700s. We now know that before that 18th century gave way to the 19th, the inscription was painted over. (Perhaps the patron of the Chapel's ambitious, trend-setting altar screen wished to efface all evidence of generous predecessors?) Late in the 19th or early in the 20th century, one of the Christian Brothers repurposed the entire canvas, covering it over with his own imitation—not of the prototypical Archangel Michael by the great Renaissance painter Raphael, but of a relatively minor effort by the same hand.

Finally, in the mid-20th century, the original painting was again revealed thanks to the diligence of art conservator F. duPont Cornelius of the Taylor Museum in Colorado Springs.



— Archangel Michael as painted for San Miguel Chapel by Bernardo Miera y Pacheco, photograph courtesy of Blair Clark.



—
*"Full Moon
 over San
 Miguel Chapel,"
 photograph by
 Thomas Dodge,
 2017.*

Contemplating it, visitors can identify the Prince of Heaven's emblematic scales of justice as well as the shield that echoes his Biblical motto: "Quien como Dios / He Who is Like God."

In the late 20th century, the painter was finally identified. Since then, the uniquely versatile Bernardo Miera y Pacheco—painter, sculptor in stone, cartographer—has been widely recognized as New Mexico's foremost colonial-era artist. Based on his experience as a participant, his illustrated map of the 1776 Dominguez-Escalante expedition from Santa Fe west to Monterey in Alta California, cut short due to the onset of winter, is a recognized resource for the pre-history of the Old Spanish Trail.

Treasures recovered and rearranged in dialogue with one another. Unexpected revelations and unsuspected multinational connections. A renewed sense of tranquility in the nave. A new level of engagement in the curated spaces. An

emerging sense that the Chapel's origins are more multifaceted than previously recognized. San Miguel Chapel docents and staff invite you to form your own impressions during your next visit. For current hours of admission and additional information, please go to SanMiguelChapelSantaFe.org.

Originally written for the winter 2022 issue of the Old Santa Fe Association's Boletín, this essay was reworked for the readership of Spanish Traces. Author Julianne Burton-Carvajal has been Consulting Historian and Curator at San Miguel Chapel since 2018. During her research and teaching career at the University of California–Santa Cruz, she published a dozen books, including two in Spanish, and edited three historical journals in succession. As a freelance curator since 1998, she has developed more than a dozen exhibitions connecting the art and history of both California and New Mexico.

THE DISAPPEARING OLD SPANISH TRAIL

By Alva Matheson



Are you one of those people who think that if you have seen one trail you have seen them all? Or maybe you have been to an Old Spanish Trail site and the only thing you could factually say is that the Old Spanish Trail must have

gone “from here to there” or somewhere? Well, think again, as they say. (Your timing could be everything, so pay attention.)

I was recently asked by several members of the Southern Utah Chapter of the Old Spanish Trail Association (OSTA) to visit a lengthy portion of the trail where it crosses the Neck of the Desert in Iron County. My trip was to revisit an area that I had flown over in the past while searching for clues to the physical location of the trail. My intent was to complete a ground survey of a portion of the Old Spanish Trail that I had visited several times in past years, and I was elated

to be on the ground once more. Patience and perseverance my father counseled me— “The trail is there, you just have to find it!”

I had driven a four-wheel drive vehicle through Holt Canyon to an area where the trail is confined between two sharp ridges of lava and decomposed granite. Physically, there was no alternative to travelers transiting the region between the Great Basin of central Utah and the Mojave Deserts of Nevada without passing through the “Holt Chokes.” Having passed through the canyon, the Spanish caravans would encounter the clear springs and verdant forage of a Mountain Meadows campsite. Similarly, those travelers returning from California enroute to Santa Fe would have their first taste of hope after their arduous trek across the Mojave deserts of Nevada.

Having spent much of my time on the Old Spanish Trail in my younger years, and knowing generally where the trail would have been, I was confident that some trail trace would be evident. Generalizing the path of the historic trail was the easy part because natural features of geology and topography competed to limit the likely areas of passage, as did the limited availability of water and forage. This should not be too difficult I thought. But I was not prepared for another Spanish Trail “treasure” to reward my interest and diligence. This time the Old Spanish Trail appeared right before my eyes. I was astounded, it was perfectly intact and discernable for several miles! The reason for the discovery soon became evident.

For much of the year, the dry soil conditions of the arid Southwest desert make it

***“The trail is there,
you just have to
find it!”***



Old Spanish Trail, Mountain Meadow, Utah. The spring grasses initially appear as a soft green mantle over the barren soil, lending hope and color to an otherwise arid desert landscape. Photo courtesy of author.

impossible to distinguish any one portion of the historic OST from a variety of other trails, paths, and roads related to early travel to the interior of the United States. But in the early spring there is sufficient moisture in the ground to sprout latent seeds, which may have been dormant for years, from a variety of desert grasses along a corridor several hundred miles long. These include the invasive and much maligned grasses, such as Cheat Grass, Rye Grass, and a plethora of short-lived wheat grasses, which emerge to greet an appreciative eye. Since the seeds germinate at precisely the same rate and time, and in the same conditions, those seeds that sprout on hard packed soil begin to fail almost immediately, followed closely by those seeds sprouting on ground devoid of moisture. The result is a “resurrection” of sorts, one that for a short period (one or two days) reveal the patterns of compaction from travel as completely as watching a photographic image emerge from a developing solution. The appearance of the trail is understandable enough, but what was unexpected to me was

that as the hot winds begin to wither the new growth, the grasses in compacted areas lack sufficient moisture to keep up with their surrounding competition. The result is that as the trail begins to “develop,” traces of the trail become more and more evident as some grasses die from lack of moisture and others prosper, albeit for a limited time, revealing an exact pathway through the sparse green growth. Within only a short time, the fragile trail traces disappear with the drying of the surrounding grass.

I was absolutely astounded to find that for a period of several days the trail was perfectly visible, and not just for a few hundred feet, but for miles. The more I learned to look for the distinctive margins of the trail, the easier it was to find just the right angle to see them more clearly. Impressive, you bet! It was time to take to the air with my new-found perspective.

In the early morning, with OSTA member Dr. Lyman Platt as our official OSTA “photographer extraordinaire,” we proceeded to take to the sky



in a spotter plane for a low level flight along some forty miles of the OST, between Enoch, Utah, and Mountain Meadows. While we were able to find ample opportunities for the camera shutter to record the event, the transformation was already beginning to wane and the magical transformation we were seeking was rapidly disappearing as the grasses merged into the brown of the desert. Much like an eclipse or a solstice event, the “grass show” takes almost perfect timing. But it is a event that is well worth the effort it takes to be there at the right time and place. It was the show of a lifetime for two Spanish Trail junkies.

Holt Canyon Chokes (far right center). Note the thin line between the verge and the grasses beyond. The visible trail is but ONE TRACK wide. Other elements are always two parallel tracks from shallower impressions of wagon wheels. Photo courtesy of author.

TRAIL NEWS

Let's Stay Connected!

We are committed to staying connected with you, which is why we started our eNewsletter “Trail News.” Now that it has been launched we want to hear from you.

SEND US YOUR NEWS!

Please give us updates on your Chapter, stories on the trail, and events and activities taking place soon.

We will continue to inform you on updates on OSTA's threats to the trail, as well as news of signage and what's happening along the trail.

Our eNewsletter is produced in email form, with no print costs.

Not getting it? Check you spam or junk mail.

Please send your stories to: Earl Fosdick's email: ekfosstorm@netzero.com



HISTORIC INSCRIPTIONS ON THE SPANISH TRAIL IN UTAH



Fig. 1: William Wolfskill Braffits Canyon, 1831. Photos courtesy of author. Fig. 2: William Knight Inscription on Little Creek.

By Steven H. Heath, Former OSTA President

Some of the most significant experiences one can have on a historic trail is seeing authentic historical inscriptions and unique items from the past. Many years ago, S. Alva Matheson showed me a Spanish amulet with a cross. A short time later, he took me to the place where he found the historic item and showed me evidence of the original Spanish Trail. It sparked my nearly thirty-five-year interest in the trail.

Fortunately for all, the amulet can still be seen by visitors at the San Rafael Swell Museum in Castle Dale, Utah, and remnants of the trail can be seen southwest of the Three Peaks Recreation area near Cedar City, Utah.¹ Around that same time, Alva mentioned inscriptions at two places in Iron County, but he was unable to take me to them. I was able to discover one on my own near Paragonah, Utah, on Little Creek and, with help, I was led to the second in Braffits Canyon near Summit, Utah. My first impression was that both inscriptions were fakes, especially the one in

Braffits Canyon. However, after careful examination and checking historical records, I have concluded that both are real Spanish Trail glyphs.

The one in Braffits Canyon is featured in James H. Knipmeyer's impressive book, *Butch Cassidy Was Here: Historic Inscriptions of the Colorado Plateau* (2002).² Knipmeyer lists two inscriptions, with photos, in Braffit's Canyon but one of them was probably destroyed by a landslide. The second may be a William Wolfskill inscription (fig. 1). The letter that looks like a "T" may in fact be an "I," which is often used for the letter "J" by the Spanish in Mexico. While living in New Mexico in the 1830s, Wolfskill used the first name José. The inscription is not located on what became the main branch of the Spanish Trail through Utah, but its location can be explained by the difficult pioneering journey of Wolfskill in 1831.³

The "1842 Wm Knight" inscription is on the main trail, near the mouth of Little Creek Canyon (fig. 2). William Knight traveled the trail twice in 1842, after his first trip to California in 1841 with the Rowland/

¹For an image and account of his findings along the trail, see S. Alva Matheson, "Spanish Trail Treasure," n.d., available online at www.three-peaks.net/spanish_trail/HiddenTreasure.pdf.

²James H. Knipmeyer, *Butch Cassidy Was Here: Historic Inscriptions of the Colorado Plateau* (Salt Lake City, Utah: University of Utah Press, 2002), 17–19.

³Edward Leo Lyman, "A Historical Guide: Salina Canyon to Enoch," *Spanish Traces* (Spring 2014).



Left to right: Fig. 3: Henry W. Bigler, Beaver Dam Wash, 1849. Fig. 4: William Thomas Osborn, First Westward Gulch out of Beaver Dam Wash. Fig. 5: Paul Ostapuk on Navajo/Dominguez-Escalante/Armijo Trail, June 2011.

Workman party. The details of Knight's travel were presented at a special Old Spanish Trail conference in Cedar City in October 2007.⁴

I, like many others, have visited the Denis Julian inscription along the Colorado River below Cataract Canyon.⁵ But despite several attempts, I have not been able to relocate the D. Julian inscription that was left along the trail in Salina Canyon. This D. Julian inscription was found by geologist/surveyor G. K. Gilbert in 1875.⁶ Knipmeyer suggests that the inscription may have been destroyed during the construction of U.S. Highway 50 or Interstate 70.⁷ If the inscription still exists, it is probably near the Red Creek Old Spanish Trail Kiosk.⁸

Unfortunately, I have not been able to see the 1837 Antoine Robidoux inscription in the Book Cliffs.⁹ If

this inscription had been closer to Cedar City and I had not felt that it was a mountain man inscription, not a Spanish Trail inscription (a bias I wish I had not once had), I would probably have made a visit. I have since learned that Issac Slover, a legitimate Spanish Trail traveler on the North Branch of the Trail, left an inscription on a boulder in the desolate region north of I-70 and east of Thompson Springs, Utah.¹⁰ This knowledge has convinced me that the North Branch of the Old Spanish Trail is indeed a legitimate part of the National Historic Trail.

In June of 2000, with a party of friends on horses, I was able to visit the HWB (Henry W. Bigler) inscription of 1849 in Beaver Dam Wash (fig. 3).¹¹ The Beaver Dam Wash is on the western edge of Washington County, Utah, and in eastern Nevada. Jefferson Hunt, a Spanish Trail traveler of 1848, was asked by California Gold Rush seekers and Mormon

⁴ Steven H. Heath, "William Knight: An Early Spanish Trail Traveler," National Spanish Trails Symposium, Southern Utah University, October 2007.

⁵ Knipmeyer, *Butch Cassidy*, 113.

⁶ Charles B. Hunt, *Geology of the Henry Mountains, Utah, as Recorded in the Notebooks of G. K. Gilbert 1875–1876*, Memoir 167 (Geological Society of America, 1988), 27.

⁷ James H. Knipmeyer, "The Denis Julian Inscriptions," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 64 (Winter 1996): 56.

⁸ Ruth Friesen and Steven Heath, "Driving the Old Spanish Trail Through Utah and Arizona" (Old Spanish Trail Association, 2015), 43.

⁹ Knipmeyer, *Butch Cassidy*, 20–21.



missionaries to lead them south from Salt Lake City to Los Angeles in the fall of 1849. Members of that expedition were to travel the Spanish Trail from Paragonah southward to California. Near present-day Enterprise, Utah, a major internal dispute separated them into two groups. Most of the expedition left Hunt and the Spanish Trail and headed directly west looking for a supposed shortcut to the California gold fields. After major traveling difficulties in the Beaver Dam Wash, nearly all returned to the Spanish Trail and made it safely to Los Angeles by following Hunt's tracks. A smaller group continued west and eventually ended up becoming the foolishly famous Death Valley Party of 1849.¹²

In addition to the Bigler inscription, our group also stopped to see and photograph the "Osborn 49" inscription on the way out, which verified we were indeed on the same trail as the Death Valley '49ers.¹³ We had initially missed this inscription on the way to the Bigler inscription (fig. 4). Neither were on the Spanish Trail, but their locations

presented evidence of what travelers who strayed from the trail had to face. It was a difficult journey for our party in 2000, even though we knew where we were headed that day.

There is a lot of work to do on trail inscriptions. Much is still unknown about the travelers who made them and many need to be authenticated. In the St. George area there are a number of inscriptions. I was told about a "Kit Carson" inscription north of the city and west of the Cinder Cone in the White Rocks area. One afternoon, I was able to find the inscription. It read: "Kit Carson 1869." It took only minutes at our university library in Cedar City to establish it was a fake. Kit Carson did travel the Spanish Trail many times but he died in 1868. Another inscription simply reads: "E K 1826." It is located on the basalt rocks to the north of Indian Hills Drive and below the end of the old St. George airport runway. It is right where travelers would have camped before heading southwest into Nevada's desert country. It may have been someone in the Jedediah Smith party that visited the area in 1826,

¹⁰ Doug Knudson, *Characters of the Old Spanish Trail* (South Fork, Colo.: Sylvan Trail Books, 2013).

¹¹ Charles Kelley, "On Manly's Trail to Death Valley," *Desert Magazine*, February 1939, 6–8, 41, 43.

¹² Tom Sutak, *Into the Jaws of Hell, Jefferson Hunt: The Death Valley '49ers Wagon Train & His Adventures in California 1846–1857* (Danville, Calif.: Pine Park Publishing, 2012), chap. 18; and Steven H. Heath, "Jefferson Hunt, Bad Judgment, the 49ers and the Mormon Battalion," *Pioneer*, Summer 1995, 6–7.

¹³ Jean Johnson, *Grit and Gold: The Death Valley Jayhawkers of 1849* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2018), 233.



Fig. 6: Spanish Trail
North of Mountain
Meadows along
Spring Creek.

but historical records indicate there was no member of his party that had initials L K. We know that Smith was instrumental in the development of the southern half of the Spanish Trail and he pioneered a route that avoided the almost impassable Virgin River Gorge.¹⁴ Perhaps L K was with another party that traveled along the Armijo section of the historic Spanish Trail in 1826. The inscription looks old but may be the work of someone in more recent times.

There is one pre-1828 inscription that has much to do with the Armijo Branch of the Spanish Trail. At the 2007 conference in Cedar City in which I talked about William Knight, Paul Ostapuk presented a significant study of the 1776 inscription that was found the year before. He presented evidence that led to the authentication of a 1776 Dominguez-Escalante inscription. It was an exciting paper.¹⁵

One of the great days of my life came a few years later. On 15 October 2010, Paul invited me and one of his friends to travel by boat with Jim Page of the National Park Service to an inscription site. It took Burt, Paul's friend, and I thirty minutes to locate this wonderful treasure. We left the boat and walked by a protective cave, then through a narrow canyon. The inscription was not in the cave as I thought it would be, but a short distance from the cave up the slot canyon. I wrote later that day: "I have no

doubt that the Dominguez-Escalante party of 1776 sheltered themselves from a terrible rain on 5–6 November 1776. On the 6th or 7th someone in the party made the inscription." Jim Page spoke about its discovery and what needed to be done to preserve this national treasure. Before we returned, we walked to the Gunsight Pass where all travelers, for years after Dominguez and Escalante, would have had to pass to get across the Colorado River. The visit that day was a remarkable experience.

On 24 June 2011 with an invitation from Paul, I led David Tate, editor of *Lake Powell Magazine*, Paul and friends, and my grandson, Peter, to the historic Utah/Arizona boundary marker (#152.332) below Boundary Butte. Aside from standing beside the historic marker, the most remarkable event was when Paul and I noticed the clear indications of the Navajo/Dominguez-Escalante/Armijo trail next to the site (fig. 5). It was another rush of joy to feel for a moment what it was like to be on a historic trail. Seeing inscriptions, artifacts, and evidence of a well-worn trail brings wonderful feelings to students of the Spanish Trail. There are places near you where you can get the same experiences I have had. Take time to visit the trail and these inscriptions, and study the history to understand why it is there. You will be greatly rewarded.

¹⁴ Friesen and Heath, "Driving the Old Spanish Trail," 44.

¹⁵ Paul Ostapuk, "Authenticating Efforts related to a 1776 Spanish Inscription at Glen Canyon," National Spanish Trails Symposium, Southern Utah University, October 2007, 1–35.

THE TRAIL THROUGH NATIVE LANDS

By Jim Wood, *Agua Mansa Chapter*

As one studies the formation, use, and heritage of the Old Spanish Trail, it is important to be mindful of how the trail and the entire era affected Indigenous peoples and the land—their home. As details of the trail are discussed and presented, words can be included about the Native tribes who cared for the land for thousands of years, taking only what they needed for food, shelter, medicine, and clothing. Their stewardship maintained a harmonious relationship with nature and landscape, the natural scheme and fabric of what would become the United States. In many cases, their foot paths became the Spanish Trail.

Interactions between Natives and non-Natives along the trail from 1829 to 1848—the designated OST era—are rare to find in print, but some can be inferred from adjacent era reports. As an overview, the trail can be drawn on a map that estimates early Native cultures, such as “Early Indian Tribes, Culture Areas, and Linguistic Stocks,” by William Sturtevant in 1967. For clarity, some states and boundaries have been indicated. Note that such maps often vary in cultural names and boundaries, and interactions with and between tribes were complex. Written records reflect European views that were often from a domineering stance. They often recorded their first encounters with Native peoples as cooperative, with the trading of gifts, supplies, and guidance. Natives often reacted first with fear, curiosity, then cautious acceptance. One or two might even join an expedition. But often, the newcomers would disappear for decades, leaving Natives to ponder if they would ever return.

Encounters in the region prior to the OST are reported by Dominguez-Escalante and the Garces party, both in 1776–1777. Other reports come from trappers Jedediah Smith and Harrison Rogers who

trekked the western regions in 1826–1827. In the OST era, trail traffic included annual wagon-less pack mule caravans of Spanish-speaking traders and settlers, few having paper and pens. John Fremont did record Native encounters in 1844. After the trail era, some descriptions come from the Mormons who traveled some western trail segments.

Franciscan priests Atanasio Dominguez and Silvestre Escalante with cartographer Bernardo Miera y Pacheco and a twelve-year-old Ute guide explored New Mexico, Colorado, Utah, and Arizona in 1776, while attempting to reach California. Escalante’s 1777 map names eight Indian tribes. Their 1778 map indicates over forty-three Native villages. Father Escalante’s journal is also a valuable resource. Here are some translated extracts:

They visited the Utes at their village near the [Utah] lake. The Utes were friendly and willingly learned about Christianity as the priests taught them . . . the valleys we were crossing recently burnt, and still burning in other nearby valleys. From this we suspected that these Indians had mistaken us for Comanches, or another unfriendly tribe, and as they had perhaps seen that we had horses with us, they had decided to set fire to the pasture lands along our route so that the lack of fodder would compel us to leave the plain more quickly. But since the plain is very large and wide . . . they had set the fires at many points . . . Atanasio set out for the first huts . . . Some of the Indians came out to receive them with weapons in hand to defend their homes and families, but as soon as Silvestre spoke to them, all these warlike preparations were changed to sincere expressions of peace and affection. We led them back very joyfully to their poor huts, and after embracing them and assuring them that we came in peace and that we loved them . .

. many people came from neighboring camps . . . He said that he would teach them . . . and that he would baptize them if they wished to become Christians, and . . . some Spaniards to live among them; that in this case they would also be taught how to plant, and to raise cattle. By these means they would have food and clothes like the Spaniards . . . Then he told them that we had to continue our journey . . . and would need one of them to guide us to the next known tribe . . . We told them that if they had troubles with illness or with their enemies before we came back, they should call upon God . . . They begged us again not to delay our return, saying that they would look for us within a year.

Also in 1776, but more to the west, Francisco Garces traveled from the Colorado River over the Mojave Desert and Cajon Pass to Mission San Gabriel. In his report, he described the region and some encounters with Natives. Sadly, such European visitors unknowingly brought new diseases into the regions, which began to decimate Indigenous populations. As later explorers and settlers came, often decades later, they found Native peoples suspicious and suffering from illness. Over time, more Natives died or were killed, the country was damaged, and, understandably, Native suspicion often turned into hostility as they realized Europeans were taking resources and using them for slave labor. News of “invaders” would spread hundreds of miles by Natives on foot. This was surely true by 1826 when trappers Smith and Rogers trekked near western sections of the future OST. Their reports describe the region.

Soon after, Antonio Armijo blazed what would become the first OST route in 1829. His report is very brief. In his studies of the OST, historian LeRoy R. Hafen quotes the following text from the Armijo Expedition: “They live on grass seeds, hares and rabbits, using the skins of the latter to cover a small part of their body . . . they cultivate fields . . . have knowledge of horses and horsemanship. None of the above mentioned nations attack the travelers;

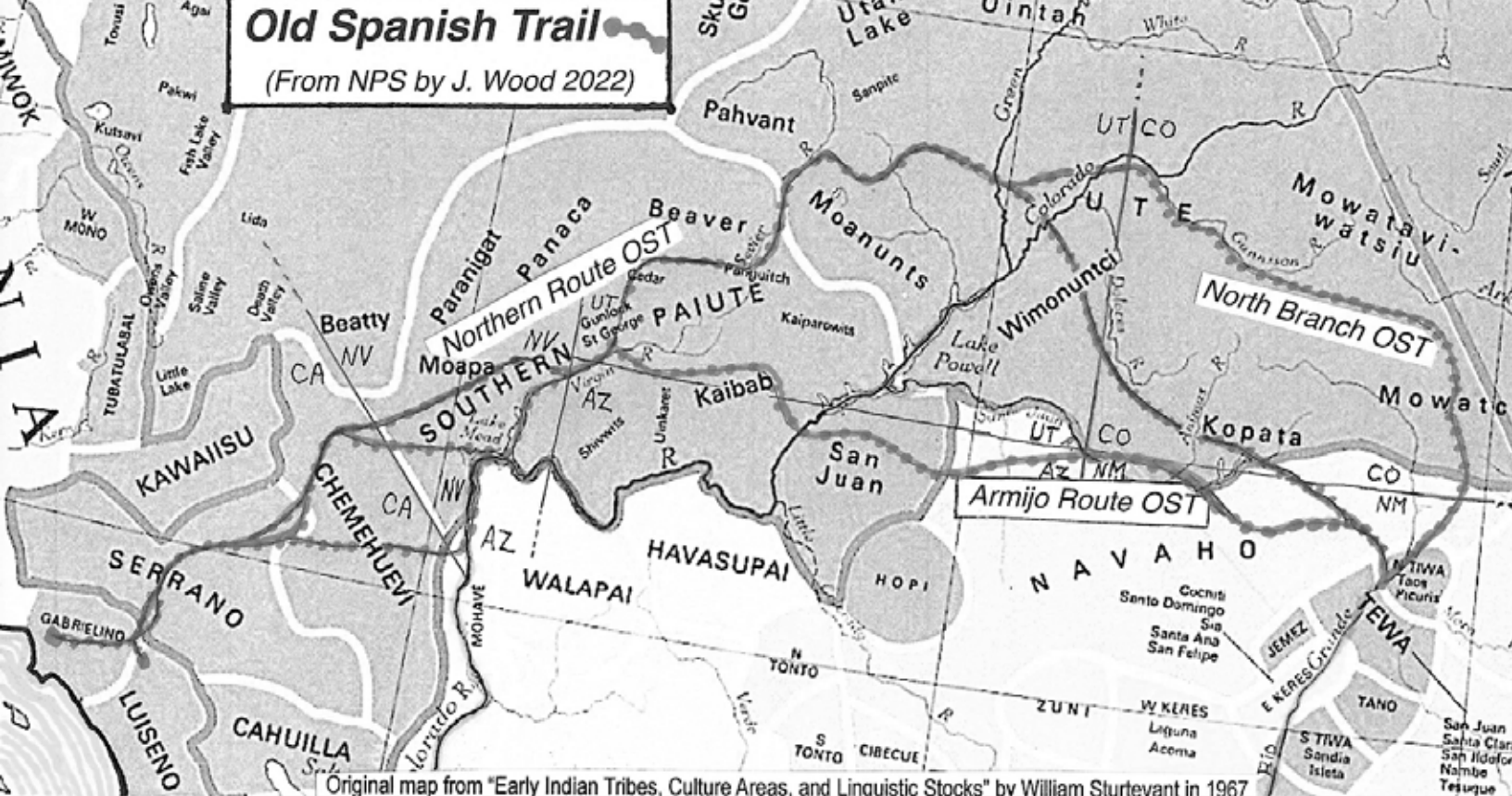
they fled upon seeing them and some were frightened by the presence of horses.”

Reports from the trail in the 1830s are rare and sought after. In September, William Wolfskill left Abiquiu, New Mexico, with trappers, including George Yount. They traveled into Colorado and up to the Green River in Utah. When they encountered a funeral for a Ute chief, they showed great respect, so the Utes promised them protection while traveling. Toward the end of their journey over what was becoming the Spanish Trail, Wolfskill ordered a swivel gun to be mounted on a mule in case of problems, but the Mojave Desert tribes were friendly, giving the trappers cornbread, dried pumpkin, and beans.

In 1843–1844, there is a story of a traveler going east who was killed by an arrow. His wife back in New Mexico later gave birth to a son, and both came west to California (see *Spanish Traces*, Summer 2021, p. 18). Also around that period, Maria Ruperta Martinez and husband Jose Sixto de Jesus Martin were able to form business relationships trading with members of the Ute, Comanche, Navajo, and other tribes.

In 1844, Fremont rode the trail east through California and Nevada. From his journal:

We were now careful to take the old camping places of the annual Santa Fe caravans . . . a party of six Indians came into camp, poor and hungry, and quite in keeping with the character of the country. Their arms were bows of unusual length, and each had a large gourd, strengthened with meshes of cord, in which he carried water. They proved to be the Mohahve Indians mentioned by our recent guide; and from one of them, who spoke Spanish, I obtained some interesting information . . . The Indian who spoke Spanish had been educated for a number of years at one of the Spanish missions, and, at the breaking up of those establishments, had returned to the mountains, where he had been found by a party of Mohahve (sometimes



Map adapted from "Early Indian Tribes, Culture Areas, and Linguistic Stocks," William Sturtevant, 1967, available at www.loc.gov/resource/g370le.ct003648r/.

called Amuchaba) Indians, among whom he had ever since resided . . . He said they lived upon a large river in the southeast, which the soldiers called the Rio Colorado; but that formerly, a portion of them lived upon this river and among the mountains which had bounded the river valley to the northward during the day, and that here along the river they had raised various kinds of melons. They sometimes came over to trade with the Indians of the Sierra, bringing with them blankets and goods manufactured by the Monquis and other Colorado Indians. They rarely carried home horses, on account of the difficulty of getting them across the desert and of guarding them afterwards from the Pautah Indians, who inhabit the Sierra at the head of the Rio Virgin . . . He informed us that, a short distance below, this river finally disappeared. The two . . . portions in which water is found had received from the priests two different names; and subsequently I heard it called by the Spaniards the Rio de las Animas, but on the map we have called it the Mohahve river.

Fremont also describes finding a man and boy from a small Spanish group that had been attacked by Paiutes on the trail near modern Tecopa, California. It was Andres Fuentes and eleven-year-old Pablo. Sadly, they rode on to find Pablo's mother missing and his father killed, along with trader Santiago Chacon.

Several post-OST era reports come from the Mormon wagon trains using the trail between Utah and Southern California after 1848. One Mormon group arrived starving, and the New Mexicans who had settled at Agua Mansa, California, gave them food and help. Such kindness was sometimes given to New Mexicans in earlier years, when they trekked the Spanish Trail and received help from Native peoples.

I thank retired history teacher, Henry James Vasquez, and also Conchita Marusich of the Old Spanish Trail Association for their useful edits. Some material was adapted from oldspanishtrail.org and ilovehistory.utah.gov/time/stories/escalante.html.

NORTH BRANCH OF THE OLD SPANISH TRAIL

FROM THE SAN LUIS VALLEY TO THE UNCOMPAHGRE AND GUNNISON VALLEYS

By Jonathon C. Horn,

Alpine Archaeological Consultants, Inc.

Over the past ten or so years, Alpine Archaeological Consultants, Inc. of Montrose, Colorado, has been fortunate to be able to continue work started under the Bureau of Land Management's National Historic Trails Project to investigate routes of the North Branch of the Old Spanish Trail on federal lands in Western Colorado. Most of this work was reported upon in the Spring 2019 issue of *Spanish Traces*.¹ Since then, Alpine has completed additional work on the eastern side of North Cochetopa Pass and South Cochetopa/Carnero Pass on the Rio Grande National Forest. This additional work has linked up trail sections on both sides of the passes completed under the earlier National Historic Trails Project on Bureau of Land Management land and on the Gunnison National Forest, all through the facilitation by the Interpretive Association of Western Colorado and the PaleoCultural Research Group. With completion of this work, it is opportune to report on what new information we have learned and to more fully describe the linkage these routes made from the San Luis Valley to the Uncompahgre and Gunnison valleys.

North Branch Background History

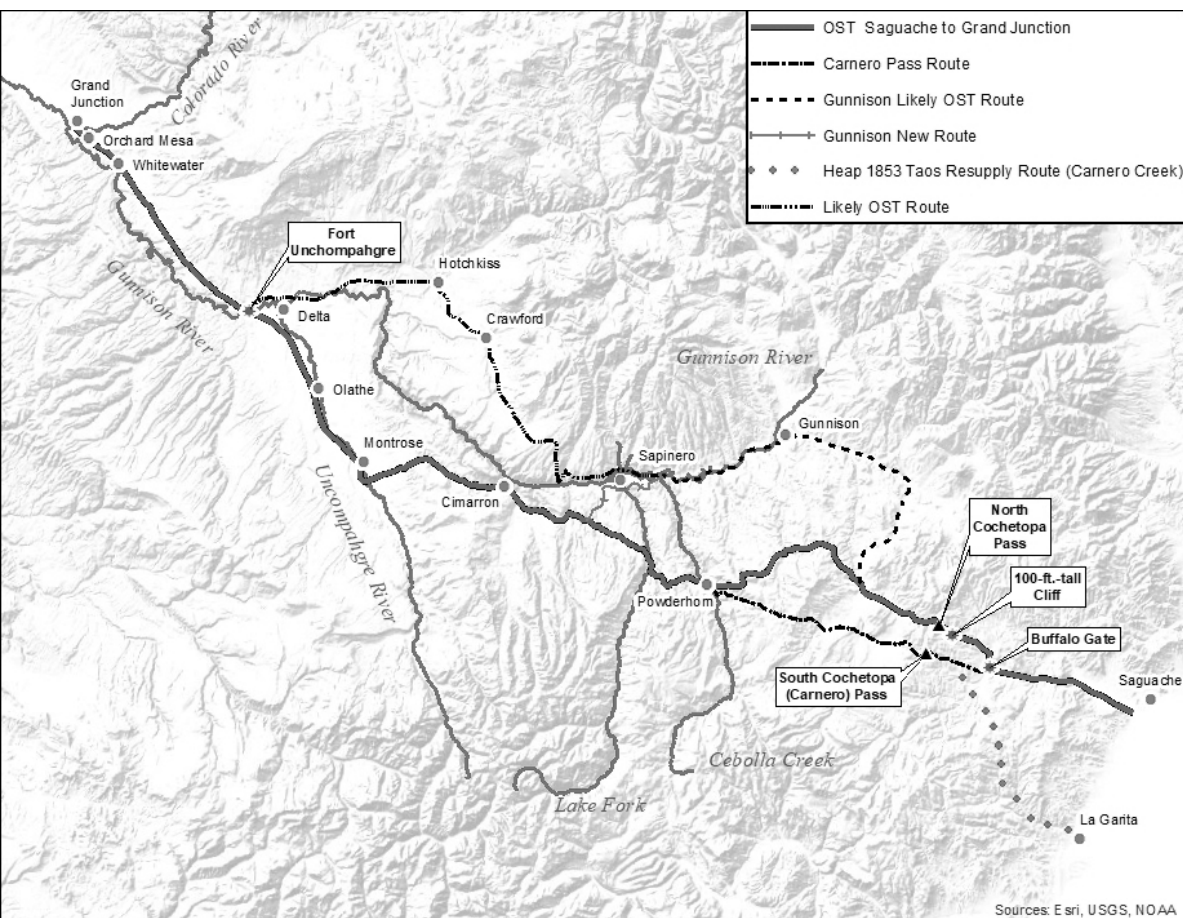
The North Branch of the Spanish Trail was established by trappers moving north from Taos, New Mexico, through the San Luis Valley into the mountains of Colorado and continuing northwestward into the Uintah Basin of Utah and

onward to Utah Lake and the Great Salt Lake.² This became possible beginning in 1821 after Mexico secured its independence from Spain. Spain had restricted trade north of its settlements in northern New Mexico, but illicit trade with the Utes as far as Utah Lake is known to have taken place with knowledge acquired of the region by the 1765 Rivera Expedition as far as the Gunnison River near the current town of Delta, Colorado, and by the Dominguez and Escalante Expedition in 1776, which extended even farther north. Antoine Roubidoux constructed his fur trading post, Fort Uncompahgre, near present Delta in 1828, which included the Ute as prime trading partners through about 1844. Although a few travelers may have used the North Branch to make a complete crossing from New Mexico to southern California, others, like the Whitman Party in 1842, used the North Branch as the course of travel to the Salt Lake Valley, often making use of the main Spanish Trail or other connecting routes to travel farther west. Fur traders were mostly interested in using the North Branch to access trapping and trading areas and not as a thoroughfare.³ In addition to Fort Uncompahgre, Antoine Roubidoux used the route to supply his Fort Uinta trading post in the Uintah Basin of Utah. It is known that Roubidoux used carts to transport his goods as far as he could, then transferred them to pack animals for travel over Cochetopa Pass and beyond to his posts. The logical transfer point would have been at what is still known today as the Upper Crossing, where Sheep Creek intersected Saguache Creek.⁴ Some movement of horses and

¹Jonathon C. Horn, Michael J. Prouty, and Connor C. Johnen, "Recent Documentation of Routes of the North Branch of the Old Spanish Trail in Colorado," *Spanish Traces* 25, no. 1 (Spring 2019): 10–25.

²Ruth Marie Colville, *La Verada: A Trail through Time* (San Luis Valley Historical Society, 1995); James Knipmeyer, "The Old Trappers Trail through Eastern Utah," *Canyon Legacy* 9 (1991): 10–15; National Park Service, *National Historic Trail Feasibility Study and Environmental Assessment: Old Spanish Trail, New Mexico, Colorado, Utah, Arizona, Nevada, California. Final* (United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2001); Jack William Nelson, "North Branch of the 'Old Spanish Trail,'" *Journal of the Western Slope* 11 no. 4, (1996): 1–43; Jack William Nelson, "North Branch of the Old Spanish Trail: The Trapper Variant," *Canyon Legacy* 53 (2005): 36–38; and Jack William Nelson, *Forgotten Pathfinders along the North Branch of the Old Spanish Trail 1650–1850* (Grand Junction, Colo.: n.p., 2003).

³Knipmeyer, "The Old Trappers Trail"; Nelson, "North Branch"; Nelson, "North Branch of the Old Spanish Trail: The Trapper Variant"; and Nelson, *Forgotten Pathfinders*.



Map of the North Branch of the Old Spanish Trail connecting Saguache, Co. with Fort Uncompahgre located in Delta, CO. Map created by Alpine Archeological Consultants, Jon Horn, Principle Investigator

mules for trade probably took place along the North Branch, along with some movement of slaves, but this was probably minimal in comparison to transport of trade goods into the area and furs and hides out of the region.⁵

After the collapse of the fur trade in the early 1840s, the North Branch probably saw little use until the early 1850s. The 1849 California gold rush created an immediate economic opportunity that stimulated use of all of the trails leading to California as thoroughfares for sheep drives. With sheep in high demand and reportedly bringing \$10 to \$20 per head in California after having been purchased for \$1 in Mexico or New Mexico, sheep were hailed as the most lucrative venture available in California. As a result, speculators from California ventured to New Mexico and Mexico to assemble large bands

of sheep for the California market between 1852 and 1854. Among the speculators were former mountain men who were already familiar with the trails. Richens (Uncle Dick) Wootton drove a band of 9,000 sheep from Taos to the Sacramento Valley in 1852. He used the North Branch across Cochetopa Pass to the crossing of the Green River where he headed north and continued his journey by way of Salt Lake City and across the deserts of Utah and Nevada on the California Trail.⁶ Within a short time, the sheep herds in New Mexico and Mexico were greatly depleted and initial purchase prices had gone up, eliminating the high profits of the first sheep drives. Also, after just a few years, sufficient breeding stock had reached California for its own sheep industry to become established and the high sales prices plummeted. As a result, the great sheep drives ended.⁷

⁴Joseph J. Hill, "Antoine Robidoux, Kingpin in the Colorado River Fur Trade, 1824–1844," *Colorado Magazine* 7, no. 4 (1930): 125–32; William Swilling Wallace, *Antoine Robidoux 1794–1860: A Biography of a Western Venturer* (Los Angeles, Calif.: Glen Dawson, 1953).

⁵Leland Hargrave Creer, "Spanish-American Slave Trade in the Great Basin, 1800–1853," *New Mexico Historical Review* 24, no. 3 (1949): 171–83.

⁶Howard Louis Conard, *Uncle Dick Wootton: The Pioneer Frontiersman of the Rocky Mountain Region* (Chicago, Ill.: Lakeside Press, R. R. Donnelley & Sons Company, 1957); R. S. Wooten, "Letter to the editor," *Missouri Democrat*, 22 October 1853; and Gwinn Harris Heap, ed., *In Central Route to the Pacific, From the Valley of the Mississippi to California: Journal of the Expedition of E. F. Beale, Superintendent of Indian Affairs in California, and Gwinn Harris Heap, from Missouri to California, in 1853* (Philadelphia, Penn.: Lippincott, Brambo, and Co., 1854), 125–27.

⁷*California Farmer and Journal of Useful Sciences*, 1 February 1855, 38.



Fig. 1: Drawing by Gwinn Harris Heap of the “Gate of the Buffaloes” (Plate VIII of Heap 1854). Fig. 2: Modern photo of the Gate of the Buffaloes on Sheep Creek just north of the Upper Crossing Guard Station.

Cochetopa Pass as the Key to Travel on the North Branch

Formal U.S. government exploration of the North Branch of the Spanish Trail through the Rocky Mountains and into Utah can be tied directly to the interest of Sen. Thomas Hart Benton of Missouri. He was convinced that the best and most direct route through the Rocky Mountains and to the Pacific was through Colorado by way of Cochetopa Pass on what was termed the Central Route. As a result, when different alignments were proposed for exploration to determine the best route for a transcontinental railroad, Benton made sure that the Central Route was included. Lt. Edward Beale used the route on his way to become the Indian Agent for California in 1853, just a few months before the Gunnison Expedition also followed the general route of the North Branch.⁸ The Beale Expedition, traveling on horseback, had little difficulty traversing North Cochetopa Pass on June 19, 1853, hardly making mention of the crossing beyond noting it as a divide that separated the water flowing east to the Gulf of Mexico from those flowing west to the Gulf of California. Their passing along that route is verified by drawings that Heap made along the way. The first was that of the Buffalo Gate along Sheep

Creek just above its confluence with Saguache Creek (see figs. 1 and 2).⁹

The other was a steep stone bluff that stands on the southwestern side of East Pass Creek about two miles below the top of North Cochetopa Pass, eight miles above the Gate of the Buffaloes, and about two miles above the current Buffalo Pass Campground (see figs. 3 and 4).¹⁰ Passing quickly westward to Cochetopa Creek, mention is only made of the rounded hills and the grassy, well-watered meadows. In the vicinity of Cochetopa Creek, Gwinn Harris Heap, the chronicler of the Beale Expedition, made a notable mention of a route heading northeastward over rather gentle terrain that would get them to their destination, but would add two days to their journey. In other words, another variant of the North Branch. Their mention was prophetic, as it was the route that the Gunnison Expedition took soon thereafter over a low divide to Razor Creek (then known as Eagle Tail Creek) and along Tomichi Creek to present Gunnison and into the Sapinero Basin of present Blue Mesa Reservoir, but proved impassible for wagons beyond that point.¹¹

⁸ Frederick W. Bachmann and William Swilling Wallace, eds., *The Land Between: Dr. James Schiel's Account of the Gunnison-Beckwith Expedition into the West, 1853–1854* (Los Angeles, Calif.: Westernlore Press, 1957); E. G. Beckwith, *Report of Explorations for a Route for the Pacific Railroad, by Capt. J. W. Gunnison, Topographical Engineers, near the 38th and 39th Parallels of North Latitude, from the Mouth of the Kansas River, Mo., to the Sevier Lake, in the Great Basin* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1854); and Heap, *In Central Route to the Pacific*.

⁹ Heap, *In Central Route to the Pacific*, 38. | ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 39. | ¹¹ *Ibid.*, 40.



Within two months of the Beale Expedition, the Gunnison Expedition with eighteen wagons passed through the region using Antoine Leroux as their guide. Their ascent of Cochetopa Pass was on September 2,

1853, and required work parties in the lead to cut out aspen trees on both sides of the pass. After removing trees from 0.25 miles of the route on the western side, they entered an “open prairie” and camped a mile farther downslope “in a fine field of grass, where two or three mountain rills, coming from as many small valleys, unite.”¹² The next day, they noted that the route down “Pass Creek” was crossed by several side drainages and, after four miles, opened to a wide valley on the south. This valley is what is now known as Cochetopa Park, through which County Road 17GG passes west of Cochetopa Dome. Turning north along the secondary route indicated by Heap a few months before, the party successfully traversed Razor and Tomichi creeks, bypassed to the south what they referred to as the “First Canyon of the Grand River,” which is the canyon between Gunnison and Blue Mesa Reservoir, as far as the junction of Cebolla Creek, now under the waters of Blue Mesa Reservoir. Their guide, Antoine Leroux, clearly had them on an existing trail route to that point and had hopes of finding a route that was passable for wagons beyond. Although not verified at this time, the existing route probably pulled northward away from the Gunnison River on a route that traversed very rough terrain around Curecanti Creek and over Black Mesa through what is now Maher and Crawford and down the North Fork of the Gunnison River to present Delta, to join the

main North Branch just beyond its crossing of the Gunnison River.

In 1858, Col. William Loring was tasked with improving a route from Camp Floyd, near Salt Lake City, to Fort Union, New Mexico to facilitate troop movement during what has been termed the Mormon War.¹³ Traveling from west to east from Camp Floyd with fifty wagons and three-hundred men, Loring improved much of the route of the North Branch of the Spanish Trail as a wagon road that became known as the Government Road or the Salt Lake Road. Traveling up West Pass Creek, they crossed the pass with little difficulty, noting only that they cut out “thick pine, balsam and aspen” in order to drive their wagons through. They camped on the east side of the pass, about 0.8 miles from the top.

In 1869, the Los Pinos Agency on the Ute Reservation was placed west of Cochetopa Dome in Cochetopa Park in a very isolated location that was not on any main trail or road. Access to the agency by wagon was over North Cochetopa Pass and then southward on a very rough route that was developed solely to access the agency.¹⁴

Travel Westward Beyond Cochetopa Pass

Traveling west beyond Cochetopa Pass, the Beale Expedition crossed Cochetopa Creek and continued northwest and curved southwest over mostly open, rolling terrain that was interspersed by stands of aspen, spruce, ponderosa pine, and fir trees and drained by deeply incised drainages, most notably Beaver Creek and Willow Creek. The delineation of this route was described in detail in the 2019 *Spanish Traces* article. This terrain was easily traversed on horseback, but was not suitable for travel by wagons. This unsuitability is why the Gunnison Expedition did not go that way and why no later wagon roads were built on the

¹² Beckwith, *Report of Explorations*, 47.

¹³ LeRoy R. Hafen, “Colonel Loring’s Expedition across Colorado in 1858,” *Colorado Magazine* 23, no. 2 (1946): 49–76.

¹⁴ Edward M. McCook, Governor of Colorado Territory, to General E. S. Parker, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 16 October 1869, Microcopy 234, Roll 200, National Archives, Washington, D.C.



Fig. 3: Prominent rock outcrop drawn by Gwinn Harris Heap along East Pass Creek on the eastern side of North Cochetopa Pass (Plate IX in Heap 1854). Fig. 4: Modern photo of the rock outcrop along East Pass Creek about 8 miles above the Gate of the Buffaloes and 2 miles below the top of North Cochetopa Pass. Crossing Guard Station.

route. Upon reaching the Cebolla Creek drainage by way of Huntsman Gulch, the trail continued westward through more rolling and occasionally wooded terrain with the deeply entrenched Dutch Gulch drainage providing entry to the Lake Fork of the Gunnison River at Gateview near the northern end of a rather wide, open valley. Heading north through a narrow gap and crossing the river near the present Red Bridge Campground, the trail then climbed the steep western side of the canyon on a route very similar to that taken by the current Blue Mesa Road (Gunnison County Road 25) onto Willow Creek Mesa. Once again on gentle terrain, the trail made a beeline northwest across Willow Creek and Pine Creek onto Blue Mesa.

Blue Mesa is notable because it proved to be the destination of the Gunnison Expedition when it needed to find a way to continue their journey westward after reaching the Sapinero area along the Gunnison River. Not finding a route northward above Curecanti Creek and onto Black Mesa that could be traveled by wagons, and knowing that travel farther down the Gunnison River led into the Black Canyon of the Gunnison, the Gunnison Expedition made the decision to exit the river to the southwest on a route of their own making. The incredibly difficult route they took included a precipitous climb

down to, across, and out of the canyon of the Lake Fork of the Gunnison River and onto Blue Mesa where they rejoined the more commonly traveled route taken by the Beale Expedition.¹⁵

On Blue Mesa, the route taken by the North Branch, followed by the Beale and Gunnison expeditions, reached the East Fork of Blue Creek then passed over a steep hill to Big Blue Creek, and over Blue Mesa Summit into the Cimarron River drainage. Continuing downstream past the present town of Cimarron, the route climbed along Squaw Creek to Cerro Summit. They descended the summit following Cedar Creek northwestward along the route of current U.S. Highway 50 and reached the eastern edge of the Uncompahgre Valley. The route turned southwestward through broken Mancos shale hills that became increasingly covered in greasewood and sagebrush as the crossing of the Uncompahgre River was reached. The crossing was in the vicinity of the Ute Indian Museum south of Montrose, upstream of the current U.S. Highway 550 bridge across the river. It was here, on June 23, that the Beale Expedition found the river to be in its full spring-runoff flood making it impossible to cross. Moving downstream to find a place where crossing might be possible, they reached the vicinity of present Delta, and were able to cross

¹⁵ Beckwith, *Report of Explorations*, 51–53.



to the west side of the Uncompahgre River just above its confluence with the Gunnison River, but they still had to contend with crossing to the eastern side of the Gunnison River. Moving downstream, they reached a point near the ruins of Fort

Uncompahgre and attempted to cross the Gunnison River, probably at the usual place immediately above the confluence of Roubideau Creek. Several days were spent in this endeavor in building rafts and a canoe and getting some of the men across, but the final outcome was that they lost nearly all of their equipment and supplies in the river on June 27.¹⁶ This forced the Beale Expedition to retreat back to the Cimarron River, where Lieutenant Beale recreated with some Utes and Heap and a small group of men were sent back to resupply the expedition in Taos.

Once resupplied, the Beale Expedition was able to cross the Uncompahgre River at the usual place south of present Montrose, as did the Gunnison Expedition two months later. The route from there followed present Chipeta Road and stayed on the western side of the Uncompahgre River. The route took an almost direct straight-line course onto the eastern edge of Spring Creek Mesa and continued northwestward over the mostly flat terrain of High, Ash, and California mesas to the crossing of the Gunnison River, just above the confluence of Roubideau Creek just west of the present town of Delta. From about 1828 to the early 1840s, the trail passed by and provided access to Antoine Roubidoux's Fort Uncompahgre, just before the crossing. The close connection of the North Branch with Fort Uncompahgre has made the reconstruction of the fort in Confluence Park in Delta an ideal location as the interpretive center for the trail. The trail crossing, in the present Escalante

State Wildlife Area, had a rocky bottom just above the river's entrance into the Gunnison River Canyon. The trail made another nearly direct beeline course northwest from the crossing of the Gunnison River, across Kannah Creek, to where the river reemerges from the canyon at Whitewater. Staying on the eastern side of the Gunnison River, the trail continued northwestward across Orchard Mesa to a crossing of the Colorado River just upstream of the confluence of the Colorado River. The Gunnison Expedition, finding the trail crossing unsuitable for wagons, deviated about a mile eastward from the trail route and found a crossing farther upstream on the Colorado River at what is now Los Colonias Park in southern Grand Junction. Beyond this point, the trail continued northwesterly on easily traversed terrain past Salt Creek and turned more westerly into what is now the McInnis Canyons National Conservation Area, which was described in detail in the 2019 *Spanish Traces* article.

Heap's Identification of a Second Route between Saguache and Cebolla Creek

When the Beale Expedition reached Cebolla Creek near present Powderhorn after following Huntsman Gulch into the valley, they noted that a second trail joined from the southeast. Their New Mexican guides informed them that the intersecting trail was another frequently used route that passed over South Cochetopa Pass, referred to by them as Carnero Pass. They indicated that the route was used by traders from as far away as Abiquiu at times when the snow was too deep for travel on the main route of the Old Spanish Trail. At the time, no one expected that this second route would become important to the expedition, but when they lost all of their supplies when trying to cross the Gunnison River near Delta, it was the route taken by Heap to reach Taos to resupply the mission.

The resupply mission gave Heap the opportunity to investigate the route over Carnero (South Cochetopa) Pass that was noted as intersecting the route from North Cochetopa Pass at Cebolla Creek.

¹⁶ Heap, *In Central Route to the Pacific*, 43–51.

Heap does not provide much detail about the route over Carnero Pass, as they were traveling 40–50 miles each day. It appears that they took either DelDorado Creek or Beaver creek eastward from Cebolla Creek and then followed Rock Creek to the southern part of Cochetopa Park and past the later site of the Los Pinos Indian Agency. From there, they followed Archuleta Creek and crossed over the divide on the “Puerto del Carnero.” Heap then described traveling eastward down Cantonment Creek, soon turning southward, probably down Luders Creek to Saguache Creek. At this point, he said that they had two choices they could make. The first was to continue eastward along Saguache Creek, exiting into the San Luis Valley on the trail they had initially entered from the east, or to turn southward through the La Garita Mountains. They chose the latter route, as it was shorter to their Taos destination and because it was new country for them to travel through. Once again, their description of the route is brief, but it appears that they traveled down the Middle Fork of Carnero Creek to the San Luis Valley, which they noted joined La Garita Creek in the valley.¹⁷

The Beale Expedition was not the only to identify the southern pass as Carnero Pass. As the Gunnison Expedition moved along Saguache Creek on the way to North Cochetopa Pass, they noted that an Indian Trail continued up Saguache Creek to make its way over Carnero Pass. They reported that it was supposedly equal to or superior to Cochetopa Pass as a way over the divide, but that it passed through thick timber that would take considerable work to clear to make it suitable for wagon travel. Later, after having crossed North Cochetopa Pass, Carnero Pass was once again mentioned. This time, Antoine Leroux informed them that the eastern

side of the pass was more abrupt than Cochetopa Pass and that rocks and trees along its route made it more of an impediment to wagon travel.¹⁸

Alpine’s most recent investigations of the North Branch examined both sides of South Cochetopa (Carnero) Pass.¹⁹ In 1873, Lieutenant E. F. Ruffner, on his reconnaissance of the Ute country, utilized the routes over both South (Carnero) and North Cochetopa passes providing a glimpse of them twenty years after the Beale and Gunnison expeditions.²⁰ His travels confirm them as highly suitable travel routes over the divide. The following year, in 1874, the Saguache & San Juan Toll Road was built over South Cochetopa (Carnero) Pass utilizing Rabbit Canyon, upper Luders Creek, and Cantonment Creek to access the pass from the east. It then utilized the route described generally by Beale between the pass and Cebolla Creek before turning southward along the Lake Fork of the Gunnison. This southward leg passed through the site of Lake City, built the following year, on its way to the mines of the San Juan Mountains on the upper Animas River at Animas Forks and Mineral Point and nearly reaching Silverton.

Cochetopa Pass Name Confusion

The Carnero Pass name for the southern of the two passes that cross the Continental Divide into Cochetopa Park has been lost since the Beale and Gunnison Expeditions recognized it in 1853. Another Carnero Pass is currently shown on maps to the south near the headwaters of Carnero Creek, but this is an unrelated landform. A survey of Township lines was performed in 1873 that included the Cochetopa Pass area. That map shows a road over North Cochetopa Pass with the label “Cochetope Pass.” This was the route of the North Branch taken

¹⁷ Ibid., 54–58.

¹⁸ Beckwith, *Report of Explorations*, 46, 48.

¹⁹ Michael J. Prouty, *Results of Site Recordation along the North Branch of the Old Spanish Trail – Carnero Pass on the Gunnison National Forest, Saguache County, Colorado*, Prepared for Paleocultural Research Group, on the behalf of the United States Forest Service – Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, and Gunnison National Forests, Delta, Colorado (Montrose, Colo.: Alpine Archaeological Consultants, Inc., 2019); and Michael J. Prouty, *Site Recordation of a Portion of the North Branch of the Old Spanish Trail on the Eastern Side of Cochetopa/Carnero Pass in the Rio Grande National Forest, Saguache County, Colorado*, Prepared for Paleocultural Research Group, on the behalf of the United States Forest Service, Rio Grande National Forest, Monte Vista, Colorado (Montrose, Colo.: Alpine Archaeological Consultants, Inc., 2022).

by Beale and Gunnison in 1853 and improved as a wagon road by Loring in 1858. Both the Beale and Gunnison expeditions recognized a second pass over the divide about a mile south of Cochetopa Pass as Carnero Pass, and this is shown as having an Indian Trail over it on the 1873 map without a name assigned. The section lines were surveyed for T46N R3E during the fall of 1879 and for T46N R4E in May 1880. These show that an improved road had been built over Cochetopa (North) Pass prior to 1879 that was known as the Saguache to Gunnison Road.²¹

In 1874, the Saguache & San Juan Toll Road was built from Saguache over Carnero (South Cochetopa) Pass and became a popular route for miners and supplies entering the rich mines of the San Juan Mountains. This route passed by the Los Pinos Agency and through what became Lake City in 1875 on its way over Cinnamon Pass to the upper Animas River, including Animas Forks and Silverton. It may have also served as a route over the mountains to Gunnison, though it is unclear to what extent. Interestingly, the two Township survey maps mentioned above from 1879 and 1880 show the road, but do not provide a name for the pass it crosses on the southern side of Cochetopa Dome.

In the December 1, 1877, issue of the *Saguache Chronicle*, it was noted that the rapid growth of the Gunnison Valley, including Tomichi and Ohio Creek, had created quite a demand for goods that the merchants of Saguache were anxious to supply. They advocated improvement of “the road over the old Government Military Pass [North Cochetopa Pass], which leads directly into the Gunnison Valley can be made a good road by a little work.” It noted that the Cottonwood Pass Road from Colorado Springs was blocked by snow for half the year, so Cochetopa Pass above Saguache was expected to continue as the main

route to access the Gunnison area.²² A few years later, it was noted that the road from Saguache to Gunnison was not a toll road and was the best and only practical route to take.²³ Because the route they advocated was not a toll road, it was not the Saguache & San Juan Toll Road, so was the improved route over North Cochetopa Pass that they had advocated improving in 1877. Consequently, the road shown crossing Cochetopa Pass on the northern side of Cochetopa Dome on the 1879 and 1880 GLO maps are that improved road. The route began competing with the toll road Otto Mears completed across Marshall Pass to Gunnison in 1880, which was quickly used as the route of the Denver & Rio Grande Railroad to Gunnison in 1881. The railroad certainly made the road over North Cochetopa Pass obsolete as a commercial route, relegating it to local traffic. The route was evidently improved over the pass as a well-graded cut-and-fill road in 1897 that took a slightly different route across the top of the pass and across Lujan Creek in 1897. In our work on North Cochetopa Pass; we referred to that improved route as the Old Cochetopa Pass Road.

In 1914, a state highway, known as the Salida-Gunnison Highway, was constructed across South Cochetopa Pass; it was designated State Highway 114 in 1923. With construction of the highway in 1914, the southern pass that the Beale and the Gunnison expeditions had referred to as Carnero Pass in 1853 and had otherwise been unnamed was rechristened Cochetopa Pass. This renaming of Cochetopa Pass has caused confusion to historical researchers to the present time. To further confound things, what had historically been known as Cochetopa Pass until 1914 was subsequently known as North Pass and is so designated on current maps. Paving of the route over North Cochetopa Pass was started in the 1950s. Highway 114 was rerouted to traverse North Cochetopa Pass in 1963 with final paving done in 1964.²⁴

²⁰ E. H. Ruffner, *Report of a Reconnaissance in the Ute Country, Made in the Year 1873*. (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1874).

²¹ These maps were presented in Horn, Prouty, and Johnen, “Recent Documentation of Routes of the North Branch,” 17–18.

²² *Saguache Chronicle*, 1 December 1877, 2.

²³ *Saguache Chronicle*, 8 May 1880, 1.

²⁴ Matthew W. Salek, Colorado Highways Routes 100 to 119 (2011), accessed 15 December 2016, www.mesalek.com/colo/r100-119.html#114.

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BACK TO THE OLD SPANISH TRAIL FIELD TRIP

April 30th & October 1st

9:00 am–12:00 noon

Open to the Public, FREE

Join Chris Miller, Executive Director, Fort Uncompahgre and the Interpretive Association of Western Colorado, along with Jon Horn, Alpine Archaeological Consultants, Montrose, Colorado, on a field trip to explore the Old Spanish Trail location in Delta County. Jon Horn will share with you the points of interest along the North Branch of the Old Spanish Trail (OST) and future plans to interpret the history of the trail and why Antoine Robidoux picked the strategic location for Fort Uncompahgre in an area known as Robidoux Bottoms. Jon Horn will share the location of segments of the Old Spanish Trail and its history.

While seeking the Colorado River, Juan Rivera and his company arrived at these bottoms and forded the Gunnison River in the fall of 1765. During their trips of 1776, Fathers Dominguez and Escalante also arrived at the great Delta travel gate, though they struck the river a few miles above the Robidoux Bottoms. Even to the present day, this travel gateway has been used by nearly all travelers who wished to pass north and south up the western slope of Colorado.

“Nearly all that we know about Robidoux’s old trading post comes from accounts left by such travelers. Robidoux clearly sited his enterprise at the most strategic travel gateway in the region.” — Steven G. Baker, Uncompahgre Valley Ute project, Centuries Research, Inc. Montrose, Colorado.

The movement of trade goods and livestock over the Northern Branch during the Spanish and Mexican periods provided the foundation for later American exploration starting with the Gunnison Expedition in 1853.

Fort Uncompahgre was officially certified as the first non-Federal Interpretive Center on the OST and is located at 440 North Palmer Street, Delta. The public is invited to attend one of two scheduled field trips, Saturday, April 30th and or Saturday, October 1st. Transportation will be provided by the Interpretive Association of Western Colorado. Please plan to meet at the Fort no later than 9:00am and returning no later than noon. We will be using school buses; seating is limited to the first 46 folks that sign up for each day. RSVP is required, please call 970-874-8349.



Photo courtesy Fort Uncompahgre Interpretive Center.

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FROM DUST TO GOLD: Celebrating 20 Years as a National Historic Trail

OSTA National Conference, October 20–23, 2022

Venue: Courtyard Marriott – Page/Lake Powell

Come help us celebrate the 20-year anniversary of the Old Spanish National Historic Trail at the annual OSTA conference in Page, Arizona, October 20–23, 2022.

Page, Arizona, borders the Navajo Nation and is located next to Lake Powell, the Colorado River, and a network of historic routes that included travel by Dominguez-Escalante in 1776 and Antonio Armijo in 1829.

This is your chance to experience the unique beauty of this historic landscape and network with friends—old and new. The venue will be at the beautiful Santa Fe style Courtyard Marriott Conference Center.



THURSDAY

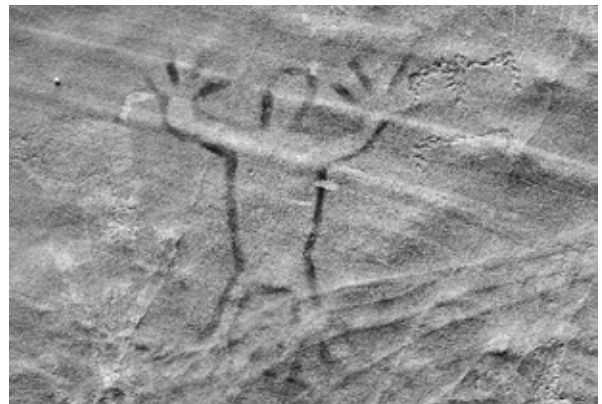
OCT 20, 2022

Early Bird Field Trips

This is an opportunity to visit world famous locations, such as Horseshoe Bend and Antelope Slot Canyon. Or you can choose to float the Colorado River below Glen Canyon Dam, kayak Lake Powell or take to the skies with a plane/helicopter tour that offers commanding views of this historic landscape. Please book your commercial tour reservations several months in advance, as demand is high. Fees Apply. Other options include free local hikes to the Hanging Garden in Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, the City of Page Rim Trail and the Toadstool Trail near the Paria River off Highway 89 in the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument. Come early to take advantage of these unique recreational adventures.

Thursday Night Reception

The conference begins with a reception offering finger foods at the Glen Canyon Conservancy Visitor Center located at 12 North Lake Powell Boulevard. The GCC is a local non-profit partner with the Glen Canyon National Recreation Area and the Grand Staircase-Escalante Monument. They serve public lands by operating book stores in southern Utah, northern Arizona, and southwestern Colorado. The reception is free to all Old Spanish Trail Association members and guests.



FRIDAY

OCT 21, 2022

Conference presentations at the spacious Marriott Conference Center will begin with a panel session to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the congressional designation of OST as a national historic trail in 2002 and to highlight the important role of the Old Spanish Trail Association as a trail advocate. The national trail designation is truly a “Dust to Gold” story that OSTA is proud of! A full slate of speakers will cover a range of topics including retracing the 1776 Dominguez-Escalante expedition from the Lees Ferry Area to the Crossing of the Fathers. Friday also features noted *Arizona Highways* photographer Leroy DeJolie, who will share his experiences photographing Navajo lands and chasing golden light across this magical landscape.

Friday Night Performance

OSTA will host a free public concert performed by noted Nashville performer and Native American violinist Arvel Bird. A prolific songwriter, five of Arvel’s musical releases have earned international music awards. One of his most cherished is his classical recording, “Tribal Music Suite: Journey of a Paiute,” a Celtic and Native American concerto for violin and Native American flute, that earned him Best Instrumental Album and Best Producer/Engineer (with Grammy-winning producer Tom Wasinger and Nashville engineer Chas Williams) at the Canadian Aboriginal Music Awards. For many years, Arvel toured with Glen Campbell, Loretta Lynn, Tom T. Hall, Ray Price, Louise Mandrell, and Clay Walker. His emotionally driven performances leave his audiences inspired, transfixed and transformed.

SATURDAY

OCT 22, 2022

Lectures resume with a session focused on recreation as an economic development opportunity as it relates to Navajo Nation heritage tourism. There will also be a panel session related to Spanish artifacts and stories of gold to further expand on the “Dust to Gold” conference theme.

Saturday Night Banquet Dinner

Join us for a wonderfully catered banquet dinner at the Courtyard Marriott. Lee Terbosic will provide an evening of exciting entertainment with his brand of magic and comedy. Lee has performed for audiences across the country with sold out theater shows and he conducts special performances for Fortune 500 companies. You won’t want to miss the banquet dinner!



Arizona Highways photographer
Leroy DeJolie

SUNDAY

OCT 23, 2022

OSTA Field Trips

The conference concludes on Sunday with a pair of OSTA-guided field trips.

Option 1:

For those choosing to head south to Lees Ferry, a fun day is scheduled enjoying a 2.5-mile round trip walk along the Colorado River upstream from Lee's Ferry boat ramp in scenic Glen Canyon National Recreation Area. The trail is a mix of gravel, rocks and sand, with no shade. In 1776, Fathers Dominguez and Escalante camped several days in this location trying to vain to ford the river before moving farther upstream where they eventually found the Ute Crossing. A century later, Lees Ferry became infamous for transporting saints, sinners, dreamers, schemers, and even a former U.S. President across the Colorado River. We'll explore their stories and the historic district of stone buildings and artifacts left behind, including Lee's Ferry Fort (1874) and Charlie Spencer's mining operation (1911 – 1914). The trail ends at the upper ferry site with a couple historic cabins and formally active spring.

Option 2:

For those heading West from Page towards Kanab there are scheduled stops at various viewpoints and short hiking excursions that will help bring to life the Armijo Route of the Old Spanish National Historic Trail. This field trip will include a discussion about two route options through the Cockscomb monocline, an imposing geologic formation.



1. Lees Ferry River Trail 2. Calico Peak – Old Paria Townsite

OSTA National Conference Schedule (Tentative)

Page, Arizona – Courtyard Marriott

Thursday, October 20 – Sunday, October 23, 2022

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 20

All Day

Early Bird Field Trips (Antelope Canyon, Colorado River Float Trip, Horseshoe Bend, Hanging Garden Trail). Fees Apply.

9:00 am

OSTA Board Meeting

2:00 – 5:00 pm

Registration at Hotel Lobby

6:00 – 7:30 pm

Reception w/finger food at the Glen Canyon Conservancy

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 21

7:00 am

Registration at Hotel Lobby

8:00 am

Paul Ostapuk

Welcome

8:15 am

Lynn Brittner

Celebrating 20 Years as a National Historic Trail

8:30 am

Panel Discussion

20th Anniversary of OSNHT

- Earl Fosdick

Timeline of National Trail Designation

- Aaron Mahr

Opportunities for Historic Trails

- Joseph Sanchez

Significance of the OSNHT

10:00 am

BREAK

10:30 am

Karlynn Bunting

Retracing the footsteps of Dominguez-Escalante Expedition

11:15 am

LeRoy DeJolie

Photography of Navajo Land: A Native Son Tells His Story

12:00 pm

LUNCH – Courtyard Marriott Catering

1:15 pm

Dee Williamson

Las Vegas Mission Records (1855-1857)

2:00 pm

Arvel Bird

Journey of a Paiute / Violin Concert Tease

2:45 pm

BREAK

3:20 pm

Rob Sweeten

BLM Agency Update

3:40 pm

Aaron Mahr

NPS Agency Update

4:00 pm

Conchita Marusich

OSTA Membership Meeting

5:00 pm

End of Session

Dinner on your own (Gone West Restaurant / Grand Circle Grille)

7:00-8:30 pm

Arvel Bird - Public Concert

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 22

Presentations continue:

8:15 am

Jon Yazzie

Recreation as Economic Development on Navajo Nation

9:00 am

Tom Rigenbach

Trails on the Navajo Nation

9:45 am

BREAK

10:30 am

Tomas Hunt

Navajo Clans and Heritage Tourism Opportunities

11:15 am

Jerry Jackman

The Lucrative Sheep Industry

12:00 pm

LUNCH – Courtyard Marriott Catering

1:15 pm

Panel Discussion

Spanish Artifacts and Stories of Gold

- Ron Chapman

True Stories of Spanish Artifacts

- Irv Kranzler

Sand Canyon

- Merle Graffam

Peg Leg Smith's Black Gold Mine

2:45 pm

BREAK

3:15 pm

Steve Heath

Survey of the 37th Latitude (Arizona / Utah Border)

4:00 pm

Jeff Frey

Route Possibilities - 1829 Armijo Caravan

4:45 pm

Paul Ostapuk

Sunday Field Trip Logistics

5:00 pm

End of Session

6:30-8:30 pm Banquet Dinner at Courtyard Marriott / Entertainment by Magician Lee Terbosic

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 23

OSTA Guided Field Trips: Heading West (Page to Kanab) and Heading South (Lees Ferry Area)



OLD SPANISH TRAIL ASSOCIATION

National Conference, October 20-23, 2022

Courtyard by Marriott (Page-Lake Powell)
600 Clubhouse Drive Page, Arizona 86040

Registration Form

Register Online at: www.OldSpanishTrail.org

Or complete this form and mail to: **Old Spanish Trail Association, P.O. Box 629, Corrales, NM 87048**
805-729-6588 (Lynn Brittner)

Name(s) _____
Address _____
Daytime Phone _____
Email _____

Conference Fee includes: Registration for Thursday Evening Reception, Presentations on Friday and Saturday, and Sunday Field Trips. Price includes Continental Breakfasts, Lunches, and Refreshments.

***** **PLEASE NOTE: REGISTRATION CLOSSES SEPTEMBER 18, 2022** *****

Current Old Spanish Trail Association (OSTA) Member? Yes ____ No ____

****New Member Conference Discount (\$5.00)** New OSTA Membership \$35 per person \$ _____

Early Bird Registration: Register by August 31, 2022

OSTA Members	\$145 per person	\$ _____
Non-Members	\$170 per person	\$ _____

Conference Registration: After August 31, 2022

OSTA Members	\$185 per person	\$ _____
Non-Members	\$210 per person	\$ _____

Saturday Banquet Dinner (Optional)

- Mixed Grill Choices or Filet of Salmon
- Magic Show Entertainment (Lee Terbosic) \$30 per person \$ _____

Please make checks payable to: Old Spanish Trail Association

TOTAL FEES: \$ _____

A limited number of rooms are held at the Courtyard Marriott with a group discount rate of \$114/night.

Phone 877.905.4495 (Discount Code: Old Spanish Trail 22) or [Book Your Marriott Room Reservation](#)

OSTA Board Executive Committee



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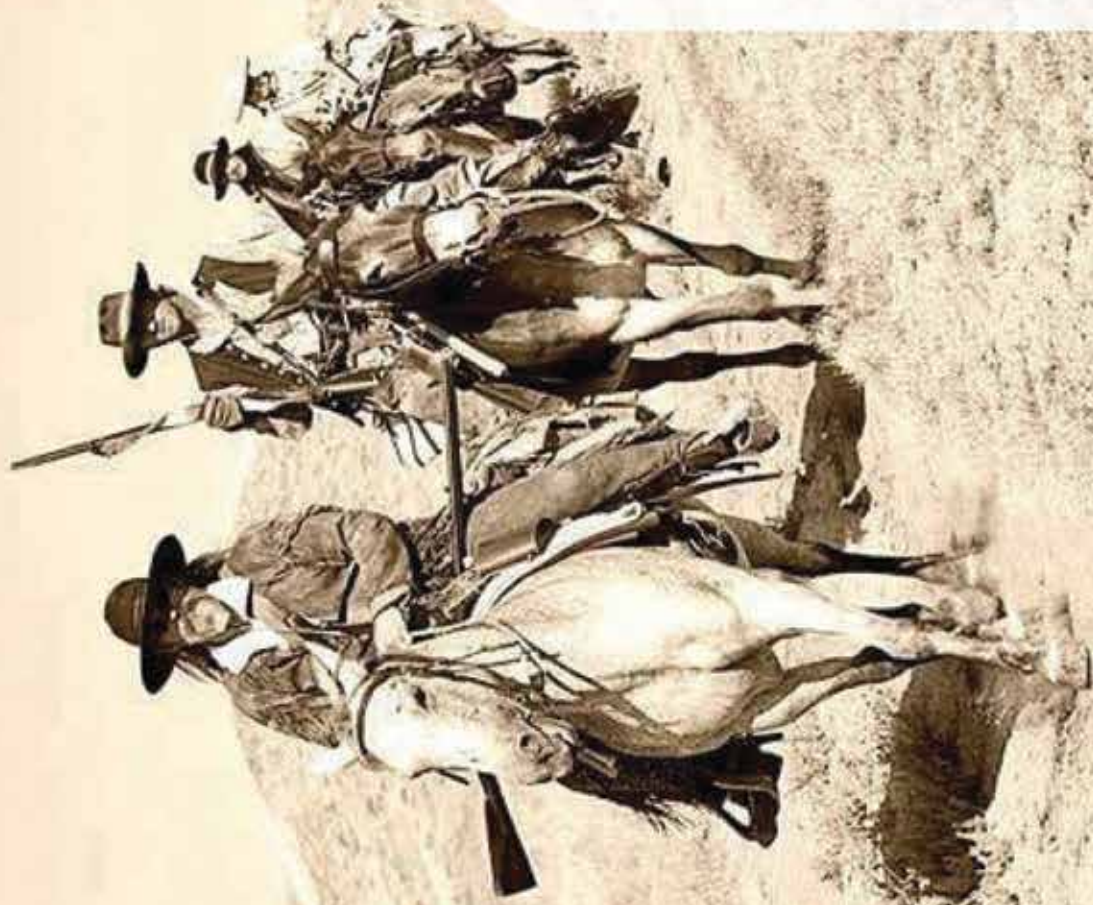


Lion's Mouth Cave, Cedar City, UT

Al and Thelma Matheson, and Andrew Saullo

Photo by Lynn Brittner

Back to OST Event, Grand Junction, CO



Spanish Traces / OSTA
c/o Lynn Brittner
P.O. Box 629
Corrales, NM 87048

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