

SPANISH TRACES

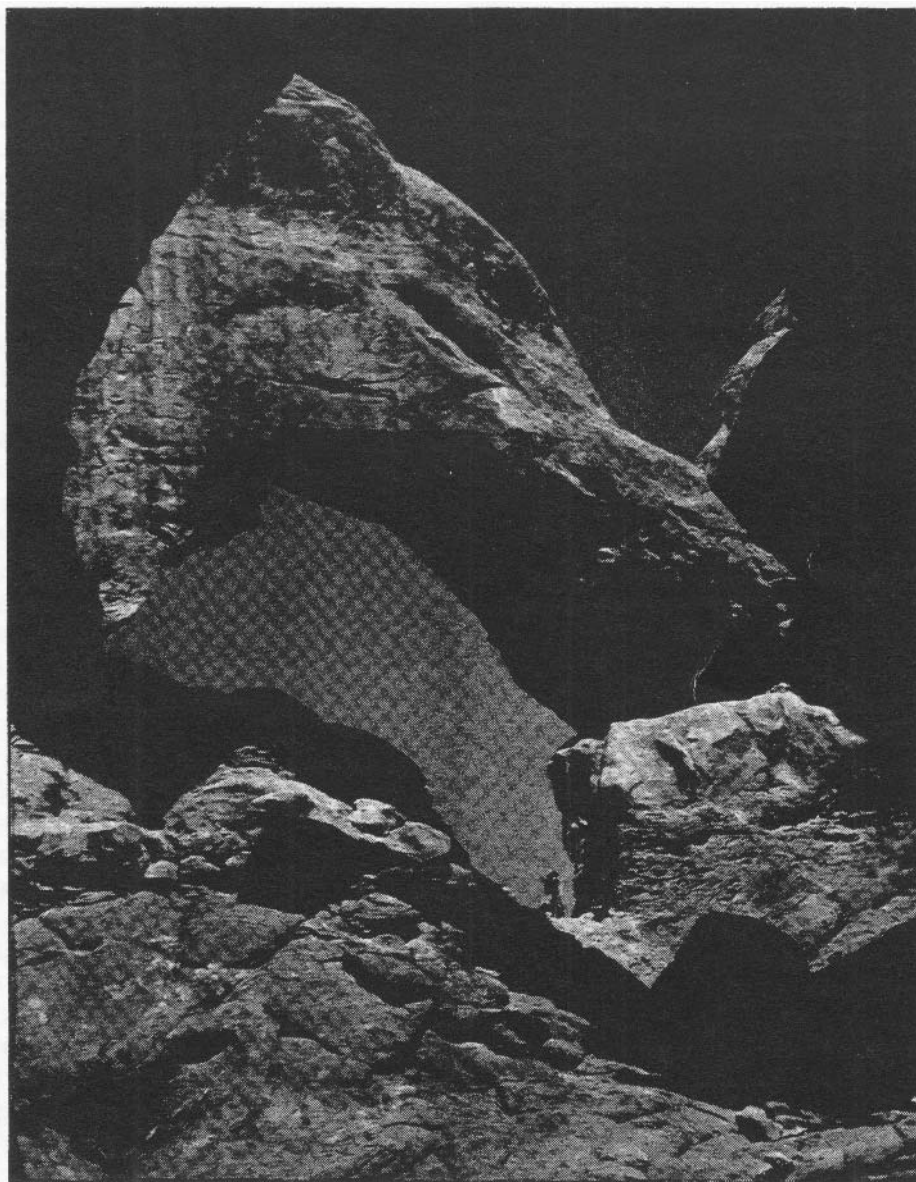


Volume 3

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No. 1



One towering arch ... can make your whole day soar, especially when you are retracing the Spanish Trail in the vicinity of Moab, Utah. Arches National Park lies to the east of the trail, just north of Moab.

Photograph courtesy of Steven K. Madsen.

Park Service will lead three-year study of Spanish Trail

The good news is that the National Park Service is currently undertaking the long-awaited study of the Spanish Trail's eligibility for National Historic Trail status.

Congress passed a major parks bill (HR 4236) in October 1996, which contained a directive to the National Park Service (Section 402) to study the trail.

Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell, R-Colorado — whose Ignacio, Colo. home lies near the Spanish Trail — introduced the bill with Rep. Joel Hefley, R-Colo. President Clinton signed that bill into law on November 12, 1996.

The study process will require several years and starts slowly, so patience is required. The long, slow process is not necessarily due to the study's difficulty, though these trail studies typically take about two and a half years. But the National Park Service has many mandates and it must sustain multiple, concurrent efforts.

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Section 402 directs the NPS to report to Congress within three years on the Spanish Trail's eligibility as a National Historic Trail, which involves 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.

Though such studies typically require about \$250,000 to complete, Congress must make specific appropriations each year to sustain that work. In fiscal 1997 about \$56,000 has been made available for this study in the NPS's Rivers and Trails Study fund. This will be spent on planning the study and gathering primary source material.

It is critical to note that continued funding for the NPS study is not guaranteed. Members of the Old Spanish Trail Association should write their federal legislators now and at regular intervals to support the trail study to a favorable conclusion. Writing to the entire congressional delegation from all six states crossed by the trail would be useful.

The importance of maintaining OSTA's strong presence during the study process cannot be over-emphasized, as it is the primary vehicle for public interest in and support of the NPS study.

The bulk of this year's study funds will go to the Spanish Colonial Research Center, an NPS research arm that operates in cooperation with the University of New Mexico at Albuquerque.

Joseph P. Sanchez, Ph.D. historian and director of that Center, has authored the new book, *Explorers, Traders and Slavers: Forging the Spanish Trail, 1678-1850* (University of Utah Press, 1997). So the

early planning and search for primary materials is in good hands. (Please see this issue's Book Bag for a review of Sanchez's book.)

According to David M. Gaines, who runs the NPS's Long Distance Trails Group Office in Santa Fe, by fall 1997 (that is, fiscal 1998) more funds will probably be appropriated for the Spanish Trail study. Then activity will shift to the NPS's Denver Service Center. That Center will coordinate a study team that will gather information on the trail's location and its immediate environment. Gaines's office, however, retains administrative responsibility for completing the study.

Gaines says that the bulk of the actual trail study will occur in 1998 as subcontractors in history, archaeology and other disciplines perform fieldwork. By fall 1998 Gaines expects the NPS to seek public input to its draft report, which it will mail out to interested parties such as OSTA members.

A final report, with recommendations for National Historic Trail status, is expected to go to Congress in late 1999.

According to Gaines, the NPS will keep interested parties apprised of its progress in the aforementioned mission through a series of newsletters. The NPS will not conduct primary research or archaeological investigations; recommend specific management actions; interfere with other groups' ongoing trail projects; or provide technical or financial assistance to other trail programs or projects.

Gaines briefed a group of interested parties in Grand Junction, Colo. in early February on these very matters and assured them that the Spanish Trail's North Branch will be included in the NPS study. Present at that Grand Junction meeting were representatives of OSTA, Daughters of the American Revolution and the Mesa County Riverfront Commission. (Several characters belong to more than one of these groups.)

A few points about the NPS study from OSTA's perspective may be illuminating.

Because several major historians have already plumbed archives in the U.S., Mexico and Spain to uncover the primary sources on the Spanish Trail, that aspect of the NPS study should be the proverbial "academic exercise." And since over the course of 20 years the late Greg Crampton and co-author Steve Madsen managed to establish the Spanish Trail's entire, 1,200-mile route (except the North Branch), the NPS team's efforts in that quarter should be vastly simplified.

It is also apparent that politics have played a role in the National Historic Trail program.

For instance, the so-called "Anza Trail" in Sonora and California, forged in 1776 when Captain Juan Bautista de Anza connected northern New Spain and a fledgling settlement at San Francisco Bay, while daring and significant, falls short of meeting several criteria for National Historic Trail status. Yet it has been so designated, quite probably due to the large California congressional delegation.

Because five of the six states crossed by the Spanish Trail have modest congressional delegations, it would be wise for OSTA to promote chapters in California, and leverage that connection in favor of the current trail study and a favorable NPS recommendation to Congress. Clearly OSTA has succeeded in obtaining a trail study; now a new round of lobbying must begin.

Finally, it is imperative that as a citizens' group, OSTA participate in the study process and provide oversight. The National Park Service has a long and honorable history, a complicated and difficult mission, and many competent and dedicated professionals in its ranks. Nonetheless, it is a large, federal bureaucracy and requires both oversight and direction. Let's give its staff our respect, attention, and assistance — and our guidance, when necessary.

President's column

By Ron Kessler

Now that the National Park Service will study the Old Spanish Trail for National Historic Trail status, it's even more important that OSTA grows.

A strong OSTA can perform its own trail programs, support the NPS study, and lobby for historic trail status.

I'm pleased to report that we are growing and now have more than 300 members and five chapters. Several more chapters are forming as you read this report.

That's not enough. My goal as president is to establish a chapter in each of the 28 counties crossed by the trail. Those counties include: •Santa Fe, Rio Arriba, and Taos in New Mexico;

•Costilla, Alamosa, Saguache, Conejos, Rio Grande, Gunnison, Montrose, Delta, Mesa, Archuleta, La Plata, Montezuma, and Dolores on both the main and north branches in Colorado;

•San Juan, Grand, Emery, Sevier, Millard, Beaver, Iron, and Washington in Utah;

•Coconino in Arizona;

•Clark in Nevada;

•San Bernadino and Los Angeles in California.

Chapters are forming in several of these locations. If you live in the following areas, please contact the following members who are leading chapter formation in your area:

Colorado:

Conejos County, Dave Horning, 103 Monte Vista, Antonito, CO 81120, 719-372-2042;

Costilla County, F. Elizabeth Pacheco, P.O. Box 1977, Blanca, CO 81123, 719-379-3263;

Delta County, Delta County Historical Society, 251 Meeker St., Delta, CO 81416, 970-874-8721;

Gunnison County, Laura McClow, 216 N. Colorado, Gunnison, CO 81230, 970-641-0471;



Back in 1950... The late William R. Palmer of Cedar City, Utah organized the Spanish Trail Association, which placed these markers along the trail in Utah. That earlier organization fizzled out. Let's not allow that to happen this time! *Photograph courtesy of Vernell Rowley.*

Montrose County, Sharon Passmore, 14984 Shavano Valley, Montrose, CO 81401, 970-249-3009; or Julie Colman Fike, 1105 South First, Montrose, CO 81401;

Southwestern Colorado, Tom Vaughn, 11795 C.R. 39.2, Mancos, CO 81328, 970-533-9068;

New Mexico:

Taos County, Andy Lindquist, P.O. Box 2447, Taos, NM 87571, 505-751-0935;

Utah:

Emery County, Vernell Rowley, P.O. Box 474, Huntington, UT 84528, 801-687-2268.

To become a chapter a group must have ten current OSTA members and send a letter to the president to request chapter status. I will write back forthwith with approval if the criteria have been met.

You'll find the names, addresses, and phone numbers of existing chapters on page 13.

Please note that chapter formation is open to all interested groups, not just counties. If you would like to form a chapter, contact me: Ron Kessler, P.O. Box 510, Monte Vista, CO 81144.

Editor's corner

OSTA members must spread the word that we've got a national historic trail study underway!

Contact your local media and convince them to do stories. Ron Kessler or myself can provide information, maps, and contacts. Or simply consult your handy membership list, available from OSTA for \$1, and go at it yourself. Let us know of your work.

Members must write their representatives in Congress to insist that the National Park Service study receive adequate funding and that it is completed on time. Convince them the trail has historic sites deserving protection.

Tell your representatives at all levels about the trail in your area, its importance to America's heritage and emphasize the economic development benefits a national historic trail has for rural areas that need it.

Phil Carson

National meeting set for Saguache, Colo. North Branch location offers ancient Ute sites

Preparations are underway for the Old Spanish Trail Association's 4th annual conference June 21-22 at Saguache, Colo., a magnificent spot on the trail's North Branch.

OSTA members will receive registration packets in early May, according to Yvonne Halburian of the sponsoring Saguache County chapter.

Saturday morning, June 21, there's registration and a business meeting. Ruth Marie Colville reports on the Valley's North Branch. Steve Madsen, co-author of *In Search of the Spanish Trail*, gives a talk and slide show on the main trail. David Gaines, chief of the National Park Service's Long Distance Trails Office, Santa Fe, may speak on the National Historic Trail study.

After lunch the Saguache County gang lead a fieldtrip to numerous local sites. On Saturday and Sunday in Saguache's town park trappers demonstrate tomahawk throwing and muzzle-loading rifles.

Saturday evening features a council fire and story-telling.

Sunday morning at 7:30 a.m. brings a pancake breakfast sponsored by the local Kiwanis Club followed by an interpretive sign dedication by Saguache's Mayor Floyd Smith — at 89, Colorado's oldest — and OSTA President Ron Kessler.

Sunday afternoon brings a

fieldtrip to Russell Lakes, a wild bird refuge, and ancient Ute sites.

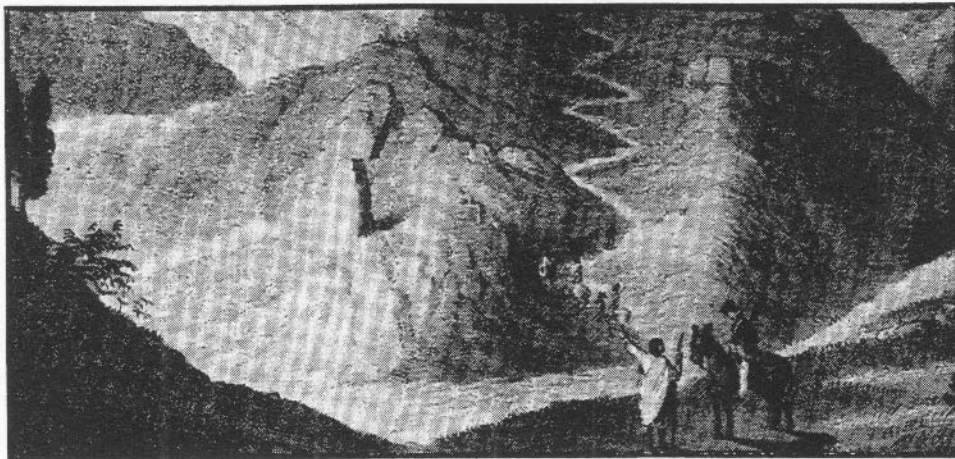
Spare time may include visits to the Saguache County Museum, the Hazard House Museum, and the *Saguache Crescent* weekly newspaper, which uses two of Colorado's last hot lead linotype machines. Editor Marie Coombs has run the paper 61 years.

On Monday, June 23, Ron Kessler may run a van down the North Branch's west fork to the Palace of the Governors at Santa Fe — with a return to Saguache via the east fork, or Taos Trail.

The San Luis Valley is 7,000 feet high, runs hot and cold, with sun and mosquitos. Be prepared accordingly. Home to Colorado's warmest folks, it lies between the Sawatch range and the Sangre de Cristos. Bring cameras!

The conference will cost \$15 for OSTA members and \$18 for non-members. The public is invited.

Lodging in Saguache is limited, but you can call the Hillside Motel (719-655-2524); Blue Earth B&B (719-655-0230 or x2302); or the Saguache Creek Lodge (719-655-2264), which has RV sites. Lodging is also available in Monte Vista and Del Norte, less than one hour away. Call Yvonne Halburian, (719) 655-2529.



Trail over pass... Could be the Saguache area's ancient Cochetopa Pass.

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, 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.

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 shall be included; each member may introduce only one item of business.

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.

Membership:

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 memberships allows two votes if two family members are present. Members must be present to vote.)

Send all inquiries and membership dues to:

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Monte Vista, CO 81144

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Retracing the Spanish Trail: Across the Great Basin in Utah

By Steven K. Madsen

Join us on the summit of the Wasatch Plateau in central Utah as we resume our westward trek over the Spanish Trail. We begin this segment of our journey over the entire length of the trail on cool, mountainous Wasatch Pass. Hundreds of miles later we shall pause in a forest of Joshua trees on the Utah-Arizona border. En route we will examine the old trail in its natural setting and consult historic descriptions to corroborate the route and etch its image in the minds of readers and travelers alike.

Below Wasatch Pass, beyond a patch of verdure enclosing a mountain spring, we'll descend to the floor of the Great Basin — a broad, inland desert with no outlet to the sea. Our journey takes us across the southern portion of that arid basin, in part broken into short strips of smaller basins and ranges, extending north and south, formed by shifts in the earth's surface. One great hurdle, the mighty Markagunt Plateau, will challenge us midway on our trip. Beyond the southern rim of the Great Basin, we'll proceed to the Utah-Arizona line, where a diverse landscape is drained by the lower Colorado River. This stretch of the Spanish Trail covers a distance of 245 miles in central and southwestern Utah.

As we traverse the Wasatch Plateau the trail enters the Great Basin at Wasatch Pass (elevation 7,900 feet) and descends the long, rocky course of Salina Creek's canyon to its opening south of the town of Salina, Utah. Much of the way down the canyon the trail is confined to a narrow gorge. The Edward F. Beale railroad survey team of 1853 with a Mexican guide followed the main Spanish Trail, with a few detours, down Salina Canyon. [1]

Fortunately for those retracing the trail, there is corroborating evidence for Beale's presence on this portion of the Spanish Trail.

Lieutenant John W. Gunnison's railroad survey traversed the Wasatch Plateau with wagons in 1853 on the heels of the Beale expedition and avoided the narrows of

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as we resume
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Hundreds of miles
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forest on the Utah-
Arizona border.**

Salina Canyon by keeping south of the Spanish Trail. Below Wasatch Pass, in Meadow Creek canyon, Gunnison's Ute guide informed the expedition that the direct course to the Sevier was through a large canyon cut by Salina Creek. The guide reported that a horse trail ran through the canyon but "it is impossible for wagons to pass through it without removing the rocks." [2]

Heeding his guide, Gunnison cut a path around the main canyon. The Gunnison expedition ultimately rejoined the Spanish Trail in lower Salina Canyon, at the mouth of Soldier Canyon, and descended its course to the Sevier River.

Additional evidence for the Salina Canyon route comes from public land surveyors who in 1878 clearly labeled the Spanish Trail on township plats covering the area in the main canyon, above Soldier Canyon.

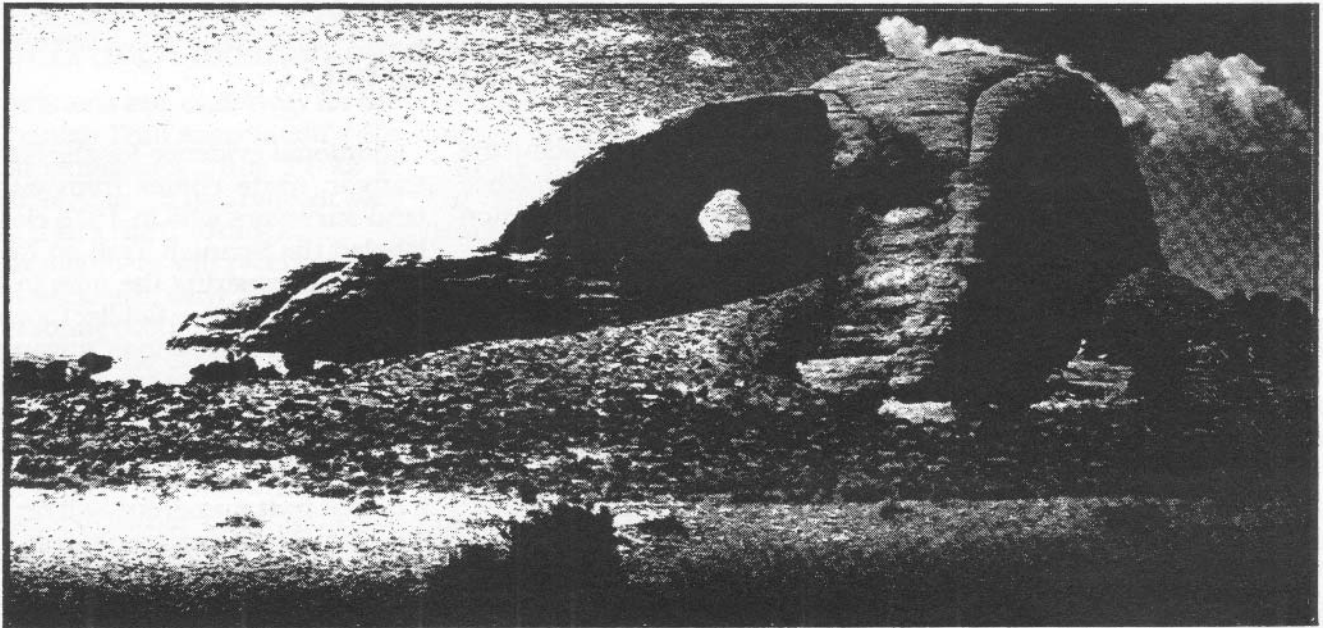
Below yawning Salina Canyon the Spanish Trail crosses the Sevier River near its confluence with Salina Creek, a fresh water stream known in former times as Rio Salado since it flowed past numerous salt deposits. The Beale party on July 29, 1853 mentions the "mines of rock-salt" still visible near the foot of the canyon. [3]

On reaching the valley of the Sevier, or Rio Severo, early trail riders encountered luxuriant vegetation. Gwinn Harris Heap of the Beale expedition glowingly reported in 1853: "This valley lies north and south, and surpassed in beauty and fertility anything we had yet seen. It is about thirty miles in length by four in breadth, surrounded by mountains, down whose sides trickled number-less cool and limpid brooks, fringed with willows and cottonwoods.. Sevier River flows through its centre, and it abounds in its entire length in rich pasturage. The mountains which inclose it were clothed from summit to base, with oaks and pines." [4]

Earlier, Heap had noted as he tramped the overland path: "The grass was of the most luxuriant description, and reached above our saddle-girths." [5]

Sevier Valley is a natural corridor for modern traffic along U.S. Highway 89. A surging centuries-old movement of overland traffic along this route has done little to alter its serenity. Today, passing motorists glimpse cattle grazing in the river's fertile bottomlands. The river was known in the trail period by its

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Looking Glass Rock... sits west of the trail, south of Moab, Utah. It remains a compelling landform. Photograph courtesy of Phil Carson.

Retracing the trail...

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Spanish name, Rio Severo (Severe River), an obvious misnomer. (The present name, Sevier, is a corruption of "Severo.") Although they did not follow the stream to any great extent, Dominguez and Escalante in September 1776 labeled the river "Santa Isabel" in honor of the Spanish monarch. [6] Mountain man Jedediah Strong Smith called it Ashley's River "in compliment to my friend, the enterprising Genl. W. H. Ashley." [7]

Smith followed the Sevier Valley route on his two seminal explorations from the interior West to the Far West of southern California in 1826 and 1827. Ascending the stream in a southerly direction, Smith encountered a narrow, impassible canyon, today's Sevier (or Marysvale) Canyon. Unable to penetrate the canyon, Smith backtracked to Clear Creek, then pushed westward along the present route of Interstate 70, which crosses a broken tableland toward the site of Cove Fort in central Utah. [8] The later

Spanish Trail, however, detoured around Marysvale Canyon and pressed south across a high ridge east of Sevier River.

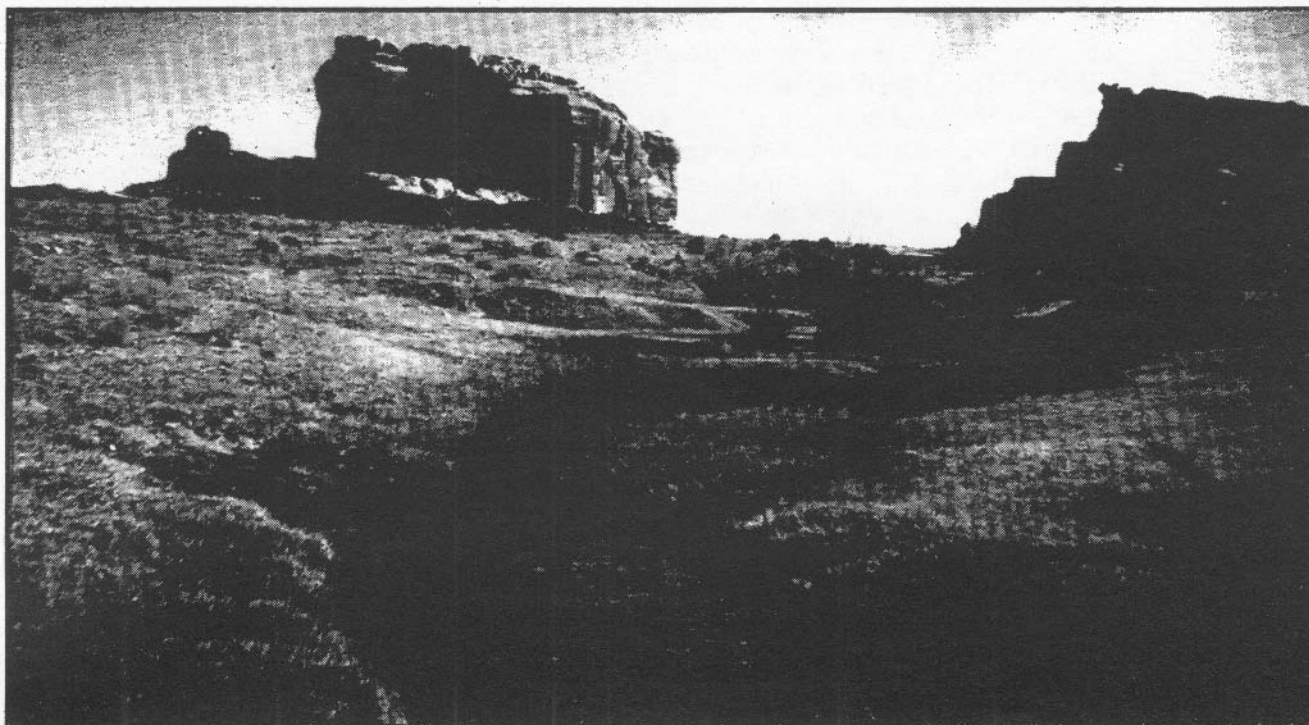
The Spanish Trail breaches the Sevier River near the site of Vaca (Spanish for cow), avoiding the present route of U.S. Highway 89 as it weaves through Marysvale Canyon. Vaca was a shipping point for cattle and sheep on the former Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad. From there the trail crosses Long Valley to reach the divide separating present-day Piute and Sevier counties, then twists through mountainous terrain and drops to the Sevier River near present-day Marysvale, about 45 miles south of Salina.

Supporting evidence that the Spanish Trail followed this route comes from an early Mormon exploration party. Parley P. Pratt's Southern Exploring Company was sent by Brigham Young to reconnoiter the southern and central valleys of Utah. On December 11, 1849 this group encountered the Spanish Trail in Sevier Valley. Pratt's party of fifty men, traveling south, was unable to penetrate Marysvale Canyon, and was forced to cross the ridge to the

east, 1,000 feet above the stream. Emerging from the choked canyon someone in the party wrote: "The river inclosed on both sides by a mountainous range, and running through a close canyon, the company were forced to leave it, and make over a spur of the mountains to the left, where the Spanish trail crosses them." [9]

Near Marysvale late-nineteenth century prospectors searching for precious metals apparently pockmarked the mountainsides, particularly in Bullion Canyon. The itinerant miners left behind relics, such as *arrastres*, which some have attributed to Spanish gold seekers, though others discount those stories as local lore.

From Marysvale the trail resumes its southerly course, snaking upstream along the Sevier. The trail meanders alongside the channel, passing through present-day Junction, Utah, the seat of Piute County. The town of Junction is situated close by the confluence of the Sevier River with its East Fork. Near the confluence a southern branch of the Spanish Trail — the Fish Lake Route — merges with the main thoroughfare. Here on August 1, 1853 Gwinn



Upper Courthouse Springs... northwest of Moab, Utah, had good water and grass for trail travelers.
Photograph courtesy of Steven K. Madsen.

Harris Heap, on the Beale railroad survey reported that the group struck the "old trail from Abiquiu to California ... so long disused that it is now almost obliterated." [10]

To follow the trail's Fish Lake branch, let's retrace our steps to the east slopes of the Wasatch Plateau. After leaving the Spanish Trail in Ivie Creek Canyon, the Fish Lake Route pursues a southwesterly direction as it crosses the Fish Lake Plateau. Although it is a cutoff route saving trail riders some 20 miles, it climbs elevations in excess of 9,000 feet. It passes Fish Lake and descends an easy slope to Otter Creek which it follows to present-day Otter Creek Reservoir, then pushes south to the East Fork of the Sevier.

Here the route turns abruptly westward and proceeds to the Sevier River, 11 miles distant. Kit Carson, accompanied by Lieutenant George D. Brewerton, popularized the Fish Lake Route when in the summer of 1848 he followed the upland path blanketed by snow, camped at Fish Lake, and enjoyed a repast of trout.

In trail days the Sevier River above its East Fork was known as St. Pasqual (Holy Passover) River. From the main forks of the Sevier the Spanish Trail advances southward, upstream to Circle Valley and Circleville. Three miles beyond Circleville, the trail passes the boyhood home of outlaw Butch Cassidy. Visible from U.S. Highway 89 the old family ranch bestrides the historic corridor.

John C. Fremont, surveying a central railroad route to the Pacific, intersected this section of the Spanish Trail in January 1854. The path of the Fremont expedition is often confused with that of the Spanish Trail which in part it pursues.

The Fremont party entered Utah following the line of the 1853 Gunnison railroad survey. It veered from the Gunnison trail to cross the Green River at its junction with the San Rafael River, some 20 miles south of present-day Green River. [11] Fremont pushed west to reach Rabbit Valley where he cached his supplies, then ascended the head-

waters of what is now known as Fremont River, entered the Great Basin, and descended to Otter Creek in Grass Valley. Here he struck the Fish Lake branch of the Spanish Trail and continued over its course to the Sevier River in Circle Valley. From there he marched south up Circleville Canyon. Then, leaving the Spanish Trail, Fremont turned abruptly west to cross Utah's high plateaus. Floundering in waist-deep snows, Fremont's men struggled over the jagged, high tableland, traversing Dog Valley, Fremont Pass and Fremont Canyon. [12]

Ultimately reduced to survival rations of horse soup, boiled horse entrails, and roasted hide, Fremont's expedition stumbled out of the mountains about 20 miles north of the Spanish Trail. Near today's Exit 100 on Interstate 15, in the valley of the Little Salt Lake, the half-starved, nearly frozen party found its way to the Mormon settlement at Parowan.

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Retracing the trail...

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Later, nursed back to health, the intrepid explorers completed their overland journey to California following generally the western leg of the Spanish Trail.

A few miles beyond the point where Fremont turned west searching for a passage over the rugged uplands, the Spanish Trail leaves the Sevier and attempts its crossing of the majestic Markagunt Plateau. At today's Bear Valley Junction, or Orton, the trail swings to the west and inches its way up Bear Creek. Six and a half miles from the Sevier, where a mountain valley suddenly appears in the verdant highlands, the trail angles off to the southwest. It continues its ascent of Bear Creek along a natural corridor through Lower and Upper Bear valleys, crosses a divide and, bouncing over rough terrain, enters a narrow depression along the channel of Little Creek. The trail tumbles down Little Creek's canyon and penetrates the Hurricane Cliffs, breaking out into the wide, open basin of the Little Salt Lake, today's Parowan Valley, near the town of Paragonah.

Trail diarist Orville C. Pratt, who descended Little Creek canyon on October 1, 1848, made a dramatic entrance into Parowan Valley and corroborates the route here: He traveled "up the steepest of hills, then down places which it would seem impossible to descend again in deep and precipitous canyons: until suddenly broke upon us one of the finest and most extensive valleys I have seen in the whole western country!" [13] (Emphasis added.)

John C. Fremont's map and report of his second expedition provide further evidence that the Spanish Trail came this way.

Passing through the valley in 1844 Fremont wrote that the Little Salt Lake lies "nearly opposite a gap in the chain of mountains through which the Spanish Trail passes." [14] The Beale expedition, follow-

ing the Spanish Trail in 1853, also entered Parowan Valley by way of Little Creek's canyon. (Solomon N. Carvalho verified the Beale/Spanish Trail route when on May 17, 1854 he stated that his party "camped on Little Creek canon — the pass through which Lieut. Beale entered Little Salt Lake Valley, a few months previously.") [15]

Parowan Valley served as a base for Ute Indians led by the famous Ute leader Walkara, who exacted tribute from trading parties on the Spanish Trail.

John C. Fremont's map and report of his second expedition provide further evidence that the Spanish Trail came this way.

Fremont met Walkara's band of Utes on May 20, 1844 and reported: "They were all mounted, armed with rifles, and use their rifles well. The chief had a fusee, which he had slung, in addition to his rifle. They were journeying slowly towards the Spanish trail, to levy their usual tribute upon the great California caravan. They conducted their depredations with form, and under the color of trade and toll for passing through their country. Instead of attacking and killing, they affect to purchase — taking the horses they like, and giving something nominal in return." [16]

Lt. Brewerton, who traveled the Spanish Trail with Kit Carson in 1848, recounted that "it was not far from the Little Salt Lake that we first met the Eutaw Indians. At this point we found one of their principal chiefs, "Wacarra," or Walker, as he is commonly called by the Americans. His encampment consisted of four lodges, inhabited by his wives, children, and a suite of inferior warriors and chiefs. This party was

awaiting the coming of the great Spanish caravan, from which they intended taking the yearly tribute which the tribe exact as the price of a safe-conduct through their country."

Brewerton felt he was cheated in a horse trade with the Indians after he had exchanged his horse and one of his two Mexican blankets for an old, "rough-looking Indian pony." [17] Brewerton later complained that "many was the time while chilled by the cold breezes of the Rocky Mountains that I thought, with a shiver, of my horse-trade by the Little Salt Lake." [18]

From Paragonah the Spanish Trail heads southward across a flat, open valley, passing just west of Parowan and avoiding the playa of the Little Salt Lake. Beyond the dry lake bed the trail skirts the lower end of the north-south trending Red Hills to reach the Ojo de San Jose, or St. Joseph's Spring, at present-day Enoch, a town settled by Mormons in 1851. Orville C. Pratt referred to the spring as "one of the finest fountains and streams of water on the entire route." [19]

Beyond Enoch the trail heads west-southwest over the dry flatland of Cedar Valley and passes through the gap between Granite Mountain and The Three Peaks. (In the valley approaching the gap the Spanish Trail crosses Dominguez and Escalante's route at right angles, the only spot where the two trails touch in Utah.) From the gap, the trail runs northwesterly along Iron Springs Creek and enters the southern plain of the Escalante Desert, labeled in 1776, "Neustra Senora de la Luz" (Our Lady of Light), by the two Franciscan fathers in 1776. [20]

The trail proceeds westward around the northern base of the lightly-forested Antelope Range. On the mountain's north side Antelope Spring issues from the ground, today supplying water for livestock. Addison Pratt traveled this stretch of the Spanish Trail on November 2, 1849 in company with a Califor-



Pioneer waterwheel... at the Spanish Trail crossing of the Green River in Utah, with the majestic Book Cliffs in the background. *Photograph courtesy of Steven K. Madsen.*

nia-bound wagon train led by Jefferson Hunt. Pratt wrote that from Iron Springs the group "travelled 11 miles and camped at a spring on the mountain side. The spring oozes out of the ground and makes a large stream which, after running a few rods, sinks back into the ground." [21]

As it rounds the Antelope Range the Spanish Trail veers off to the southwest and makes a beeline for Pinto Creek, near today's Newcastle, Utah. Pinto is a corruption of the term "Piute," the name which Addison Pratt gave it in 1849. Pratt was a member of the Jefferson Hunt wagon train, comprised mainly of California-bound goldseekers who, beyond Pinto Creek, decided to part company. Lured by gold and cut-off fever, the majority of Forty-niners ventured from the beaten path.

Wandering westward through the desert several of them stumbled into Death Valley, where they met misfortune and gave the valley its name. About six miles south of Pinto Creek, near the Spanish Trail, a stone monument reminds travelers of that fateful parting of the ways.

The trail finds Meadow Creek and follows that badly eroded watercourse southward up Holt Canyon, which opens out into grassy Mountain Meadows — known in the trail days as the "Vegas de Santa Clara."

Arriving here on May 12, 1844 Fremont found "the terminating point of the desert . . . where the annual caravan from California to New Mexico halted and recruited for some weeks."

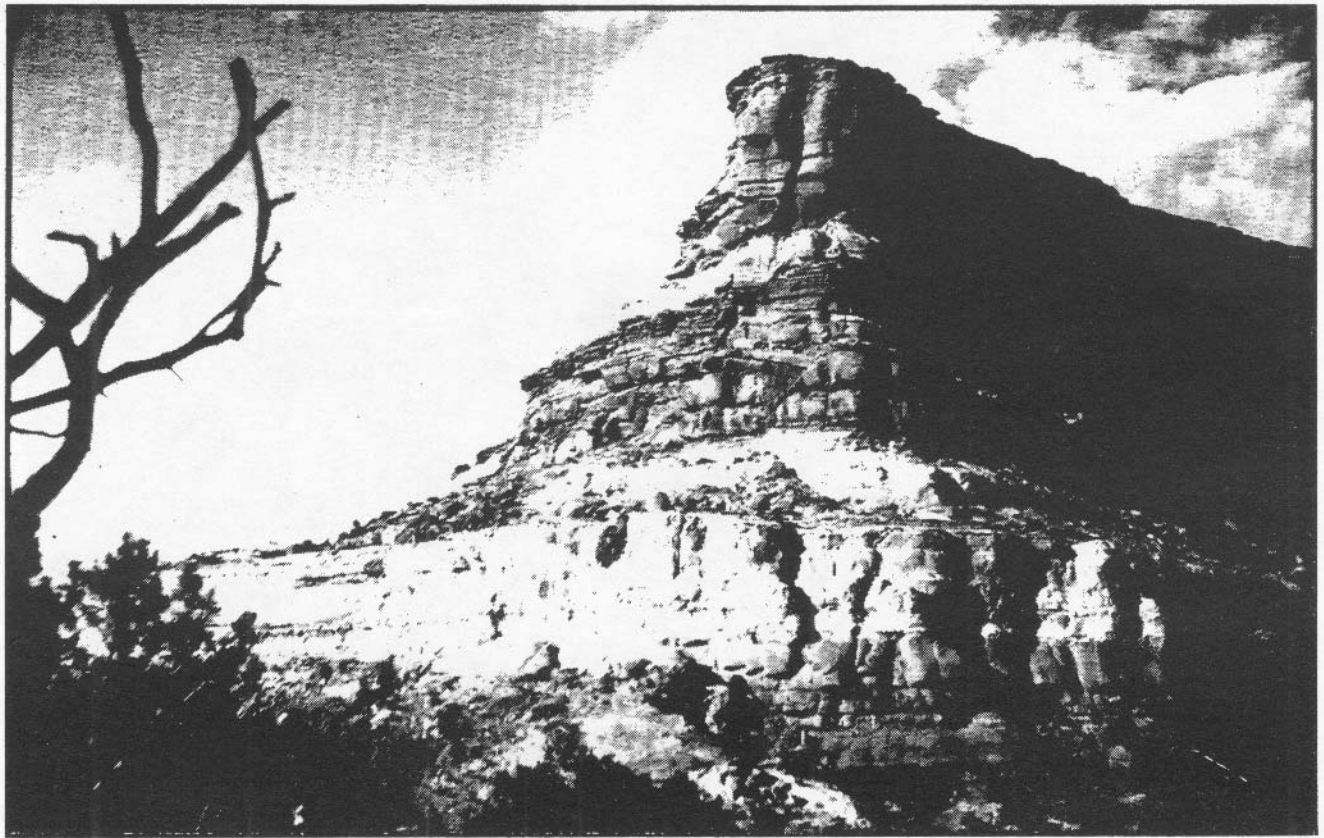
Fremont describes the place as "an extensive mountain meadow, rich in bunch grass, and fresh with numer-

ous springs of clear water, all refreshing and delightful to look upon." [22]

Camping at the meadows on October 4-5, 1848 trail diarist Orville C. Pratt reported: "The animals are doing finely on the excellent grass they get here. There is fine & tender grass growing on this Vegas to fatten a thousand head of horses or cattle." [23]

Lt. Brewerton rode with Kit Carson on the Spanish Trail in 1848 and gave a glowing account of this oasis: "The noise of running water, the large grassy meadows, from which the spot takes its name, and the green hills which circle it round — all tend to captivate the eye and please the senses of the way-worn voyageur." [24]

continued on page 10



Here lies a ghost railroad... on the Spanish Trail in the San Rafael Swell, where the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad graded a portion of the trail in 1880-83, but never laid tracks. *Photograph courtesy of Steven K. Madsen.*

The tranquil setting of Mountain Meadows conceals the tragedy that befell overland travelers here in the post-trail period. For multiple reasons, some Mormon militiamen and Paiute Indians massacred a California-bound company of about 120 Arkansas emigrants led by Captain John T. Baker and Captain Alexander Fancher in the early part of September 1857. The attackers spared only 18 children. Historians today continue to unravel the facts surrounding this tumultuous event. For a balanced treatment of the complex drama that unfolded at Mountain Meadows, see Juanita Brooks' definitive work, *The Mountain Meadows Massacre*.

In the post-trail period erosion changed the appearance of the vegas, gouging out an arroyo in the soft soils and deepening the bed of Magotsu Creek, an upper branch of the Santa Clara River.

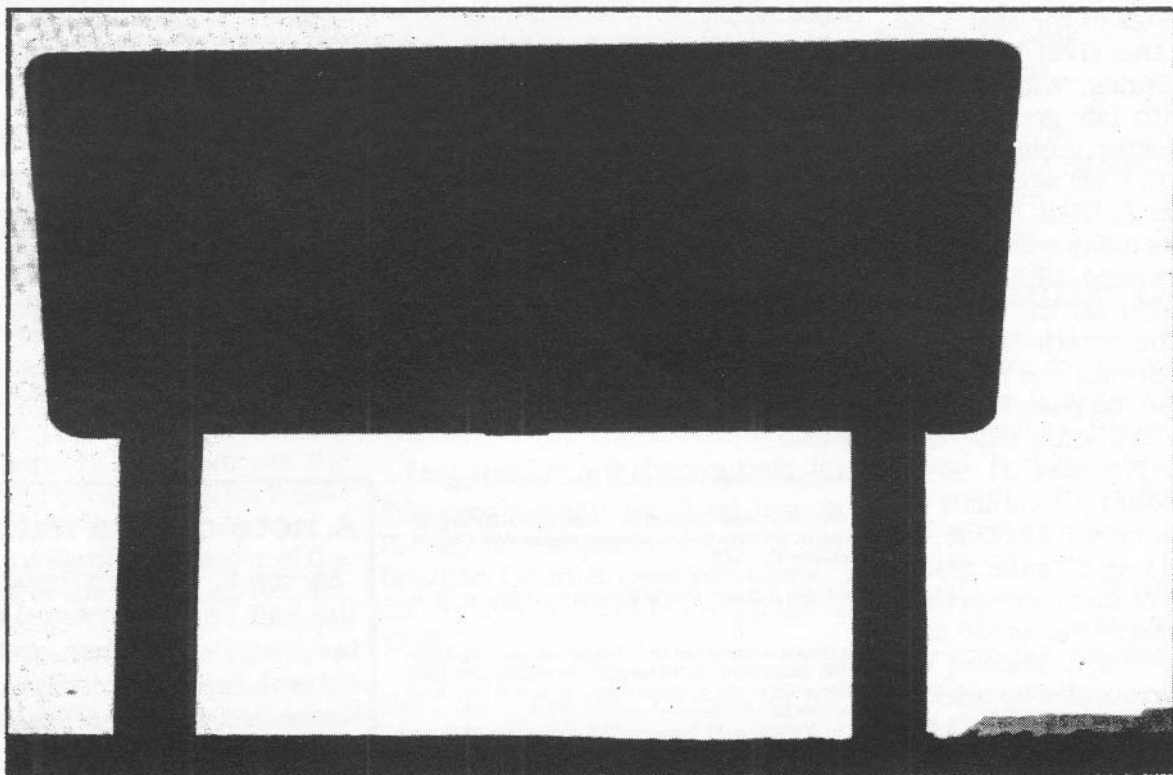
As Anthony W. Ivins recounted his travels over the Spanish Trail, he described changes in the trailside scenery. Mountain Meadows, he observed, was "a small valley in the tops of the mountains, where springs spread over the surface and formed one of those beauty spots, found only in mountain landscapes. Since the days of the pioneers, heavy floods have cut a deep gully through the valley, which has drained the water from the surface, the grass has disappeared, and sagebrush taken its place." [25]

On the far side of Mountain Meadows the Spanish Trail enters a varied desert country drained by the tributaries of the Colorado River. Our historic route, widened into a wagon road in the post-trail period, is visible today as it drops from the lip of the Great Basin into the watershed of the Santa Clara River.

The trail descends two miles to

Kane Spring, then proceeds down an adjoining wash, now paralleled by Utah Highway 18. Along the channel below the spring, the trail follows "a rough, rocky, mountainous road" to present-day Central, Utah. The Pine Valley Mountain peaks rise majestically above the trail to the east, offering a refreshing view for desert travelers.

In May 1844 Fremont enjoyed the alpine scenery as he traversed the Spanish Trail. The pinnacles, he noted, "showed out handsomely — high and rugged with precipices, and covered with snow for about two thousand feet from their summits down." [26] The trail below Central angles off to the southwest, passing within sight of volcanic upthrusts in the area, including the Veyo volcano, to reach the lower portion of Magotsu Creek. The trail descends the stream to its junction with Moody Wash near today's



This time we'll read it for you... In case this sign is illegible on the published page, it says: "WARNING: You are entering an isolated desert area. Carry ample supply of gasoline, water & supplies. No commercial services available beyond this point. Sand storms or rain may make roads impassible." *Photograph courtesy of Steven K. Madsen.*

Biglow Ranch, then follows the channel to the Santa Clara River, flowing to the Virgin River.

The irregular features surrounding the Spanish Trail seem to mirror its diverse history. Astride the trail today on the Santa Clara River rests the pioneer Mormon village of Gunlock, founded in 1857. Gunlock was an offshoot of the Santa Clara settlement farther downstream, beyond the trail, established as an Indian mission. In 1854 Mormon colonizers developed a mission among the Southern Paiutes who then inhabited and still occupy the area.

The settlers needed friendly relations with the Paiutes whose lands encompassed much of the Spanish Trail, an essential corridor that linked Salt Lake City with southern California. Their efforts proved successful. Thereafter, Mormon settlements were established throughout the area, including St. George,

founded in 1861 in the heart of Utah's "Dixie." Mormons also helped convert the historic caravan route into a wagon road that took various names: the Mormon Road, the Old California Road, the Salt Lake Road, the Salt Lake to Los Angeles Route, and the Southern Route.

Riders on the Southern Route, passing through the homelands of the Southern Paiutes, regularly trampled the farmlands on the Santa Clara, Virgin, and Muddy rivers, and denuded precious desert vegetation. In 1848, Orville C. Pratt traversed what he called the "Piute Cornfields" on the Santa Clara River. Patches of sweet, yellow corn are still cultivated today along that stream, a subtle reminder of the skillful use Paiutes made of limited natural resources in a desert environment.

Paiutes lived in small encampments and moved about hunting and gathering. Unlike their eques-

trian Ute neighbors, Paiutes traveled on foot. They found it hard to defend themselves against mounted parties, including the Utes, who often raided their encampments to seize women and children. In Spanish Trail days Indian captives were spirited off to the Mexican settlements at either end of the trail where they were sold as servants and slaves. Paiutes also suffered regular abuse by New Mexican merchants who sometimes resorted to Indian slave trafficking. Some of the victimized Paiutes began to fight back in later years, but fear of slave catchers drove many of them away from the Spanish Trail area.

The trail crosses the riverbed several times as it descends the cottonwood-lined Santa Clara River nine miles "in a serpentine direction, almost due south," wrote Solomon N. Carvalho in May 1854. [27]

continued on page 12

The trail leaves the Santa Clara at a point on the present-day Shivwits (Paiute) Indian Reservation where the stream swings to the east. One mile beyond the river the trail reaches Camp Spring, "a little spring on the hill" with fair grass and a "scarcity of water for animals," complained Orville C. Pratt who camped here on October 7, 1848. [28]

Trail explorers today will find the names of several mid-19th century travelers chiseled on the register rocks around the waterhole.

From Camp Spring the Spanish Trail ascends the steep slopes of the Beaver Dam Mountains, following the line of U.S. Highway 91. After crossing the mountain summit at Castle Rock (elevation 4,800 feet), the trail rolls down a gentle grade through a forest of Joshua trees that mark the eastern limits of the Mojave Desert. Thinly shaded by Joshuas and surrounded by prickly pear and cholla cacti, creosote bush, and Spanish bayonets (stout-stemmed yuccas) the trail moves on to the Arizona border to complete its passage through Utah.

This is where we must rest and regroup before resuming our arduous journey over the treacherous Spanish Trail. There are great distances ahead and deserts we must brave. But our next leg of the trail must wait for fall and the next installment of "Retracing the Spanish Trail."

Endnotes

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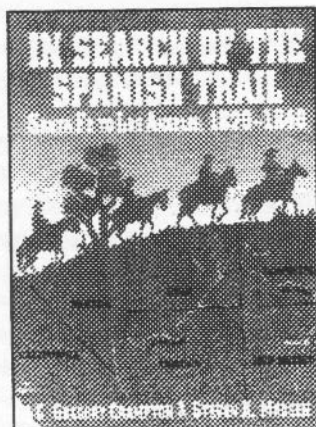
[26] Jackson and Spence, eds., *The Expeditions of John Charles Fremont*, 1, p. 692

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A note on the author...

Steven K. Madsen grew up in the Salt Lake valley and today is a historian, author, and high school history teacher. For many years he served as historian for the National Independence Day Parade in Washington, D.C. Prior to writing *In Search of the Spanish Trail* (1994) with the late Professor C. Gregory Crampton, Madsen researched the history of navigation on the Colorado and Green rivers. Madsen and Crampton wrote two government reports on that subject.



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Chapter reports

Mesa County

The North Branch Chapter in Mesa County has formed a community-wide coalition to raise funds for a bronze sculpture — "The Spirit of Pioneer Women" — in a new park overlooking the Colorado River where the North Branch crossed it.

The statue will be dedicated to the pioneer women who settled in the Grand Valley. In deference to their greater-than-life achievements the statue will be seven feet tall and bear a historical inscription.

The Mount Garfield Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution has been the main force behind the sculpture. There are opportunities to donate towards this cause and have an inscribed title or miniature statue in return.

Write to: DAR Memorial Statue, 2276 Windwood Court, Grand Junction, CO 81503.

In February the same coalition of the Mesa County Chapter of OSTA, the DAR, and the Mesa County Riverfront Commission invited David Gaines of the National Park Service's Santa Fe office to inform us about the upcoming trail study and he graciously traveled here to fill us in.

Jack Nelson,
president
2276 Windwood Court
Grand Junction, CO 81503

Rio Grande County

In May 1996 Ron Kessler, J.R. Hancock and his two sons and an Eagle Scout troop of ten cleaned up the wagon ruts and vicinity west of Monte Vista on the Spanish Trail's North Branch. In August and September 1996 Ron Kessler, J.R. Hancock and representatives of the U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land

Management, and Rio Grande County laid out and bladed a path to a parking area atop a hill that overlooks those same trail ruts. Those ruts are west of Monte Vista on the trail's North Branch in the San Luis Valley. Thanks to Rio Grande County road crews for graveling the parking area for us.

J.R. Hancock,
president
901 Acequia Drive
Monte Vista, CO 81144

Salida del Sol

Last October our chapter held its first program with a talk by Joseph P. Sanchez, superintendent of the Spanish Colonial Research Center, on the development of the Spanish Trail.

At that meeting, Jack Barnes of the End of the Trail Chapter of the Santa Fe Trail addressed the SFTA's 175th anniversary.

The chapter's next meeting took place March 8 at the Palace of the Governors on the plaza in Santa Fe. Historian Rick Hendricks, co-author of *The Navajos in 1705: Roque Madrid's Campaign Journal*, spoke on retracing that expedition — which crossed parts of the later Spanish Trail.

On March 16 Chapter President Willard Lewis addressed a meeting of the Corazon de los Caminos Chapter of the Santa Fe Trail Association.

This OSTA chapter also convinced the Palace of the Governors to present information on the Spanish Trail in its interpretive efforts.

Willard Lewis trains Palace docents in April.

This chapter is planning a fieldtrip for late April, early May, from Santa Fe to Santa Cruz, Abiquiu, and El Vado on the Chama River.

We'll rent a table at the Historical Society of New Mexico Annual Conference in Deming, New Mexico, April 10-12 to recruit OSTA members and feature books about the trail.

Should you be able to make it that far south, get in touch! Otherwise we plan to attend the national conference in June.

Willard Lewis,
president
P.O. Box 6073
Santa Fe, NM 87502
(505) 984-2978

Saguache County

Organizing for the national OSTA conference is keeping this chapter busy, reports President Connie Casteel. To raise funds for that June 21-22 event, the Saguache County chapter is holding a bake sale on Memorial Day weekend in Saguache, Colo. That will coincide with the Saguache County Museum's opening day and the town parade.

See you in Saguache in June!
Connie Casteel
president,
5666 S. 106 Road
Alamosa, CO 81101
(719) 589-2061

Road Apples

Jack Nelson's lengthy article, "From Touse to the Winty: North Branch of the Old Spanish Trail," is in the final editing throes for publication in Mesa State College's *Journal of the Western Slope*. Nelson, president of the Mesa County Chapter of OSTA, is the author of "Louis Robidoux: The Man Behind the Legend."

* * * * *

The Fifth Conference on National Historic & Scenic Trails is being held at the Canterbury Retreat and Conference Center in Oviedo, Florida on April 12-16. For information call the Florida Trail Association at 1-800-343-1882.

Book Bag

The Navajos in 1705: Roque Madrid's Campaign Journal
edited, annotated, and translated by
Rick Hendricks & John P. Wilson
University of New Mexico Press,
hardcover, 175 pp.
ISBN: 0-8263-1717-0

The Spanish colonization of New Mexico mirrored the larger clash of Old World and New. The gulf between two disparate world views, and the hegemony sought by Euro-



A Navajo warrior photographed in 1893 in Arizona. Courtesy of the University of New Mexico Press.

peans over natives, naturally wrought conflict.

From the first Spanish explorers to reach the upper Rio Grande in the mid-1500s to Mexican independence in 1821, this conflict shaped Spanish relations with their immediate neighbors — the varied Pueblo peoples — as with outlying tribes such as the Utes on the north, the Apache on all sides, and the Navajo-Apaches on the province's northwest flank.

**Madrid kept
a journal and
recorded his route,
his Navajo
encounters, and
passing observations
that sketch a
tantalizing portrait
of a Spanish
incursion into
Dinetah.**

The Navajos' Athapaskan origins and arrival in the New Mexico region remain poorly understood, but we know that in the historical period they defended their territory from Pueblo and later Spanish incursions. Periodically they attacked Spanish and Pueblo settlements.

Spaniards rode against their northwestern neighbors when they could afford to, into the broken mesa country the Navajo themselves called "Dinetah."

This pattern became established by the mid-1600s. After Governor Vargas' reconquest of the province in 1692-96 the Navajo remained hostile. So in the opening years of the 18th century — from about 1705 until a mutual peace in 1720 — Spanish forces forayed against the Navajo as meager frontier resources allowed.

In August 1705 Captain Roque

Madrid journeyed on such a mission through the heart of Navajo country.

Madrid kept a journal and recorded his route, his Navajo encounters, and passing observations that sketch a tantalizing portrait of a Spanish incursion into Dinetah.

In 1870 many Spanish archives at Santa Fe were trashed, though someone rescued Madrid's journal. Adolph Bandelier's father, on a visit to his son in New Mexico in 1889, transcribed that document and his work became part of the Hemenway Collection at Harvard University, and known to historians. In the last decade, through circuitous means, the original journal resurfaced as well and reached the New Mexico State Records and Archives Center. In such fantastic ways is history preserved!

A mutual interest in the subject brought together historian Rick Hendricks, an editor on the Vargas Project, and anthropologist John P. "Jack" Wilson, who collaborated on the present volume.

With a brief overview of the journal's provenance and the archaeological evidence for the Navajo occupation of northwestern New Mexico, these authors present an annotated English translation of Madrid's journal, with the original Spanish. That text is followed by sketches of Madrid and his cohorts.

The authors worked out Madrid's route on the ground, which crossed the later Spanish Trail. Because the Spanish Trail ascended the Rio Chama and passed directly through Navajo country, the story of Madrid's campaign is germane to trail studies.

This slim volume is clearly written, illustrated with more than two dozen maps and historic photographs of trail sites, and includes a useful bibliography and list of primary sources.

OSTA members will find here a window onto a seminal conflict that cleared the way a century later for the Spanish Trail.

Book Bag

*Explorers, Traders, and Slavers:
Forging the Old Spanish Trail,
1678-1850*

By Joseph P. Sanchez
University of Utah Press, Salt Lake
City, UT
Hardcover, 186 pp., 1997
ISBN: 0-87480-526-0

Joseph P. Sanchez, director of the Spanish Colonial Research Center in Albuquerque, immediately warns the reader that his book is not a definitive history of the Spanish Trail, and that is an accurate statement. Rather, Sanchez here provides a cursory look at some well-known and a few lesser known aspects of the trail's genesis and development. This volume is intended as an adjunct, the author says, to Leroy and Ann Hafen's *Old Spanish Trail: Santa Fe to Los Angeles* (1954). The author only partly fulfills this promise; this volume has many values, and a few drawbacks.

The book provides a series of disparate essays that unfold in roughly chronological order. The author doesn't recount trail history, but focuses on a handful of specific aspects of the trail's development.

It begins with a dozen Spanish colonial maps, many of which have not been associated previously with

Spanish Trail literature, and a chapter on the cartography that relates to Spain's attempt to link New Mexico and California.

The author reviews the Spaniards' 16th and 17th-century encounters with the myth of "Teguayo," a native realm said to lie somewhere north of New Mexico that sent Spaniards beyond their northern frontier.

However, the author then leaps to the expeditions of Juan Maria Antonio de Rivera in 1765. That leaves out documented travels northwest of Santa Fe that have hitherto received little attention, but which bear directly on the genesis of the Spanish Trail and Sanchez' theme.

Spanish movements up the Chama in the early 1600s are noted in a sentence or two. No mention is made of Captain Juan Dominguez de Mendoza's many forays up the Chama into Navajo country in 1650-1680. Captain Roque Madrid, whose journeys into Navajo country in 1705 and the next half-dozen years rendered the Chama country well-known to Spaniards, is not mentioned. Nor is the testimony of traders and former soldiers, given to Governor Codallos y Rabal in 1745, that describe numerous journeys up and down the Chama in the 1705-1735 period.

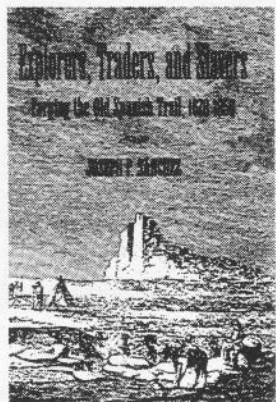
These documented episodes reveal how New Mexico's Spaniards first ascended the Chama, the geographical beginning of the later

Spanish Trail, for diplomacy, war, and trade. There is little discussion of the role of *genizaros*, and the settlement of Abiquiu, in the development of Ute-Spanish relations.

Having said that, the book's value lies chiefly in the discussion of Rivera's two journeys and the general publication of Rivera's two journals (though without discerning Rivera's route). Sanchez refers to a seminal 1977 article on Rivera and his journeys by Professor Donald Cutter, but fails to mention that far better, more complete work had been published in Austin N. Leiby's 1984 Ph.D. dissertation, including first publication of the translated journals.

It is puzzling that the author never mentions the second most important book on the trail: Crampton and Madsen's *In Search of the Spanish Trail* (1994), which established the trail's tortuous, 1,200-mile route for the first time.

Despite its limited scope, this book provides needed discussion of Spanish colonial policy in New Mexico that encouraged a Spanish-Ute alliance and spawned the idea of reaching clear from the continent's interior to the Pacific coast to strengthen Spain's grip on North America and the genesis of the trail. The focus on Hispanic traders provides some balance to the literature. In that sense it makes a solid addition to Spanish Trail publications.



Explorers, Traders, and Slavers: Forging the Old Spanish Trail, 1678-1850

A history of the trail as well as a narrative of those who used it, including Spanish explorers seeking the mythical Teguayo, scouts sent to gain information about Indian settlements, traders searching for mineral wealth, and mountain men on trapping expeditions. 208 pages, 11 maps Cloth, \$29.95



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Colville honored

The Colorado Historical Society bestowed its annual Caroline Bancroft Award for 1996 upon lifetime OSTA member Ruth Marie Colville and the San Luis Valley Historical Society.

The award for rural history efforts cited Colville's book, *La Vereda: A*

Trail Through Time, and the Society's role in publishing it for contributions to the state's history.

Colville's book retraces Governor don Diego de Vargas' 1694 entrada from Santa Fe up the Rio Grande to Colorado's San Luis Valley during the colonial Spanish reconquest of New Mexico.

We salute Ruth Marie Colville and wish her the very best upon her recent 93rd birthday. We look forward to her further contributions.

Anza meeting in May

The second international conference on colonial New Mexico's Governor don Juan Bautista de Anza will be held at Arizpe, Sonora, Mexico on May 15-18. Contact Ron Kessler for information, (719) 852-5225.

Anza's peace with the Comanches in 1786 brought peace to New Mexico's northern frontier and produced conditions conducive to the formation of the Spanish Trail

Authentic trail music

Historian, author and musician Mark Gardner has produced a compact disc of authentic Santa Fe Trail music using historic instruments. Eleven of the disc's 12 tracks are period songs performed on the trail in 1822-1880; one is a Gardner composition.

Enjoy the sheer pleasure of Gardner's work. *Songs of the Santa Fe Trail and the Far West* is available on CD for \$17.45 postpaid and

on cassette for \$12.30. Write to: P.O. Box 879, Cascade, CO 80809.

Las Golondrinas

Anyone headed to Santa Fe should not miss El Rancho de las Golondrinas, a living history site south of town that preserves a Spanish colonial rancho like those that sent traders out on the Spanish Trail. Call for directions. The site can be reached at 334 Los Pinos Rd, Santa Fe, NM 87505; (505) 471-2261.

Dues are due in June

Please send your annual dues by June or pay them at the national meeting. Mail to OSTA, P.O. Box 521, Monte Vista, CO 81144.

We need every single member to renew their support each year to accomplish our objectives.

National meeting

The next OSTA national meeting is set for Saguache, Colo. on June 21-22. See page 4 for details. Registration packets should reach you by early May. Join us on the North Branch in the San Luis Valley of Colorado!

Next issue

The next issue of *Spanish Traces* is due in your mailbox in October, if you've sent your dues.

Materials for that issue are due to the editor by September 1. Prospective authors must correspond by August 1.

Spanish Traces

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