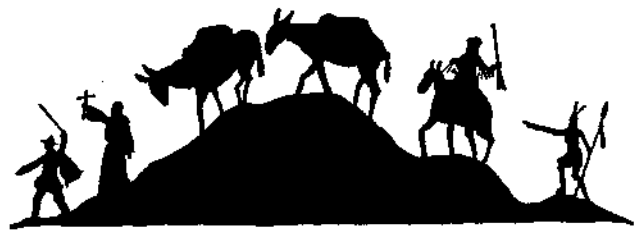


SPANISH TRACES



OLD SPANISH TRAIL ASSOCIATION

Volume 2

Spring 1996

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No. 1

SPANISH TRAIL LEADS TO GRAND JUNCTION

The West's Mightiest River Beckons

Trail aficionados from near and far will gather on the Spanish Trail's North Branch in Grand Junction, Colorado on June 8-9 for the Old Spanish Trail Association's annual conference. OSTA members, their guests, and the public are welcome to attend and learn more about the deep heritage of the Colorado Plateau and the Great Basin.

Based on the Old Spanish Trail Association's previous national meetings, we can flat guarantee that the people in attendance will be as interesting as the land and history they study. The June 8-9 weekend will be devoted to OSTA business, to fieldtrips to historic sites, and to opportunities to share research. The modern city of Grand Junction, of course, lies near the confluence of the Colorado and Gunnison rivers. The Colorado River, in days gone by, was also known as the Grand River and, to Spanish colonialists, as the *Rio Tizon*.

The North Branch Chapter of the Old Spanish Trail Association has graciously and energetically organized this year's conference. The weekend will feature field trips to the traditional ford on the Colorado, as well as visits to a nearby living history farm and a portion of the trail's North Branch along the Gunnison. (For the conference's full schedule, see below.) The cost of the conference and its various activities will be minimal. Information on the area, lodging, and restaurants is available from the Grand Junction Chamber of Commerce, 360 Grand Ave, Grand Junction 81501, (970) 242-3214. OSTA members will receive a pre-registration packet by mail sometime prior to the conference.

The business at hand...

All members and prospective members should note that June 1996 marks another deadline for annual dues. We have nearly 300 members; let's keep every single one.

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Ruth Marie Colville, ninety-something, appeals to her audience to understand the importance of the land in retracing historical events. Mrs. Colville spent more than thirty years studying don Diego de Vargas' 1694 journey across colonial New Mexico's northern frontier. Her book, *La Vereda: A Trail Through Time*, is reviewed in Book Bag on page 13. RMC is pictured here on a bridge over the Rio Grande, during a fieldtrip that marked the 300th anniversary of Vargas' nearby ford across the river.

Inside...

- Madsen on the Trail
- La Vereda book review
- Letters from all over
- Spanish Trail in Nevada

GRAND JUNCTION

(continued from page 1)

OSTA business at the June conference will focus on the election of a new president, vice-president, secretary/treasurer (these functions will be merged into one post), historian, and five directors (ideally, one from each state). Nominations for any of these offices may be made in writing to the president 30 days prior to the meeting, and at the meeting nominations will be accepted from the floor.

All four, current office-holders have expressed their desire to serve at their posts for another two-year term: Ron Kessler, president; Pat Richmond, vice-president; Janet Evans, secretary/treasurer; Phil Carson, historian. The purpose of the five directors' posts will be revisited.

Aside from the election, those present will select a location for next year's annual conference. Locations that have been mentioned include Green River, Utah; Dolores or Durango, Colorado; or Espanola, New Mexico. OSTA's by-laws may be revisited and chapters will report on their activities. Discussion may include a strategy for developing OSTA and marking and interpreting the trail. Officers will provide an update on OSTA membership and finances.

Schedule for OSTA's Third Annual Conference

Saturday, June 8, 1996

8:00-9:00am - Registration

9:00-10:00 am - Welcome. OSTA business.

10:30 am-12:30 pm- North Branch report on region's trader/trapper trails, and wagon routes. Chapter reports. Trapper exhibition.

1:00-2:30 pm - Lunch and tour at Cross Orchards Living History Farm.

3:00-4:30 pm - Field trip to "Grand River Crossing," Foresgren Ranch.

Afternoon/evening: Open

Sunday, June 9, 1996

9:00-10:00 am - Field trip to North Branch along Gunnison River. Refreshments.

10:00-11:30 am - Field trip along North Branch/Old Salt Lake Wagon Road between Grand Junction and Fort Uncompahgre.

11:30-12:30 - Tour of Fort Uncompahgre.

EDITORS CORNER

Just a thought ...

The possibility of obtaining National Historic Trail status for the Old Spanish Trail in the near future looks dim. Despite courteous efforts by the staff of Colorado's delegation to Congress, passage of a bill to study and protect the trail remains elusive. Let's face the cold, hard facts.

With a presidential election on the horizon, legislation will become increasingly political. There's big money flowing through Washington, and no Gucci-bedecked lobbyist is pushing our agenda. Secondly, OSTA ought to seek federal protections for the trail, but perhaps without an expensive study (rumored to cost \$200,000) by the National Park Service to determine its eligibility for historic trail status. The Spanish Trail's eligibility is not rocket science, it's a slam dunk, based on facts. (If the mere route of Anza's trek from Sonora to San Francisco Bay in 1776 can earn historic trail status, then the Spanish Trail should simply be designated. But you'll notice California has a large Congressional delegation.)

Why doesn't the Park Service contract with OSTA to provide succinct reports on how the trail meets historic trail criteria? We could easily provide, as honest brokers, the primary accounts, maps, articles, books, and persons that establish our point.

We don't need a bunch of federal money thrown at this thing, particularly when we get to placing interpretive signage at trail sites.

FOR THE RECORD

OSTA is dedicated to the study, preservation, and protection of the trail's historical integrity.

OSTA's purpose is to promote public awareness, encourage research efforts, work with local, state, and federal agencies, assist local chapter formation, obtain National Historic Trail status, and recognize the multi-cultural heritage of the trail.

Meetings of the national association will be held at least once every two years, and special meetings may be called by OSTA officers.

Officers are elected for two-year terms, and are nominated by a committee of five members selected by the general membership. No one may hold more than one office at a time, and no officer other than a director may serve more than two consecutive terms in the same office.

OSTA bylaws may be amended at any regular meeting of the membership by majority vote, provided the amendment has been submitted in writing to the president or board of directors at least 30 days prior to a meeting.

Meeting agendas are set by the president. Items forwarded at least 30 days prior to a meeting will be included; each member may introduce only one item of business for a vote. Otherwise, open discussion of unscheduled items will take place at the end of a meeting.

SPANISH TRACES is published by OSTA for its members. Contributions may be accepted, rejected, and/or edited by the editor. OSTA accepts no responsibility for unsolicited contributions. Those wishing their materials returned must provide a self-addressed, stamped envelope with sufficient postage. *SPANISH TRACES* reserves the right to republish at a future date any of its contents in any form.

Memberships:

Life Membership	\$100.00
Institution	\$25/year
Family	\$15/year
Individual	\$10/year
Student	\$5/year

(Life, institutional, individual, and student memberships entitle holders to one vote on OSTA business at annual meetings; family membership allows two votes. Members must be present to vote.)

Send all inquiries and membership checks to:

Old Spanish Trail Association
P.O. Box 521
Monte Vista, CO 81144

OSTA President:
Ron Kessler, c/o Adobe Village Press
P.O. Box 510, Monte Vista, CO 81144

SPANISH TRACES Editor:
Phil Carson, 2012 W. Kiowa, Colorado Springs, CO 80904

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

by Ron Kessler

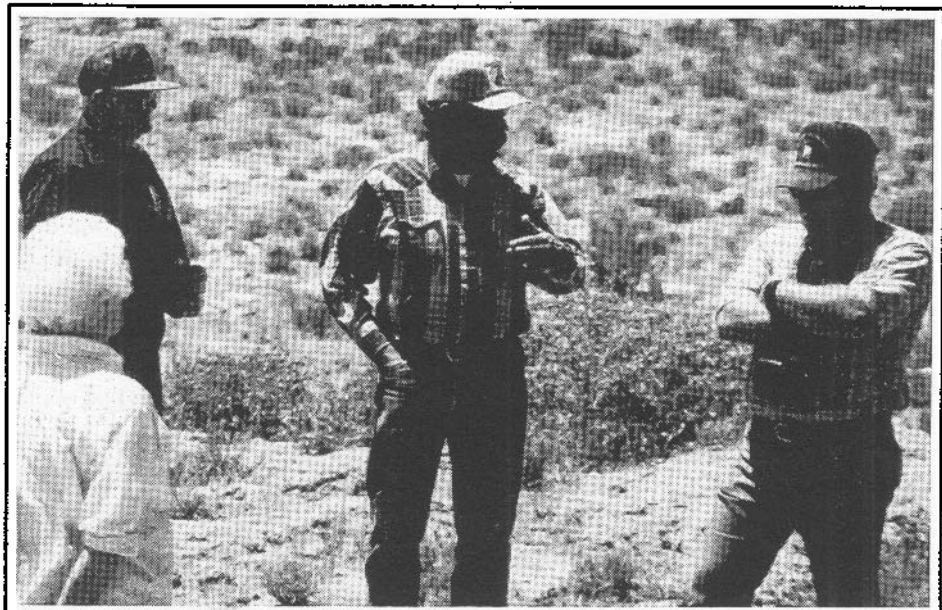
Nineteen ninety-six promises to be an exciting year for trail research and interpretation. Many interesting trail-related discoveries continue to be made, as those of you who attend the '96 national conference will soon learn. The Mesa County/North Branch Chapter has been busy making careful preparations for that meeting.

Those who miss it will lose out on a terrific experience, but rest assured we'll keep you informed of decisions and developments in the next issue of *Spanish Traces*.

As you travel to the annual conference, keep your eyes wide open. Remnants of the Spanish Trail's North Branch are found both east and west of Grand Junction. You can imagine both the hardships endured by early travelers, and their joy, as you pass through that magnificent country. Plan on extra traveling time so you can fully enjoy the experience.

If you're traveling from the Rio Grande Valley, you're already on a network of trails that hooked into the Spanish Trail. The east fork of the North Branch passed through Blanca, Colorado, on Hwy 160, as it came north from Taos, or over the mountains via Sangre de Cristo or Mosca passes. Probably, Blanca developed due to its proximity to the trail. Wagon ruts near the Rio Grande County landfill, about six miles west of Monte Vista, mark the main North Branch. (See my book, *Retracing the Old Spanish Trail/North Branch*, for precise directions.)

If you are traveling to Grand Junction from the west, don't miss a chance to visit the traditional ford on the Green River, about 2.5 miles north of the present town of Green River, Utah. West of Green River, the Emery County Historical Society has marked *Spring 1996*



OSTA President Ron Kessler, center, makes a point on a fieldtrip to see wagon ruts overlaying the Spanish Trail's North Branch in the San Luis Valley of Colorado.

the trail. Information on local sites is available at the John Wesley Powell Museum in Green River, or see Crampton and Madsen's wonderful book, *In Search of the Spanish Trail*.

Traders who left Santa Fe for Los Angeles in the 1820s through 1840s typically used the more direct, main branch that runs northwest from Santa Fe to near Moab, Utah, before looping west and southwest to California. On their return to Santa Fe, these traders might have taken the less frequently used North Branch to graze the horses and mules they brought from California. Otherwise, the North Branch saw more activity by fur trappers and traders heading north out of Taos to reach forts and camps on the upper Green River. That all these routes were once native American trails is established by the many examples of rock art along them. Aside from Crampton and Madsen's book, Leroy and Ann Hafen's *Old Spanish Trail* is a great source of information on the main branch of the trail. My own book, *Retracing the Old Spanish Trail/North Branch*, provides precise directions on sites along the North Branch.

OSTA continues to inform increasing numbers of people about the trail and its heritage. This growing awareness and continuing research will help us protect trail sites. A well-planned trip to the annual conference in Grand Junction will add greatly to your appreciation of the trail. I look forward to seeing each and every one of you there! When we meet, I hope to report to you not only on OSTA matters, but also on the first world conference on Juan Bautista de Anza. That conference is being held on May 24-26 in Arizpe, Sonora, Mexico. Anza governed New Mexico in the years 1778-1788. His defeat of the Comanche chief, Cuerno Verde, in 1779 and the Comanche peace treaty he signed in 1786 contributed to peace on colonial New Mexico's northern frontier. That in turn allowed development of the Spanish Trail in the opening decades of the nineteenth century. Just as the various branches of the trail are interconnected, so are the historical figures involved in the trail's development. See you soon.

RETRACING THE SPANISH TRAIL: SANTA FE TO THE SAN JUAN RIVER

by Steve Madsen

[Editor's note: This article is based on manuscript notes made by the late C. Gregory Crampton and Mr. Madsen in the course of research for their 1994 book, *In Search of the Spanish Trail*.]

Trail enthusiasts who venture into the plaza in the heart of Santa Fe today may not know they've arrived at the start of the Spanish Trail, the first major thoroughfare across the Southwest. There are no official reminders of the trail in that historic city center. In contrast, sign posts and monuments commemorate the Santa Fe Trail in this famous public square. Visitors learn, too, that Santa Fe served as the final stop on the Camino Real, or royal highway, from Mexico City.

The Spanish Trail is largely a forgotten trail. Until recently, few people could follow its beaten track. Now the entire 1,120 mile tortuous path that commercially linked New Mexico and California has been mapped and described in the book, *In Search of the Spanish Trail: Santa Fe to Los Angeles, 1829-1848*. [Editor's note: See page 15 for ordering information.]

Nevertheless, the often overlooked, eastern segment of the Spanish Trail demands a more detailed examination. Let's focus on the main trail through New Mexico, beginning at Santa Fe. Santa Fe thrives on its past. Its pueblo-style architecture, drenched in terracotta tones, and its blend of Hispanic, Native American, and Anglo customs lends charm to this ancient city.

Settled by Spaniards nearly 400 years ago, Santa Fe sits on the site of prehistoric Indian ruins overlooking the northern Rio Grande valley, at the western base of the Sangre de Cristo mountains. It is the oldest capital city in the United States. At one time Santa Fe served as a frontier outpost, located at the northern end of Spain's empire in North America. Through much of the Spanish colonial period,

the city was closely dependent on older settlements such as Durango, Chihuahua, and Mexico City, capital of the vice royalty. Santa Fe relied on merchandise and luxury goods which were transported over the Camino Real from Mexico City to the upper Rio Grande. The chief article of trade in New Mexico was wool, cut from churro sheep and made into textiles by both Spanish and Indian weavers.

Various attempts were made to connect New Mexico with Spain's other North American frontiers in Texas and California. The Dominguez-Escalante expedition in 1776 was one venture in this direction, but it re-mained for pathfinders of the Spanish Trail to forge that link.

The Spanish Trail looped far to the north, forming a wide arc through central Utah, then turned southwesterly, crossing southern Nevada to reach the Pacific coast. It took trail riders two

***Abiquiu,
50 miles from Santa Fe,
was the last
Spanish settlement
between
New Mexico and California***

and a half months to complete the journey in one direction.

Raw wool and locally woven, woolen fabrics – serapes, rugs, blankets, bedspreads, floor coverings – became principal items of commerce on the trail. New Mexican caravans reaching southern California exchanged their merchandise for horses and mules that they drove over the Spanish Trail to New Mexico. Pack animals were in big demand on the Santa Fe Trail and among the trappers and Indians of the West.

In autumn, the yearly California-bound pack trains gathered in Santa Fe's central plaza before departure. The occupants of the Palace of the

Governors on the square's north side – the oldest public building in the United States – witnessed much of the excitement as laden mule trains started their northward trek.¹

Following narrow side streets that radiated outward from Santa Fe's plaza, the Spanish Trail caravans followed two main, prehistoric native roads up the Rio Grande. Astride their stallions, these traders drove pack-trains up the ancient road to Taos, over a sage and juniper covered ridge.²

Five miles from Santa Fe they intersected the Rio Tesuque at Tesuque village, and descended that stream ten miles to its junction with the Poquaque River near the settlement of Poquaque.

Early trail riders then followed along the foothills of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains another seven and a half miles to reach Santa Cruz (Spanish: "Holy Cross"), founded in 1695 in the heart of the fertile Rio Grande valley. The trail passed in front of Santa Cruz' restored church and headed north.³

From Santa Cruz the trail ascended four miles along the east bank of the Rio Grande to near San Juan Pueblo, occupied by Tewa-speaking Pueblo Indians. Don Juan de Onate's colonists first settled here upon their arrival in 1598, but soon moved to the west bank of the Rio Grande to found a colony dubbed San Gabriel – the first Spanish settlement in today's American West. This stretch of trail, from Santa Fe to the Rio Grande's confluence with the Rio Chama, was described by J. S. Newberry, geographer on Captain John N. Macomb's 1859 military expedition: "Between Santa Fe and and the mouth of the Chama the country is much broken and generally sterile. Rounded gravel and eroded hills, dotted with scrubby trees of cedar and pinon, and eroded buttes of pale red, pulverulent sandstone, everywhere meet the eye and give character to the scenery. Among these wind threads of

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This portion of Bernardo Miera y Pacheco's 1778 map of colonial New Mexico's frontier shows the Provincia de Nabajoo, center, and the Rio del Norte, running vertically on the right. Above the Navajo flow the tributaries that create the San Juan River, which runs west to join the Colorado. The Spanish Trail on this map would run roughly from the lower right to the upper left corner. *Courtesy of the Palace of the Governors, Santa Fe.*

RETRACING THE TRAIL

(continued from page 4)

fertility following the courses of the streams, marked by lines of cottonwood, by meadows of coarse grass, and, in some localities by fields of grain.”⁴

At San Juan Pueblo, at the mouth of the Chama, trail riders forded the Rio Grande and tramped along the north bank of the Chama, passing by the site of San Gabriel.

Nothing remains of San Gabriel today; it languished after Santa Fe was founded. But the legacy of Juan de Onate's colonizing effort lives on. Onate's colonists brought with them large numbers of horses, and Native Americans soon acquired horses and riding skills, particularly after the Pueblo revolt in August 1680. Horses and equestrian skills rapidly spread to the native inhabitants of the plains and the mountain wilderness to the north. By the 1830s mounted Indian parties dominated much of the region threatened by the Spanish Trail.

Beyond San Gabriel our traders ascended the valley of the Rio Chama, a natural gateway to the Colorado Plateau, where they sighted *Cerro de Pedernal* (Spanish: “Flaking Stone or Flint Mountain”) on the western, then southern skyline. This flat-topped peak (9,062 ft) was a prominent landmark for early travelers on the trail. (See illustration on page 9.)

The trail from Santa Fe to Abiquiu was well-established, and wagons even made the journey to the latter village, founded by *genizaros* (Hispanicized Indians) in 1754. This is confirmed by Charles H. Dimmock, cartographer and diarist on the 1859 Macomb expedition, who reported that “between Santa Fe ... and Abiquiu, the distance and topographical features were so fully known, that it was deemed superfluous to begin the notes of the expedition, until after leaving the latter place.”⁵

Beyond Abiquiu, California-bound travelers followed a difficult trail.

Captain Macomb himself, of the U.S. War Department's Corps of Topographical Engineers, reported:

“The route has been passed over by wagons ... from Santa Fe to the upper valley of the Chama, a short distance above Abiquiu, but on the remainder of the route ... there is no evidence of a wagon having ever been seen, and a suitable road for wagons could only be made at a heavy cost ... and would doubtless meet with much opposition on the part of the Utahs [Ute Indians], whose country it would pass through.”⁶

Macomb followed long stretches of the Spanish Trail, attempting to find a feasible passageway from the upper Rio Grande to Utah's southern settlements. In 1857-58, when warfare seemed likely between the United States and the Mormons, the government needed solid information about the southeastern corridors to Utah Territory.

Because the army lacked adequate maps of the Colorado Plateau country, in April 1859 Macomb was charged with filling in the blank spaces. Consequently his expedition mapped and described much of the region touched by the Spanish Trail. Macomb's survey team reached the confluence of the Green and Colorado rivers before returning to Santa Fe. Of the scenery near Abiquiu, the trail's true jumping-off point, Charles Dimmock wrote:

“The magical variety of outline & shape to be seen in the Sandstone formations around Abiquiu – from a distorted Titan, to the minute vagaries of a Chinese fancy; from the castellated towers of architecture run mad, to the shadowy tracteries of a Fairy's home – must lead every traveller through that strange region to wander awhile from the beaten trail.”⁷

Abiquiu, some fifty miles from Santa Fe, was the last Spanish settlement on the trail between New Mexico and California. Rancho Cucamonga, in California, beckoned from more than a thousand miles away. Settled largely

by *genizaros*, Abiquiu served as a buffer between the Spanish settlements on the Rio Grande and the Utes living to the northwest. The settlement's culturally neutral position drew traders from both sides, and it developed into a trading center much as Taos had in the 17th century.⁸

Just as it had provisioned Spanish colonial expeditions beyond the Chama in the latter half of the 18th century, Abiquiu also served the mule trains that traveled the Spanish Trail after 1829. Those who rode the trail passed the adobe chapel of Santa Rosa de Lima de Abiquiu, now in ruins, one and a half miles east of present-day Abiquiu. The Dominguez-Escalante expedition visited the site on July 30, 1776 and celebrated Solemn Mass there. In subsequent years, the settlement that grew up around the church moved to its present location on higher ground, above the Chama flood plain.

In 1859 the Macomb expedition camped on the opposite bank of the Chama, nearly a mile northeast of today's Abiquiu. With Charles Dimmock's diary and map in hand we can trace the Spanish Trail from Abiquiu to a point near the El Vado Reservoir, a distance of about 32 miles.

Five miles west of Abiquiu the Chama River bends abruptly. Here the trail breaks away from the river and turns north, paralleling the modern highway. The old trace crosses open, rolling country and enters the narrow valley of Arroyo Seco Chama tributary that now empties into the Abiquiu reservoir.

The Spanish Trail ascends Arroyo Seco, past multi-colored cliffs, to a tributary, Arroyo del Yeso. The trail crosses the dry wash about one mile below Ghost Ranch, a Presbyterian retreat. The Macomb party camped at the mouth of Arroyo del Yeso, about 10 miles beyond the Chama.

Today US Highway 84 follows the route of the Spanish Trail as it ascends Arroyo Seco. Some three miles beyond

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This view of the Rio Chama looks southeast toward the Rio Grande valley from a small pass just short of Abiquiu. The humble plaza of Abiquiu witnessed the departure of many brave traders bound for distant Los Angeles in the 1830's and 40's. Their backward glances caught much the same view.

RETRACING THE TRAIL

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the mouth of Arroyo del Yeso, the trail passes Echo Amphitheater, a worthwhile stop for the modern traveler. Motorists traveling this stretch of road may appreciate J.S. Newberry's glowing description:

"There we were surrounded by a series of buttes of most varied and fantastic forms, worked out by erosion ... Their colors are exceedingly brilliant, crimson and orange being the most conspicuous. The vivid green and level valley is framed by these colored cliffs, forming a most beautiful and impressive picture."⁹

Beyond Ghost Ranch the Spanish Trail ascends Arroyo Seco 12 miles to Navajo Canyon. Before reaching the canyon the trail passes the mouth of Canjilon Creek, a Macomb campsite marked "Ojo del Navajo" on Dimmock's map. Dimmock observed

that the trail ascends Navajo Canyon over a "gently undulating sage plain," and drops down to the Rio Cebolla at the site of Alire. Macomb followed the Rio Cebolla three miles until, Dimmock noted, "the Old Spanish Trail thus far travelled is diverged from."

Leaving the trail, Macomb headed north to Pagosa Springs and Piedra Parada, near the route of Dominguez and Escalante. Macomb rejoined the Spanish Trail at the Animas River in southwest Colorado.

Beyond Rio Cebolla the country is open and wide and passage was easier. Skirting the deep canyon of the lower Nutrias, the trail ran northward to present-day El Vado Reservoir, at the crossing of the upper Chama.

On his map Dimmock shows the "Old Spanish Trail" extending toward the Rio Nutrias for three miles. That extension has been carried on across

the Nutrias and the Chama River at El Vado (Spanish: "The Ford") and beyond by F.W. von Egloffstein, whose map was based on Dimmock's notes and map, to near Burford Lake. (In 1864 Egloffstein issued his own map of the Macomb expedition route to capitalize on the market for maps as the Colorado mining districts were opened.)

The maps by don Bernardo Miera y Pacheco, cartographer on the Dominguez-Escalante expedition, also are helpful in retracing the trail. Miera's maps show the historic ford, "El Bado," above the Nutrias and immediately east of the southernmost lake west of a triad of mesas.

Appearing on Miera's map, *Plano Geographico ... 1778*, is the name *Las tres Mesas y tres Lagunas de la Trinidad*: "The three Mesas and three Lakes of the Trinity." The three lakes in question – Horse, Boulder, and

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Burford (Stinking) – are located west of the three north-south trending mesas.

Miera named the three large mesas, separated by two natural gaps, *Los Santisima Trinidad*, “The Most Holy Trinity.” The Spanish Trail threaded the southernmost gap, labeled on modern maps *La Puerta Grande*, “the open or wide gateway.”

Passing through the *Puerta Grande* and seven miles beyond the Chama, the Spanish Trail reached the north shore of *Lago Hediondo* (Spanish: “Stinking Lake,” today’s Burford Lake). The trail circled north around the lake, then headed northwest across the Jicarilla Apache Indian Reservation.

Straddling the continental divide, the Jicarilla reservation, created in 1887, is generally wooded, rough, and possesses few distinguishing landmarks. The Spanish Trail crosses the continental divide at 22 miles from the Colorado-New Mexico border.

(The Jicarilla Apache once occupied the Dry Cimarron valley and nearby mesas in northeastern New Mexico. Comanche raids in the 18th century forced them onto colonial New Mexico’s outskirts.)

The Wheeler Survey maps help trace the Spanish Trail in northern New Mexico. George M. Wheeler, of the US Army, directed one of the four, so-called “Great Surveys” of the West, in the years 1871-79. He concentrated on the Southwest, and mapped much of the region threaded by the Spanish Trail.

Wheeler’s field parties mapped virtually one-fourth of the American West. Atlas Sheet No. 69 of the Wheeler Survey clearly shows the “Old Spanish Trail” from “Hediondo L.” to Carracas on the San Juan River. On this stretch the trail runs northwest across the Jicarilla lands and adjoining Carson National Forest.

After crossing the continental divide on the Jicarilla reservation, the trail follows the drainage through Long Bridge Flat, crosses La Jara Creek, and continues northwest. It passes through the breaks of parallel igneous dikes, dubbed the Dike Rock Ridge(s) on modern maps. These two ridges are depicted on the Wheeler Survey map. Modern explorers can approach these ridges from La Jara Canyon.

After threading the ridges, the trail turns north to John Mills Lake, in Burns Canyon. It climbs another divide, and makes a gradual descent into Carracas Canyon. The trail threads Carracas Canyon to reach the Colorado border, near the San Juan River.

The San Juan is a large tributary to the Colorado River, heading in the mountains of southern Colorado and northern New Mexico, and has played a major role in the history of the re-

The San Juan River played a major role in the history of the region through which it flows

gion through which it flows. In the proto-historic period just after Onate’s founding of New Mexico in 1598, this river, dubbed by the Navajo, the Rio Grande, separated Ute lands to the north, from Navajo lands to the south. Miera’s 1778 map dubs it the “Rio de Nabajoo.”

Carracas must be a corruption of *Coraque*, the name of a southern Ute chief met by Rivera on the Rio de la Animas in 1765. During the 1870s several Hispanic settlements sprang up along the San Juan River near the mouth of Carracas Canyon. One of them, *Coraque*, was located at the mouth of the canyon of the same name.

In 1880, when the Denver & Rio Grande Railroad opened Carracas station across the San Juan, *Coraque* was

eclipsed by the new settlement and lost its name and identity. The rails are gone now and Carracas Station has disappeared, but a few people live near the mouth of the canyon where the Spanish Trail reached the San Juan.

Notes

¹ Mule breeding was introduced to the Southwest by Spaniards. These hybrid animals, a cross between a mare and a male donkey, were in big demand on the Santa Fe Trail. The “Missouri” mule may have originated in California. See *Narrative of the Adventures of Zenas Leonard* (Clearfield, Penn: D.W. Moore, 1839; reprinted, Bison Books, 1978)170

² Mexican traders would have followed the old Spanish custom of riding only stallions. See David Dary’s *Cowboy Culture: A Saga of Five Centuries* (New York: Avon Books, 1982)64. Tesuque divide is a high ridge about two miles north Santa Fe. It divides Tesuque Creek from Santa Fe Creek. See John P. Harrington, “The Ethnogeography of the Tewa Indians,” in *29th Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology: To the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, 1907-08* (Washington: GPO, 1916)465. Early land grant surveys show a “Road from Sta. Fe to Tesuque, 1878,” coterminous with the road to Taos. See also Wheeler Survey maps No. 69(D) (1876) and No. 69 (1882). Also note J.W. Abert and W.G. Peck’s map made under William H. Emory’s direction, “Map of the Territory of New Mexico ... 1846-47,” in W.H. Emory, *Notes of a Military Reconnaissance, from Fort Leavenworth, in Missouri, to San Diego, in California...* 30th Cong., 1st Sess., Ex. Doc. No. 41 (Washington: Wendell and Benthuysen, Printers, 1848), and “Plat of the City of Santa Fe Grant,” (1878), which shows the Santa Fe and Taos Road.

³ Spanish Trail parties “also departed from Santa Cruz de la Canada,” according to David J. Weber’s PhD dissertation, “The Taos Trappers: The Fur Trade from New Mexico, 1540-1846,” (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico, 1967)96

⁴ John N. Macomb. Report of an *Exploring Expedition from Santa Fe, New Mexico, to the Junction of the Grand and Green Rivers of the Great Colorado of the West, 1859, with Geological Report by Prof. J.S. Newberry* (Washington: GPO, 1876)66

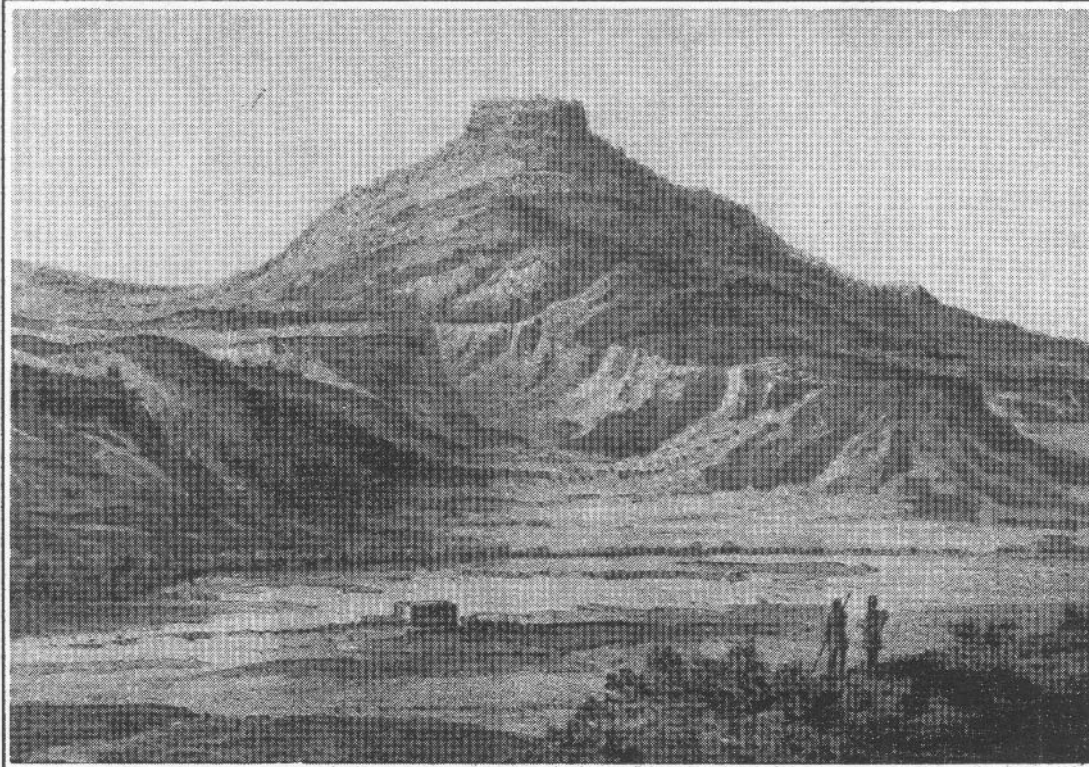
⁵ Dimmock, Charles H. 1859. *Dimmock Field Notes, Macomb Expedition of 1859*. Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Rodgers Family File, Series 1, vol. 17 (Miscellany) folder entitled, “San Juan Exploring Expedition Topographical Memoir, ca. 1856-58,” p. 1.

⁶ Macomb. Report (1876)7

⁷ Dimmock, *Field Notes*, p. 1.

⁸ By the 1820s Abiquiu’s population equaled that of Taos. Only Santa Fe and Santa Cruz surpassed Abiquiu’s 3,600 residents. In 1846 Abiquiu served as a military post against Navajo raids. By the 1850s it served as a Ute trading post. See Virginia McConnell, “Captain Baker and the San Juan Humbug,” *Colorado Magazine* 48(Winter 1971)59-75

⁹ Macomb Report (1876)70



Cerro Pedernal, 9,862 feet above sea level, towers over the Chama Valley just upstream from Abiquiu. The mountain's striking, flat top provided a distinctive landmark to travelers on the Spanish Trail, like geologist J. S. Newberry, who made this sketch on the Macomb military expedition in 1859. *Courtesy of Special Collections Department, University of Utah Libraries.*

FAR TO THE WEST

Nearly ten years ago, a land swap between the Bureau of Land Management and private parties in Las Vegas Valley led BLM archaeologists to survey 1.5 miles of the Old Spanish Trail/Mormon Road.

Keith Myhrer and Stan Rolf, archaeologists with BLM's Las Vegas District, walked 30 miles of the trail between Las Vegas Springs and the California border.

Their 1990 report, "Archaeology of the Old Spanish Trail/Mormon Road, from Las Vegas, Nevada to the California Border," in the BLM's series, "Contributions to the Study of Cultural Resources," Technical Report 17, states:

"Historic research indicates that this trail was forged in 1844 and utilized as an immigration route until 1905, with some localized traffic until the 1940s.

In spite of disturbance from off-road activities and contemporary urban construction in one of the fastest-growing areas in the nation, some sections of the trail in southern Nevada retain some degree of integrity. With the exception of 19 miles where paved highway has covered the trail, artifacts still remain along the historic route."

"The portion (of Trail) that ran through southern Nevada was likely one of the roughest, due to the sparse spacing of springs...(which) averages over 17 miles"

The authors wisely cautioned, "We do not believe that the alignment (route) referred to in this document is the only route of either the Old Spanish Trail or the Mormon Road. (Yet it) is a historic trail and based on

the dating of artifacts and the direction of the (route) it fits... both routes."

Archaeologist William White analyzed 75 artifacts collected along the trail walked by Myhrer and Rolf, and wrote:

"The portion [of trail] that ran through southern Nevada was likely one of the roughest, due to the sparse spacing of springs... [which] averages over 17 miles. Based on the absence of recorded dry camps, trail users probably attempted to make it from one spring to another within one day."

The artifacts discovered along this portion of trail "indicates that heaviest use of the trail occurred from the 1860s up to the 1920s." The authors concluded, based on their survey, that perhaps 20 percent of the trail remains undisturbed, at least in the Mohave Valley. Perhaps 40 percent has been disturbed by off-road vehicles. Thus some 60 percent still exists as a trail. These authors recommended National Historic Trail status for the route.

[Editor: More to come on this study.]

FROM FOOTPATHS TO MULE TRAINS: ORIGINS OF THE OLD SPANISH TRAIL

[Third in a three-part series]

by
Phil Carson

The "Spanish" in Old Spanish Trail derives from the long Spanish influence on a route that eventually linked New Mexico with California in the Mexican era. Though some question the validity of the trail's name, our overview of the trail's origins should dispel any mystery.

Since the 1620s Spanish traders, soldiers, and missionaries had ridden up the Rio Chama to reach the Navajos on colonial New Mexico's northwest frontier. This early traffic reached today's San Juan River, the Navajo's "Rio Grande." Ute Indians soon descended the Chama to reach Pueblo towns and Spanish settlements on the upper *Rio del Norte*, today's Rio Grande.

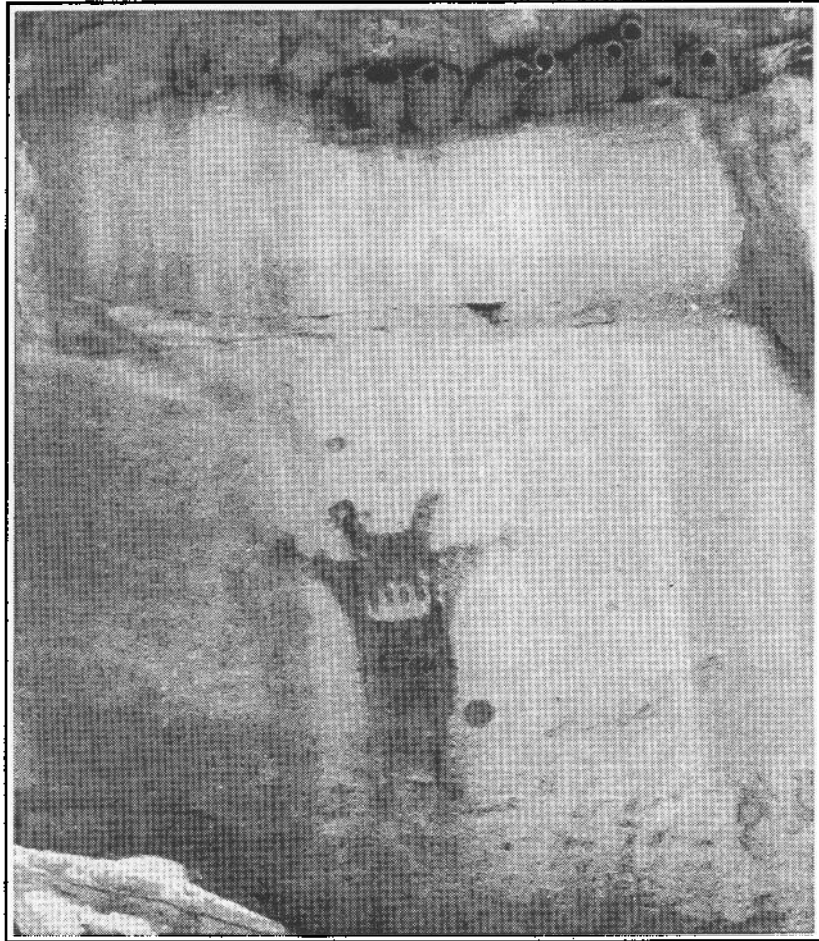
After a Spanish-Navajo peace in 1720, Spaniards followed their Ute friends beyond Navajo country, across the San Juan River, and into the labyrinthine Colorado Plateau to reach Ute homelands.

One Spanish expedition in 1742 in search of rumored silver in the northwestern mountains bestowed the name Sierra de la Plata, which still adorns mountains in southwest Colorado.

This trend culminated in well-documented *entradas* to the Colorado River by Juan Maria Antonio de Rivera in 1765 and an *entrada* into western Utah by the Franciscan fathers, Dominguez and Escalante, in 1776-77.

By the time Dominguez and Escalante made their *entrada*, Spanish frontiersmen regularly exploited the Chama route to Ute country.

The year after Dominguez and Escalante returned to Santa Fe, one of their companions, don Bernardo Miera y Pacheco, created a map of the head



The Franciscan fathers, Dominguez and Escalante, probably saw this startling pictograph (an image painted on rock) during their lengthy sojourn across the Colorado Plateau in 1776-77. This and other images, thought to have been made between 900-1400 AD by Fremont Indians in present-day Douglas Creek's canyon, led the padres to dub the area *Canon Pintado*, "Painted Canyon." It runs north-south along Colorado's western edge, north of Grand Junction.

waters of the Rio del Norte and the Rio Tizon, or Colorado River. (A portion of this map appears on page 5.)

Don Bernardo's map reflects geographic knowledge far beyond what he saw with the padres in 1776. Evidently he gleaned much from Spanish frontiersmen who illicitly plied the Ute trade. Men who risked their lives to obtain by barter the Ute's expertly tanned hides at low-cost were not deterred by mere legalities. Spanish officials tried in vain to stem the frontier trade in this period. In 1778 officials issued a *bando*, or proclamation, prohibiting New Mexican settlers and Pueblo Indians from trading with the Utes.¹

In 1785 numerous men were tried for trading with the Utes. Records preserve their humble names – Vicente Serna, Marcellino Manzanares, Salvador Salazar, Santiago Lucero, Francisco Valverde – and almost put faces on persons difficult to envision.²

The northern frontier became safer after 1779, when New Mexico Governor Juan Bautista de Anza defeated the Comanche chief, Cuerno Verde. Anza's 1786 peace with the entire Comanche nation added to New Mexicans' security.

The frontier trade, legal and otherwise, flourished late in the 18th century. In 1797 Cristoval Lovato landed in court for his arduous journeys to Ute

(continued on page 11) Spring 1996

FROM FOOTPATHS

(continued from page 10)

country.³ Apparently, as long as potential profits outweighed the risk of death on the frontier, or legal transgressions at home, New Mexico's frontiersmen would ply their trade. That included slave raids on weak Ute tribes.

The slave trade would flourish through the Mexican era, 1821-1846, and add to traffic on the Spanish Trail in its heyday, 1829-1848. Only the Mormon settlement of Utah stopped it.

The Comanche threat had receded, but various Ute bands became belligerent as Spanish traffic into the Colorado Plateau increased. Grizzly bear and cougar still ruled canyons and mesas on New Mexico's frontier. Fat diamondbacks, then as now, could be coiled in any arroyo. The burning sun taunted, like a supreme enemy.

Political events aided those venturing up the Chama. The United States' Louisiana Purchase in 1803 and Lewis and Clark's journey up the Missouri – and across vast New Mexico's northern frontier – drew official Spanish attention to New Mexico's northeastern frontier.

New Mexico's governors now kept scouts scouring the plains and mountains on the northern and northeastern frontiers for Americans. Meanwhile, furtive mule trains crept up the Chama. Occasionally, a veteran trader worked as an interpreter, which combined the roles of ambassador and scout. Manuel Mestas, a *genizaro* (Christianized Indian) from Abiquiu, was such a man.

In 1805 Mestas made a month-long journey to Utah Lake in north-central Utah to retrieve stolen Spanish horses from Ute thieves. Mestas turned seventy that year. As a resident of Abiquiu, and with 50 years on the Ute frontier, Mestas knew his neighbors and their country intimately.

Though the Spaniards' "search for the fabulous" had faded, they still sought to locate "a Spanish settlement
Spring 1996

which the Yutas have always asserted lay beyond their territory."⁴ In 1811, Don Jose Rafael Sarracino, New Mexico's postmaster, reportedly made an epic search for that legendary settlement by heading northwest up the Chama.

"After having traveled for three months, he was finally stopped by a large river," according to Don Pedro Bautista Pino, writing in 1812. Sarracino found among the Indians "knives, razors, and awls," of European manufacture, but could not find a ford across a wide river. The Indians indicated that the metal implements came from peoples still farther to the northwest.⁵

Sarracino may have reached the *Rio Tizon*, or Colorado River, if Pino means he traveled three months round-trip. If Sarracino traveled three months each way, he may have reached the Green River or beyond. Details are lacking.

Mexican independence in 1821 sent French-American and Anglo-American traders and trappers west from Missouri to Santa Fe and its materially starved markets. Soon these trappers, based in Taos, fanned out west along the Gila River, north up the *Rio del Norte*, and northwest up the Chama.

William Becknell, the first American to exploit the Missouri-New Mexico trade, wrote home about his experiences in the San Juan Mountains of southwest Colorado in 1824.

Becknell, led by Hispanic frontiersmen, apparently traced the Rio Chama route to near Dolores, Colorado, where he may have seen the same ruins as Juan Maria Antonio de Rivera 60 years earlier.

"I discovered old diggings, and the remains of furnaces," Becknell wrote. "There are also in this neighborhood the remains of many small stone houses ..."⁶

Though Becknell originally sought Oregon in this direction, his position 40 days' travel from the settlements

had landed him in deep winter weather. In spring he retreated and did not return.

Others filled the void. Those who plied the streams west and north of New Mexico included many familiar names in the annals of the American West: Etienne Provost, Jedediah Smith, Antoine Robidoux, Ewing Young, William Wolfskill, Ceran St. Vrain, and Christopher Carson.

Wolfskill and Young ascended the Chama to trap the San Juan, Dolores, and Green rivers in 1824. Provost and Robidoux exploited a trail north up the Rio Grande valley to reach the upper Green, or Seedskeedee River. Their route would become known as the Spanish Trail's North Branch.

In 1826 Jedediah Smith traveled from the Great Salt Lake southwest to the lower Colorado River and California. Although he only briefly paralleled the Old Spanish Trail, Smith's basic geographic connections proved influential. The next year two parties trapped west from New Mexico clear to California via the Gila River.

In 1829 Ewing Young, with young Kit Carson, trapped west from New Mexico to Los Angeles via Zuni Pueblo and the Salt and Verde rivers. Young returned east to New Mexico in 1830.

By 1829 numerous beaver-trapping parties had tied New Mexico to California. The economic lure for this dangerous traverse now changed.

That year New Mexican merchant Antonio Armijo led the first commercial pack train from New Mexico to California and exchanged woolen goods for horses and mules. His journey directly initiated an annual caravan trade between the two provinces. Armijo did not travel along the route later known as the Old Spanish Trail, but along a southern variant that hugged the Utah-Arizona state line, north of Grand Canyon.

Armijo is to the Spanish Trail as William Becknell is to the Santa Fe Trail: In making a historic journey,

(continued on page 12)

FROM FOOTPATHS

(continued from page 11)

each man merely stood on the shoulders of those who went before. Yet their names have become inextricably linked to a trail long-trod by others.

The importance of Armijo's predecessors cannot be overstated. As historian LeRoy Hafen has written: "Without an assurance of reaching the Pacific, no party would have set out with an organized pack horse train of goods to barter in California."⁷

Rafael Rivera, who guided Armijo on the western part of his 1829 journey, had been to California and back the previous year. Scholar Elizabeth Warren, who has studied Armijo's journey, believes that Rivera himself may have convinced Armijo to make his historic trek.

In September 1830 William Wolfskill and George Yount used the Chama route to the Colorado River's ford, crossed the tortuous San Rafael Swell, and followed a trail blazed by Jedediah Smith that led southwest to Los Angeles.

Though these two men settled in California, they sparked two decades of intensive trade over trails that linked the American frontier in Missouri to the Pacific. One of those trails led from Santa Fe to Los Angeles and was indeed quite old, and indelibly Spanish.

NOTES

¹ See Ralph E. Twitchell, *The Spanish Archives of New Mexico* (Cedar Rapids: Torch Press, 1914) vol II, p. 263

² Ibid., p. 263

³ Ibid., p. 384

⁴ Carroll & Haggard, *Three NM Chronicles*, 134

⁵ Ibid., 134

⁶ David J. Weber, "William Becknell as Mountain Man: Two Letters," *New Mexico Historical Review* 46(1971)257-58

⁷ Leroy & Ann Hafen, *Old Spanish Trail* (Glendale: Arthur H. Clark, 1954; reprinted 1993)156

LETTERS

Editor's Note: Letters from along the trail, from across the country and around the world have been arriving with heartening frequency. We'll devote the necessary space to sharing them with you. Please write! We'd like to hear about your trail experiences, research, and events.

Curious in Jacksonville

Read about your organization in *Wild West Magazine*, February 1996. Am very much interested in anything pertaining to the Old West. Would like more information, if available.

James Misdom

Jacksonville, Florida

Wondering in Tipton

My name is Fred L. Jones (64 years old) and I just read an article on the Old Spanish Trail in *Wild West*. I would like to know how to acquire the latest, most accurate book. I'd like to be part of your organization and learn what I can. I already have membership in the Santa Fe Trail Association. I note that C. Gregory Crampton and Steve Madsen retraced the entire trail, mile by mile, and documented it over passes and through canyons, and across rivers. If all this be true, then I'm assuming there should be magazine articles and maybe even a book about them. I'd like to investigate backpacking or horsebacking part or all of the trail. I have a map about 14" x 20" from the U.S. Department of the Interior that shows all of the old trails of North America. It's quite interesting. It has the Old Spanish Trail, plus others.

Fred L. Jones

Tipton, Indiana

Searching for Yount

I'm writing a paper on the Western trapper, explorer, and vintner George C. Yount. I understand he had some

involvement with the opening of the Old Santa Fe Trail and the Old Spanish Trail. Any information you might have would be appreciated.

John C. Funk Jr.

1115 Austin Way

Napa, CA 94558

Interested in Vernal

For some time I have studied as well as traversed parts of the Old Spanish Trail. I am very much interested in joining your organization.

Bob Nielson

Vernal, Utah

Registered in Huntington

The Emery County Historical Society has registered 18 photographs and locations of Spanish Markers in Emery County, with the Utah Division of State History Markers and Monuments Program. We have expressed our desire to have the Huntington Creek Crossing made into a historical site, as it was the most northern point on the entire Spanish Trail. I have enjoyed every word of *Spanish Traces*.

Vernell Rowley

Huntington, Utah

Joyful in Joseph

I read about your organization in the September 1995 issue of *Backpacker* magazine. In 1993, after correspondence with Steve Madsen [co-author of *In Search of the Spanish Trail*], I developed and rode a bicycle over a close approximation of the Trail between the two terminal cities. I'm writing a guidebook about my experiences. The route uses a combination of paved highways, utility corridors, four-wheel drive roads, and single tracks through some of the most beautiful yet sometimes hostile country in North America. It covers just a shade over 1,300 miles from Old Town Plaza Park in Los Angeles to the Governor's Palace and Plaza Park in downtown Santa Fe. I'm also developing a slide show about the Trail. I'd like to become involved in your deserving

(continued on page 13) Spring 1996

LETTERS

(continued from page 12)

effort. Anyone who has traveled over the Spanish Trail can't help but become addicted.

Louis T. McCombs
Joseph, Utah

Scheming in Vancouver

My wife and I are busy scheming and dreaming of a December trip that includes hiking parts of the Old Spanish Trail. We are busy armchair travelling at the moment, trying to get information on places and hikes in the area between Santa Fe and Los Angeles. We read about you in *Backpacker*, September 1995.

Garath Hill
Vancouver, British Columbia

Involved in Aurora

The Colorado Chapter of the Oregon-California Trail Association (OCTA) met this spring to ascertain our overall role in preservation of trails and trail history. Colorado has numerous trails of historic significance. OCTA is concerned with these trails, since they were part of the network of overland trails that played an important part in moving goods and people during western expansionism. We foster the notion that Colorado trails were vital to the western movement. Since I was elected the new chapter president, it's my responsibility to find out what other historical trail groups in Colorado are doing and begin building connections with these groups. OCTA is supportive of your endeavor to gain National Historic Trail status for the Old Spanish Trail.

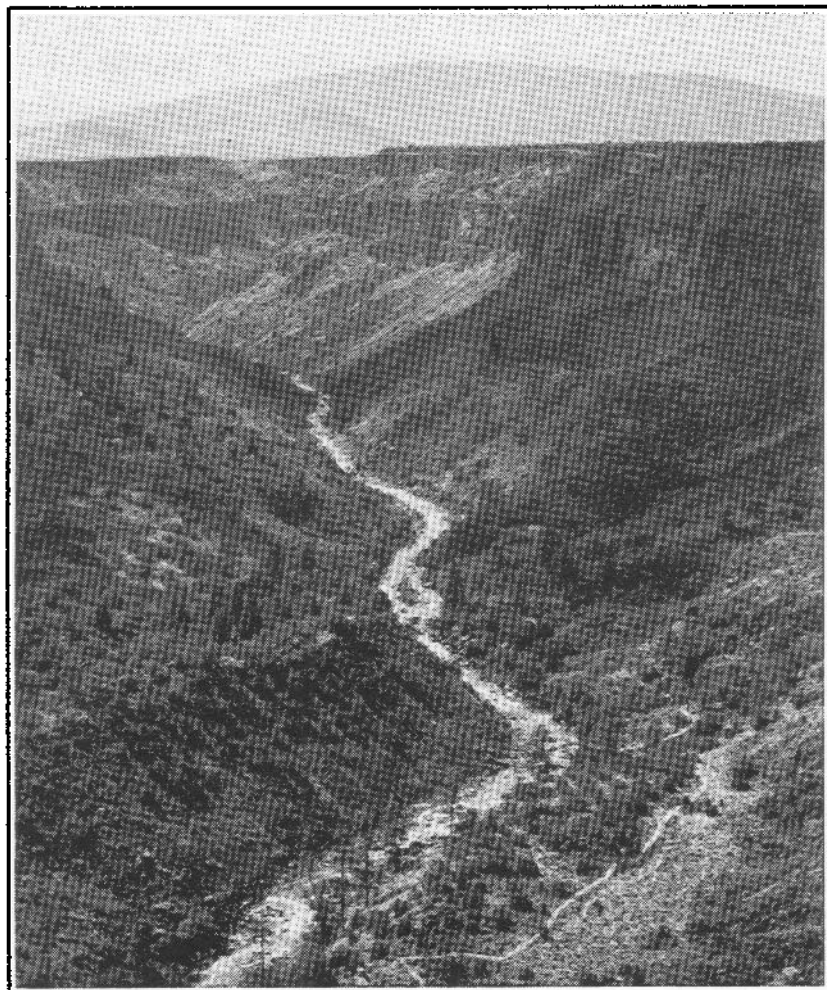
Terri Tiehen
3729 S. Ensenada St.
Aurora, CO 80013

CORRECTIONS

[We make mistakes. Please let us know.]

Pages 13-14, Fall 1995 issue: The recipient of a grant was incorrectly identified. Actually, The Grand Junction-Mesa County Riverfront Foundation received a \$5,000 grant from the Colorado Historical Society to research "Historic Trails in Grand Valley, Western Colorado." Bill Chenoweth and Jim Robb are the re-searchers. The Northern Branch of the Spanish Trail is one trail under investigation. Our apology for the error.

Spring 1996



In 1694 Governor Vargas journeyed several days' ride north of Taos Pueblo to avoid ambush by Taosenos, and to get around the formidable Rio Grande gorge, pictured here west of Questa, New Mexico. The view looks north toward looming Ute Mountain, near today's New Mexico-Colorado stateline.

BOOKBAG

La Vereda: A Trail Through Time

By Ruth Marie Colville
San Luis Valley Historical Society,
Alamosa, Colo.
Hardcover, 367 pp., 1996, \$30
ISBN: 0-9650-560. 4-X

Time itself is a trail, one of indeterminate length. It holds hazards. It can bestow gifts.

In literature, those with time — time enough to know a subject intimately, time enough to capture it in writing — will produce the most illuminating books.

In that sense, time has been a blessing for Ruth Marie Colville's thirty-

year quest to retrace the 1694 *entrada* of the New Mexico governor, don Diego de Vargas.

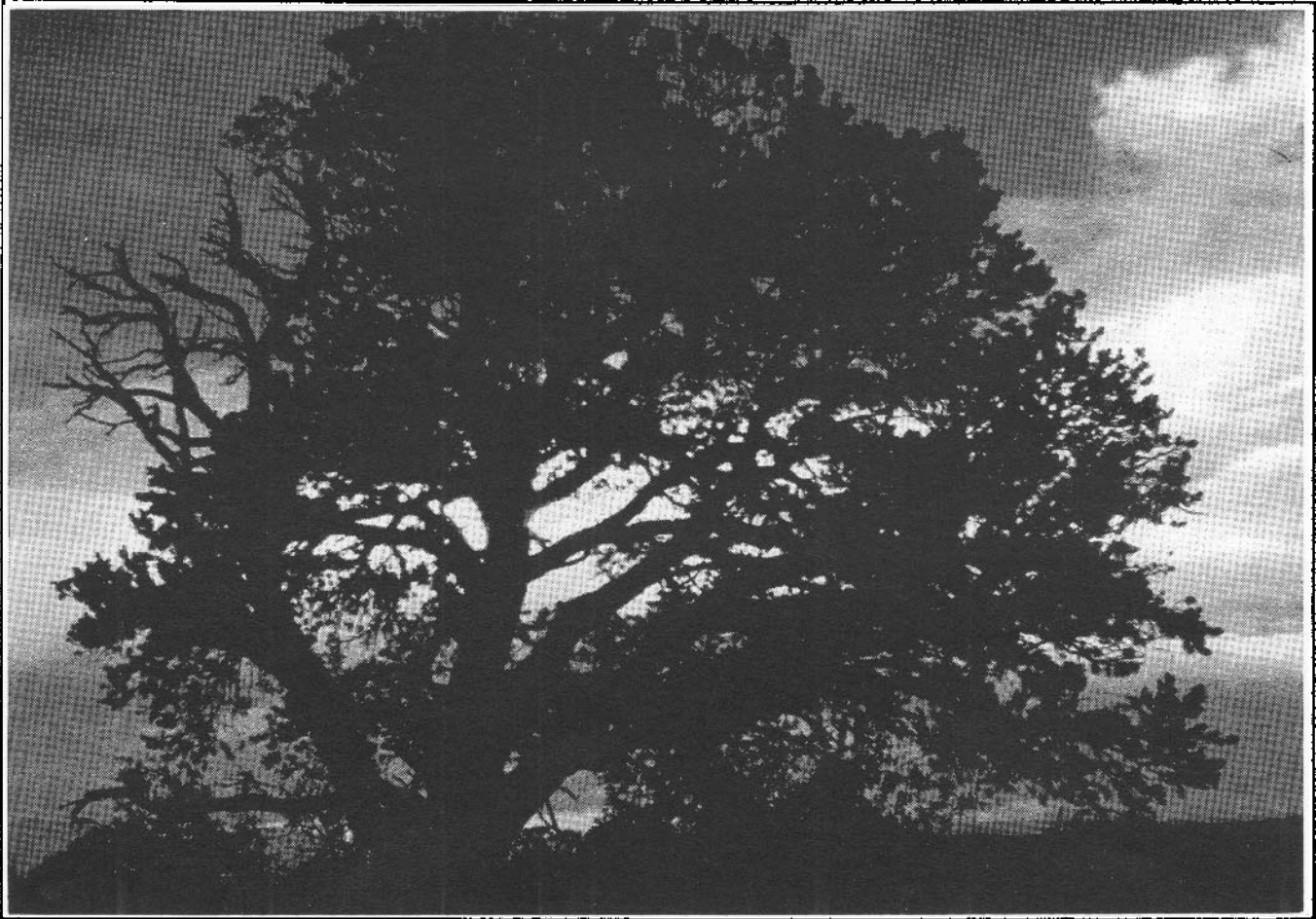
Since the early 1960s, this school-teacher, ranch wife and mother, and historian from Del Norte, Colorado, has meticulously traced Vargas' journey from Santa Fe north into Colorado's San Luis Valley and back.

Throughout that time she has produced countless articles and scholarly reports on various aspects of her region's heritage. But the retracing of Vargas' critically important journey has been her crowning achievement.

She has illuminated the region's early native and Spanish colonial past, a long-overdue task for Colorado his-

(continued on page 14)

Scanned Reprint 2007



The many branches of history that created the Spanish Trail are as complex as the limbs on this pinon pine, perched on the edge of the Dolores Canyon, just east of the trail near Dove Creek, Colorado.

BOOKBAG

(continued from page 13)

torians. She has breathed life into a distant historical figure, and demonstrated the truth of one of her favorite observations:

"I'm a place person in the study of history. I want to see where things occurred," she once told me. "The land will tell you things you cannot learn elsewhere."

For those of us fortunate to know Mrs. Colville personally, there is nothing incongruous in her patient, persistent inquiry into this aspect of the upper Rio Grande's heritage. Today at 90-something, she is an amiable yet demanding presence, and a vigorous conversationalist.

"We're just like little boats on the river of time," she once remarked, in

the midst of conversation on another subject.

To those who don't know her, the thought of a woman in her late fifties, having raised a large and active family on a ranch on the upper Rio Grande, embarking upon such a grand intellectual and physical challenge at the close of the Eisenhower Administration, might seem a tad different.

But from such individuals, intellectually capable and relentless, with no pressing plans for publication, comes the cutting edge research in the American West today. Mrs. Colville, as a non-professional historian, has used her time wisely. She delved to the very bottom, and to the heights, of her subject, sometimes slipping away from home before daybreak to see how Vargas might have seen a certain sight in the morning.

When the time came to wrap up the joyous fieldwork and provide a scholarly legacy for those who might follow, past her 90th year, she turned three decades of work into a compelling book of some 400 pages.

La Vereda is truly a trail through time: It retraces Vargas' critical journey of 1694 up and down the ancient native trails of northern New Mexico and southern Colorado. It takes the reader back to Spanish colonial times and the fascinating conflicts and alliances between early Europeans and the region's varied native peoples. And *La Vereda* is Mrs. Colville's own, personal journey to the very heart of the native and Hispanic Southwest.

In terms of scholarship, she has brought to publication the first translation of Vargas' 1694 trek in a half-century, and provided a day-by-day, mile-

by- mile recounting of the governor's trail through stupendous country.

A quick recapitulation of the Vargas entrada, before we look closer at Mrs. Colville's book.

Vargas' 1694 journey proved crucial to the Spanish reconquest of New Mexico after the Pueblo revolt in 1680; the success of his trek in 1694 established a permanent Hispanic presence in the West. He took an army north from Santa Fe to Taos, loaded a lengthy muletrain with Indian corn (he tried to buy or barter, but the Taos remained hostile to a renewed Spanish presence in their land), and to escape ambush, he traveled north to the uppermost Rio Grande. He had to avoid the river's deep gorge (pictured here), and reach the west side of the valley, controlled by friendly Utes.

In Colorado's San Luis Valley, a Tewa Indian showed him a traditional ford across the mighty river.

It might be said that the success of Vargas' mission rested on his successful ford across the Rio Grande on July 10, 1694. This reviewer had the privilege to join Mrs. Colville and others at the site of that ford on July 10, 1994, 300 years to the day after Vargas passed.

At that time, she remarked: "We don't know enough about the early history of this part of the country. We know about Washington crossing the Delaware, but we don't talk about Vargas crossing the Rio Grande."

Mrs. Colville's new book, *La*

Vereda, will go far toward rectifying the situation. It should be used in high school and university history courses. And it makes warm, fascinating armchair entertainment. Through affectionate prose, Mrs. Colville takes the reader far from home, on an adventure across forgotten frontiers.

The book opens with a series of outstanding maps by Saguache, Colorado artist Yvonne Halburian, currently the president of the Saguache Chapter of the Old Spanish Trail Association.

Each chapter is a day on Vargas' trail, from June 30 at Santa Fe to the July 10 crossing of the Rio Grande, to a fascinating encounter with Utes. Everywhere lurks danger, and the promise of salvation. The sun, the sage, the shadows and stars all inhabit this narrative.

Each chapter opens with the Spanish text of Vargas' diary entry, and its English translation. Then the author provides a narrative account of the day's action, and travel, often digressing to link that time to the present. Sources follow each chapter.

The authoritative tone, the clarity of language, the depth of detail reflects the author's thorough immersion in her scholarship. This work is cutting edge because it is not the product of an academic environment, it is of the land itself.

Fortunately for those who follow, Mrs. Colville has taken the time to embrace a subject with no overriding goal but the joy of the journey itself.

She has bestowed yet another lyrical gift upon her *compadres* of the San Luis Valley and, indeed, to those of us who live beyond it.

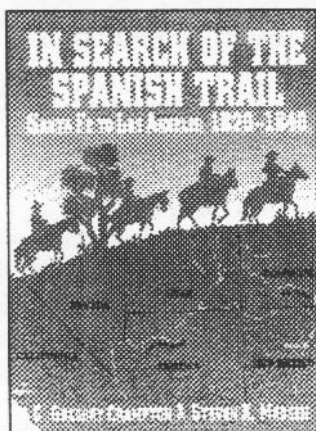
This animating spirit is reflected in the section of black-and-white photographs provided at the book's end. These images show the austere land of the upper Rio Grande, its people and creatures, in that stark yet enchanting light so many love – but few know as well as Mrs. Colville.

La Vereda is indeed many books. One of its chief values is the inclusion of a "Trail Guide," in a pocket on its inside cover. Wisely, the author opted to save the sometimes tedious directions for motorists, hikers, and horseback riders for a separate account. Her "Trail Guide" could set a standard for the genre.

The book itself is handsome, but not without a few shortcomings. For a work of this depth, destined to be a critical reference source, it should have an index. No doubt that will be corrected in the next edition, which it surely deserves.

Anyone interested in the direct connections between this region's Native American and Spanish colonial heritage and the formation of the Spanish Trail and its various branches will find *La Vereda* not only informative, but imbued with the vigor of its author and a life rooted in the land.

La Vereda is that rare blend of scholarship and poetry seasoned by time. It is the work of a lifetime.



In Search Of The Spanish Trail: Santa Fe To Los Angeles 1829-1848

This is the first study to locate and map the historic Spanish Trail! More than 200 photos and 12 maps show the trail and locate the travel route. As fascinating for field treks as armchair journeys.

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ROAD APPLES

OSTA President Ron Kessler and other OSTA members plan to attend the first world conference on New Mexico's 18th century governor, Juan Bautista de Anza, in Arizpe, Sonora,

Mexico, May 24-26, 1996. (Registration closed in April.) Anza's defeat of Comanche chief Cuerno Verde in 1779 provided a peace that contributed to use of the Spanish Trail.

* * *

Spanish Traces will be sent to a few dozen historical societies, museums, and newspapers along more than 1,000 miles of trail this spring in a renewed effort to attract new members and organizations to OSTA.

We need members in New Mexico, Utah, Nevada, Arizona, and California to bring breadth to our efforts, and to help publicize OSTA. If you can lend a hand, contact Ron Kessler at OSTA, Box 521, Monte Vista, CO 81144.

CALENDAR

[Editor: The following "calendar" will tell you what the active Saguache County Chapter is doing with people smart enough to join them! Let's hear more from other chapters, so those outside your circle can learn about trail opportunities. Deadline for the next issue is September 15, 1996; editorial address is found at the bottom of page two.]

May 18 ... Saguache County Chapter, OSTA, conducts a fieldtrip from Cochetopa Pass outside Saguache in Colorado's San Luis Valley, to the Tomichi and Gunnison rivers. The group will explore 14 PPRoad to Doyleville, and possibly Road 3076 from Parlin. Meet at Otto Mears Park in Saguache, 9 am. Contact Yvonne Halburian, (719) 655-2529 for this or following SCC activities.

June 8-9 ... OSTA National Meeting, Grand Junction, Colo. See details on pages one and two. Contact Ron Kessler, (719) 852-5225.

June 15 ... Saguache County Chapter follows Spanish Trail's North Branch from Saguache to Cantonment Creek site of Major Thomas E. Rose's 19th century camp. Meet at Otto Mears Park, Saguache, Colo., 9 am.

July 20 ... Saguache County Chapter visits ancient rock art and solstice site on Carpenter Ridge. Meet at school at intersection of Hwys 160 and 285, Monte Vista, Colo., 9 am.

DUES ARE DUE

Please renew your membership today by mail, or at the national meeting, June 8-9 in Grand Junction, and keep *Spanish Traces* coming to your mailbox.

Everyone's dues are due by June. You can mail them to: OSTA, P.O. Box 521, Monte Vista, CO 81144.

Thanks again to lifetime members!

NEXT ISSUE

In our next issue we hope to bring you more reports from the western portions of the Spanish Trail, a few of Mrs. Colville's photographs, a close look at unpublished accounts of trail use in the 1740s, and articles by new authors.

Chapters wishing to include information in the fall issue must have material to the editor by September 15, 1996. Potential authors must correspond by August 1.

SPANISH TRACES

Old Spanish Trail Association
P.O. Box 521
Monte Vista, CO 81144