

SPANISH TRACES



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No. 1



The San Rafael Swell, in central Utah, formed a formidable obstacle to travelers on the Spanish Trail to California.

Photograph courtesy of Steve Madsen, 1976.

Madsen continues account of an amazing, 20-year journey over the Spanish Trail

Join author Steven K. Madsen for his fifth exciting installment in his retracing of the Spanish Trail from New Mexico to California. In his first installment in our Spring 1996 issue, Madsen led us from venerable Santa Fe to the San Juan River.

In his second piece, Fall 1996,

we traveled across southwestern Colorado. Last spring Madsen took us across Utah's portion of the tortuous Great Basin and last fall we journeyed the little-known Mohave Desert of southern Arizona and Nevada.

On page 5, we backtrack on the Colorado Plateau!

Santa Fe will host OSTA's next gathering

The next annual meeting of the Old Spanish Trail Association will blend a stimulating set of speakers, engaging company, and a superb location.

The Salida del Sol chapter of OSTA will host that meeting on May 2-3 in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

This gathering will draw members to the very heart of their subject, venerable Santa Fe, where the trail had its genesis nearly four centuries ago. And the OSTA meeting will coincide with New Mexico's 400th anniversary, as Don Juan de Onate

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founded the "Kingdom and Province of New Mexico" in 1598.

Willard Lewis, president of Salida del Sol and spokesperson for the conference's host committee, reports that several noted speakers will address the conference and enlightening field trips are planned.

On Saturday, May 2, Tom Chavez, director of the Palace of the Governors state history museum, will deliver the keynote address.

Chavez, author of *Quest for Quivira: Spanish Explorers on the Great Plains, 1540-1821* (Tucson: Southwest Parks and Monuments Association, 1992) and other publications, will place the Spanish Trail in the historical context of the continuing European and American quest for the Pacific trade and territory.

Saturday afternoon will feature workshop panels, including one scheduled on Spanish colonial and Mexican period documents relating the Spanish Trail's genesis and development.

Robert Torrez, New Mexico's state historian and president of the Historical Society of New Mexico, will deliver that talk.

Another talk is planned on the history of the Palace of the Governors itself. It was from the plaza directly in front of the Palace of the Governors where California-bound caravans heading west on the Spanish Trail first assembled.

Saturday evening will provide an

opportunity for our far-flung members to gather for socializing and exchanging information on matters trail-related and otherwise.

Currently the schedule calls for the official meeting of OSTA to take place on Saturday evening.

At least two field trips will be offered on Sunday, May 3.

One field trip will follow the trail from Santa Fe through Santa Cruz, San Juan Pueblo, Abiquiu to El Vado on the Rio Chama.

Another field trip will depart Santa Fe and travel north to Taos by the traditional native route taken by Don Diego de Vargas in July 1694. That route has been referred to as the "east fork of the North Branch" of the Spanish Trail. (In fact it does hook up with the route over Cochetopa Pass that has been designated the Spanish Trail's "North Branch.")

PLEASE NOTE: This is a tentative schedule and details are still being finalized. OSTA members will hear from Salida del Sol sometime in mid-March with a full schedule and registration information.

In the meantime, anyone wishing to present a talk or needing further information on travel plans, fieldtrips, etc., contact Willard Lewis directly at P.O. Box 6073, Santa Fe, NM 87502-6073; or call (505) 984-2978.

As many national conventions have taken place in Colorado's San Luis Valley, this is an excellent opportunity to see the Southwest's oldest city, examine the very beginning of the trail, and meet fascinating folks. See you there!

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.)

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President's column

By Ron Kessler

Now is the time to begin planning for the trip to Santa Fe, New Mexico, for the Old Spanish Trail Association's national meeting on May 2-3.

For those of you who have never been to Santa Fe this is a chance of a lifetime. There are an abundance of sites in and around this ancient city that illuminate the long Spanish colonial period, the Mexican period, and the development of the trail.

I urge those of you who will travel by car to take a route that will parallel one of the many historic trails in the area, for many trails converge on Santa Fe.

There are many options. If you are traveling from the west you may wish to visit sites along the main route of the trail, say, from Dolores or Durango, Colorado, to Santa Fe via the San Juan and Chama rivers.

If you're driving through Grand Junction you can take highways that approximate the North Branch of the trail along the Colorado and Gunnison rivers, over Cochetopa Pass and down the San Luis Valley of Colorado to Santa Fe.

If you head north to Santa Fe, perhaps you should try highways that parallel or intersect the Camino Real that terminated in New Mexico precisely four hundred years ago.

Along the Camino Real, visit Fort Craig, Old Albuquerque, and El Rancho de Los Golondrinas. The latter site, especially, will fascinate you with its living history demonstrations and historic gardens.

If you will be driving to Santa Fe from the east, try routes that provide access to the Santa Fe Trail. Three sites on that route are spectacular and informative: Bent's Fort, near Las Animas, Colorado; Fort Union in northern New Mexico; and Pecos National Monument.

Take a traveling companion or two! I'd recommend the late Gregory Crampton and Steve Madsen's book, *In Search of the Spanish Trail, Santa Fe to Los Angeles, 1829-1848* (Salt Lake: Gibbs-Smith, 1994), and Marc Simmons' *Following the Santa Fe Trail: A Guide for Modern Travelers* (Santa Fe: Ancient City Press, 1986).

My own book, *Retracing the Old Spanish Trail, North Branch* (Monte Vista: Adobe Village Press, 1995) will serve those heading along that route.

I have a particular interest in the North Branch that has led one writer to state that OSTA has devalued the main route to just the "South Branch." This is a term that seems to readily distinguish the main route from the North Branch. And for those who question the importance of the North Branch, consider that author Leroy Hafen wrote that the North Branch offered better passage for wagons and pasturage at certain times of year.

Note that John W. Gunnison

traveled from Fort Massachusetts to Utah on his fateful journey in 1853 and that William W. Loring in 1858 used that same route to get from Green River to Taos.

These men used a well-known route developed in the fur trapping era of the 1820s and further exploited by parties heading west on the Spanish Trail in the 1830s and 1840s.

The North Branch follows a narrow corridor between the mountains and the marshy center of the San Luis Valley and it was used for centuries, even prior to establishment of the Spanish Trail proper.

In any case, both the "North Branch" and the "South Branch," that is, the route connecting Santa Fe to, say, Moab, are descriptive terms not meant to convey the importance, or lack of importance, of either.

Please note that our membership now includes members in Mexico, Germany, and England. In fact, an Englishman, David Fallowfield, has organized the first international chapter of OSTA. Fallowfield and friends retraced a portion of the trail in November 1997, as he is related to William Workman, who took settlers along the Spanish Trail from Santa Fe to California in 1841. Read Fallowfield's fascinating letter in this issue of the newsletter.

For those of you who are interested, the Taos County Historical Society puts out a great newsletter, *Ayer y Hoy en Taos*. Write to them at P.O. Box 2447, Taos, NM 87571.

See you at the conference in May!

Chapter reports

Mesa County

Exciting things afoot here in the North Branch Chapter. We are in the process of signing the contract with Lincoln Fox to sculpt "The Spirit of Pioneer Women."

Lincoln Fox is an internationally renowned artist who has recently moved into our area. We are part of a coalition headed up by our local chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, which has raised more than \$25,000 in the last nine months.

These funds will go towards paying for the seven-foot bronze statue to memorialize the pioneer women who entered the Grand Valley over the North Branch of the Old Spanish Trail. The statue will be placed in a new city park overlooking the Colorado River and an identified stretch of the Old Spanish Trail.

The five-foot high granite base pedestal will be engraved with a commemorative inscription about the trail, and will include the names of large contributors (those giving \$1,000 or more).

For \$100 we are selling one foot square granite "pavers," inscribed with the contributor's message, which must fit three lines of 16 letters each.

I should think that OSTA and some of its members would like to contribute. Make your checks out to the DAR and send them to me at 2276 Windwood Court, Grand

Junction, CO 81503. Or call me for more information at (970) 241-8143.

A bronze statue on a granite base sure beats hell out of a wooden sign!

For those who are interested, my lengthy article on the North Branch of the Spanish Trail in all its eras, "From Touse to the Winty," will be forthcoming in *Journal of the West Slope*, Vol. 11, No. 4, published by Mesa State College here in Grand Junction. The *Journal* is dedicated to publishing "original and scholarly material about Western Colorado."

Best wishes,
Jack Nelson

Salida del Sol

Our chapter has enjoyed several informative meetings prior to the May national conference.

The first program of late winter took place on February 7 at the Palace of the Governors when Frances Levine, director of Southwest Studies at Santa Fe Community College, addressed "The Importance of Roads and Trails in New Mexico History."

This talk took place about presstime for Spanish Traces, so I can't report more about it.

On March 7 our chapter hosted Robert Himmerich y Valencia of the University of New Mexico history department, who also serves as editor of the *New Mexico Historical Review*, a publication familiar to anyone who has researched New Mexico's history.

This program also took place just after this newsletter's presstime, so

we'll report about it in a future issue.

On April 18, OSTA members and the public are invited to join us for a third program, yet to be determined. One suggestion is to meet in Taos and focus on Kit Carson's adventures on the Old Spanish Trail.

If anyone has ideas or would like to join us, please get in touch by calling me at (505) 984-2978.

We're all looking forward to hosting the annual OSTA meeting on May 2-3. Hope to see you then.

Sincerely,
Willard Lewis

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Retracing the Spanish Trail: Across the Colorado Plateau in Utah

By Steven K. Madsen

Follow us as we backtrack over the Spanish Trail to the Utah-Colorado border to pick up the trail segment that crosses the immense corrugated region of southern and central Utah known as the Colorado Plateau. It earns its name by the fact that the mighty Colorado River gathers its far-flung tributaries that all cut this land, draining it to the Pacific Ocean.

Our journey begins at the Colorado stateline on the Great Sage Plain plateau and takes us 214 miles to the summit of Wasatch Pass at the eastern edge of the Great Basin. On our way, we'll pursue the tortuous path trodden by New Mexican pack trains, John N. Macomb's military expedition, John W. Gunnison's railroad survey team, and numbers of other overlanders. We'll quote the historical record to verify our course of travel and to illuminate our description of the Spanish Trail and the sandstone wilderness surrounding it.

Modern trail explorers who retrace the Spanish Trail across the Colorado Plateau will find a largely desert country sparsely dotted by modern towns and transected by ribbons of highway, little touched by the onrush of civilization.

In the awesome and intimate settings of the San Rafael Swell, travelers may pause to embrace

Modern trail explorers who retrace the Spanish Trail across the Colorado Plateau will find desert country with few modern towns and ribbons of highway the only signs of civilization.

In the awesome and intimate settings of the San Rafael Swell, travelers may pause to embrace desert solitudes.

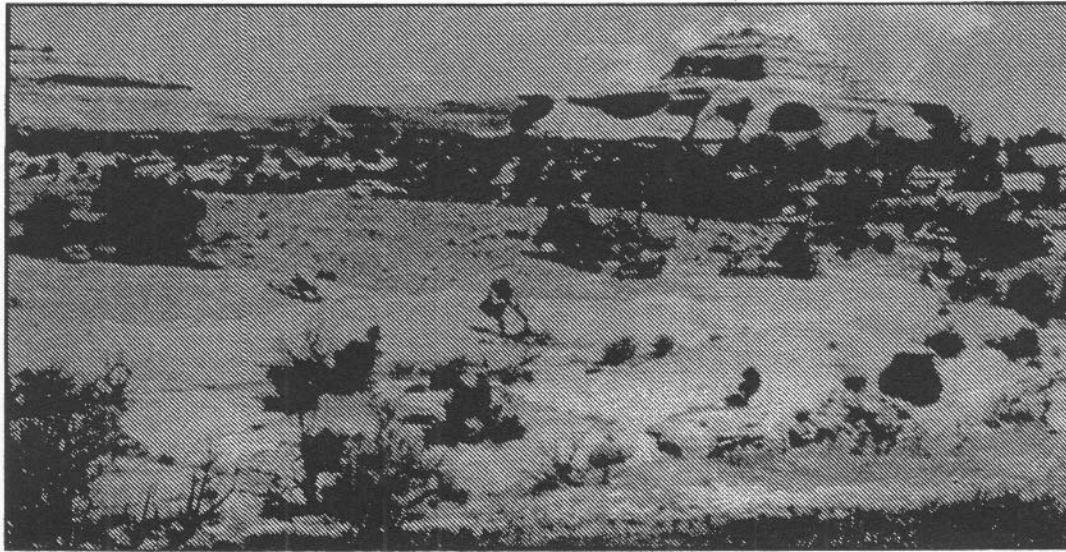
desert solitudes. They may view the mighty Colorado and Green rivers, the gently-sloping Sage Plain, the castellated formations of Castle Valley, the elongated, high plateaus that pierce central Utah, the austere landscape of the Green River Desert, and a wildly-contorted land, alive with color and harmonious features.

There is a geographic unity to Utah's Colorado Plateau. Its canyons, plateaus, mesas, and monoliths have been elaborately sculpted by the Colorado River and its affluents, creating a unity of colors, erosive cuts, and formations. The physical characteristics of the region played a role in the development of the Spanish Trail, since it is a great arch-shaped corridor, looping northward in a sinuous manner to avoid the more deeply

eroded interior of the canyonland wilderness. The rugged features and steep-walled canyons in the heart of the plateau region formed an insurmountable obstacle to direct east-west travel.

New Mexican trading caravans tramped the Spanish Trail as they gradually ascended the southward-tilting Great Sage Plain plateau to its northern rim. The lush native grasses of the Sage Plain provided abundant forage for large numbers of pack animals following the historic route. Approaching the Utah-Colorado line, the Abajo (Spanish: Lower) Mountains offered a variegated western backdrop to the old trail. [1] For trail riders, the Abajos were a prominent feature on the western

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The deeply grooved alcoves worn into the southern wall of this landmark butte prompted travelers to dub it Casa Colorado, the "Red House."

Photograph courtesy of Steve Madsen.

skyline several miles below, or south of, the jagged spine of the La Sal (Salt) Mountains that loomed in the distance.

Pack trains crossed the modern boundary of Utah near today's Ucolo, a community of farms some 15 miles east of Monticello, San Juan County's seat nestled near the base of the Abajos. The unity of this stretch of the Spanish Trail is the Sage Plain, a sage-and-grasscarpeted plateau. At Ucolo, trail riders reached a spillway or "Pour off" on Piute Draw identified as Guajolote (salamander) by the 1859 Macomb military expedition.

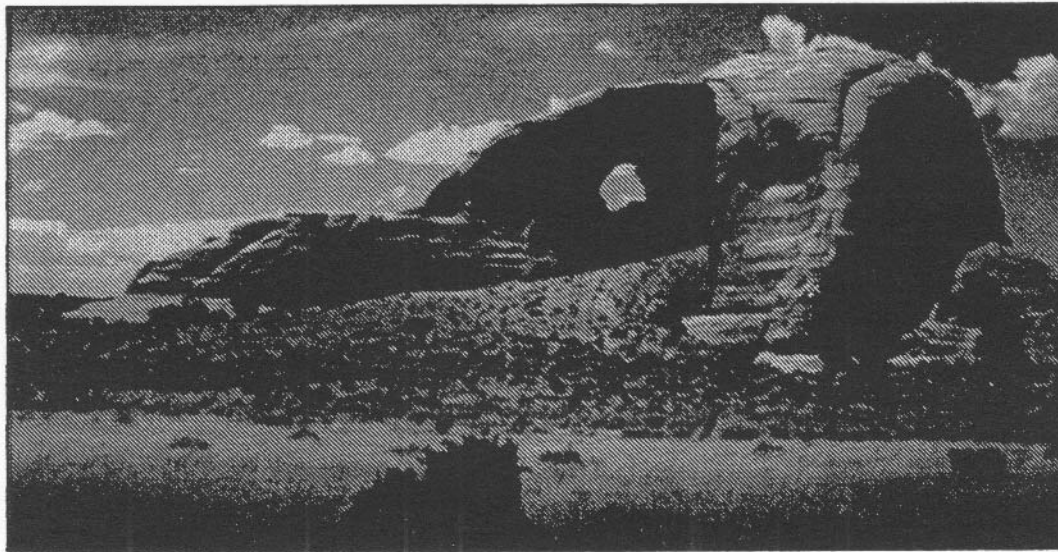
Here the overflow from Piute Spring, upstream from the Pour-off, forms pools in a "canyon slimy with water-lizards," noted Charles Dimmock, cartographer of the Macomb Survey who rode through

here in 1859.[2] Little of the landscape has changed since his observation.

Beyond Guajolote, a campsite used by the Macomb party, riders followed the water course to Piute Spring, an important waterhole on the Spanish Trail which yielded a constant flow of four gallons of water a minute, an ample supply for both traders and pack animals. Piute Spring, two miles from the Colorado border, supplied sufficient water for cattle drovers, military commands, pioneer farmers, and freighters as the American frontier moved to the area after 1876. Texas cowboys driving livestock over the old trade route to stock the ranges of eastern and southern Utah, paused at the refreshing waters. Then they plodded to South Canyon, a branch of East Canyon the long gash in the northwestern

edge of the Sage Plain plateau.

From the rim of the plateau, known by local ranchers as Summit Point, the trail plunges into South Canyon, dropping a thousand feet in about three miles to the floor of East Canyon - a long, narrow canyon opening out into Dry Valley. The Macomb military expedition named this canyon of vividly colored rock, Canyon Pintado, or Painted Canyon. Describing the descent into this wild, red rock region east of today's Canyonlands National Park on September 13, 1848, our trail diarist Orville C. Pratt stated: "We began descending one of the longest and steepest mountains yet passed over. But we got down it with safety. After reaching the bottom the scenery in the valley was the most rugged and sublime I ever beheld." [3]



Looking Glass Rock, an almost hollow sandstone formation just off the trail ten miles west of Casa Colorado, represented yet another welcome landmark on the trail. *Photograph courtesy of Phil Carson.*

Though sparsely vegetated, Dry Valley is obviously a misnomer for an extensive basin carved into a unique desert landscape drained by Hatch Wash. Here the Spanish Trail makes its abrupt entry into a region typified by scattered monuments of bald sandstone domes, windshaped into fanciful forms. Macomb's party was awed by the "intricate mass of irregular bluffs, detached buttes & sinuous canyons," wittled by nature's forces.[4] Today, range cattle and coyotes share this desert habitat that is spotted with oil rigs and windmills and crisscrossed by underground gas lines and rough roads. Following the Spanish Trail to the upper end of Dry Valley, nearly 30 miles from Piute Spring, Macomb's command halted at the landmark rock, Casa Colorado (Red House), jutting up more than 200 feet from its broad, undulating

base. The deeply grooved alcoves cut into the southern wall of this "detached butte" of sandstone reminded passersby of the windows of a massive house. Although nineteenth century travelers seldomly appreciated the natural allurements alongside the Spanish Trail, J. S. Newberry, the geologist-artist of the Macomb expedition, described Casa Colorado as "one of the most striking [formations] seen from our route." He stopped here to sketch the "immense mass of sedimentary rocks," the scene depicted in one of eleven colored plates illuminating Macomb's final report.[5] In F. V. Hayden's great *Atlas of Colorado*, which spilled over into southeastern Utah, Atlas Sheet VIII shows the course of the Spanish Trail running northward to Casa Colorado.

Beyond Casa Colorado, a trail is

shown careening off into the higher elevations of the La Sal Mountains a fiction copied from John W. Gunnison's railroad survey map, drawn by F. W. von Egloffstein. (Von Egloffstein's map shows a branch of the trail passing through the high peaks of the La Sals. It is entirely possible that frontiersmen used the La Sals as a rendezvous site in the Spanish Trail period. Keep in mind, however, that Gunnison himself never followed the trail south of the Green River Desert where he intersected the main route.)

To complete the triangulation survey of Colorado, Hayden's men traversed the Spanish Trail to within a short distance of the La Sal and Abajo mountains. They then veered from the trail to forge paths

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After crossing the Colorado River at present-day Moab, Utah, the next major obstacle loomed in the form of the San Rafael Swell, a tortuous uplift seen here from the air. *Photograph courtesy of Steve Madsen.*

leading to the highest peaks in southeastern Utah overlooking the territory to the east. As a result, some sources have erroneously mistaken Hayden's triangulation survey trails for the Spanish Trail. On the Spanish Trail, at the richly contoured slickrock base of Casa Colorado, lies El Tenejal (The Place of the Tanks). Here expedition members found large natural tanks carved into a sandstone surface. La Tinaja (The Tank) is an enormous pothole - having a capacity of about 2,000 gallons of water - formed by erosion and surrounded by several natural basins in the expansive slickrock mass below Casa Colorado. J. S. Newberry described it as a "deep excavation in red sandstone, which retains so large a quantity of surface water and for so long a time as to become an important watering

place on the Spanish Trail." [6]

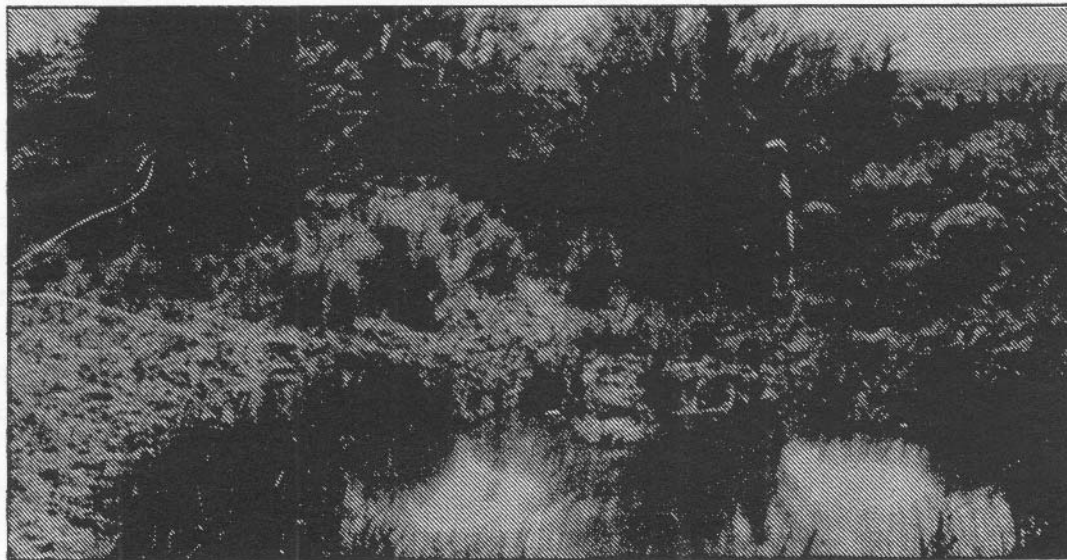
It is easy to visualize early travelers hauling water from the tanks in leather buckets to thirsty pack animals waiting below the pour-off. Following an easy grade below La Tinaja, the trail descends to Hatch Wash and continues down its course, paralleling the present alignment of U.S. Highway 191. (Several miles northwest of the point where the trail intersects Hatch Wash, Macomb set up a base camp at "Ojo Verde" (Green Spring). From this location, Macomb went on to explore the wild canyonlands to the west in the hope of finding the junction of the Green and Colorado rivers.)

The Spanish Trail leaves Hatch Wash at the mouth of Hook and Ladder Gulch and pursues a northerly path along the former highway between Moab and Monticello. It

continues this course to Looking Glass Rock, passing to the right of the salmon-tinted, perforated rock which seems to bulge up more than 100 feet from the valley floor. In post-trail days, the sandstone landmark, about 10 miles from Casa Colorado, served as a "nooning" stop for cattle drives heading north to the Denver & Rio Grande railhead at Thompson.

From Looking Glass Rock, the trail advances north through the crossroads point at La Sal Junction and, staying to the right of the U.S. Highway 191 route, pushes on toward the Colorado River. Not far from the junction, the trail passes to the left of a formation that is four hundred feet high, topped by round-shaped rocks, and imaginatively named by early cattlemen in the area, "The Nipples."

Beyond the massive rock, the



Trail Spring, pictured here, lies in the San Rafael Swell. In 1853 John W. Gunnison departed the trail near here to avoid the broken terrain of the Swell. Photograph courtesy of Steve Madsen.

overland trail proceeds north to Muleshoe Canyon. Here the trail takes the shape of a large muleshoe as it sharply curves to cross the upper end of the narrow ravin. Beyond "The Muleshoe," the trail reaches a long, unbroken wall of sandstone extending northward to Kane Springs. In early years, when cattlemen drove livestock along this stretch of the Spanish Trail, towering rocks heated by desert sunlight wilted the drovers and their herds. Tormented from thirst, the exhausted cattle trudged relentlessly up the trail and circled the base of a protruding rock monument, named "St. Louis Rock" by a Mormon scouting party sent to explore the region south of Moab in 1855. [7] The landmark rock jutting against U. S. Highway 191, known today as "Hole N the Rock," is covered with commercial graffiti and the

inscriptions of former passersby.

Just beyond the rock promontory, the trail reaches Kane Springs which served as a campsite for weary travelers on the Spanish Trail, now a rest stop on U.S. Highway 191 about 16 miles south of Moab. Trail riders and animals drank lustily from its life-giving waters. In 1848, B. Choteau labeled the site, "Corisite." Trail diarist Orville C. Pratt called it "Corasito," quite possibly a corruption of *corridita*, a Spanish diminutive of *corrida* meaning flow of water, or runoff. (The root word of Corasito may also be *carrizo*, meaning reed grass; hence the diminutive "carrisito," or short reed grass.) Leaving Kane Springs, travelers on the Spanish Trail ascended Blue Hill. Early settlers of the region noted that the marks of shod horses had gouged a path,

clearly visible in the 1870s, into the rocky slope. [8] The dugway cut into the hillside, which intersects the highway from the southeast, is today a visible remnant of the Spanish Trail.

On the far side of Blue Hill, trail riders struggled northward closely approximating the present highway to Spanish Valley, flanked by upstanding walls of russet-colored sandstone. At the head of the valley the trail reaches Pack Creek and descends its course to the city of Moab. Founded initially in 1855 by the Mormon Elk Mountain Mission group, the settlement was soon abandoned due to Indian depredations. Resettled in the 1870s, the city has become an important center of economic activity in the area, spurred by

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tourism. Leaving Moab, the trail reaches the Colorado River three miles distant and crosses it downstream from the present highway bridge, a half mile above "The Portal," a narrow opening leading to Cataract Canyon.

Beyond the Colorado, the trail climbs Moab Canyon, past the entrance to Arches National Park, and ascends Courthouse Wash to the vicinity of a giant monolith known locally as Courthouse Rock. Water issues from the hillside below the rock, providing a bountiful supply of spring water for roaming livestock. Beyond the watering source known as Upper Courthouse Spring, the trail makes an abrupt transition as it enters the Green River Desert. The muted grays of the desert stand in stark contrast to the rich natural pigments permeating the sandstone formations to the south. The drab desert landscape is broken only by the serrated profile of the Roan and Book cliffs on the northern skyline.

At a low divide between Thompson Wash and Little Grande Wash, in the center of this dull, parched terrain, the famous North Branch of the Spanish Trail intersects the regular thoroughfare. In this sterile, monotonous setting, midway across the desert, John W. Gunnison's railroad survey team in 1853 reached the regular course of the Spanish Trail. Gunnison, captain in the U.S. Army Corps of Topographical Engineers, was commissioned by the War Department to survey a "central route" for a railroad across the continent, along the 38th and 39th parallels of

latitude. Advancing westward along a wide, natural corridor toward Green River, now followed by Interstate 70, he struck the main Spanish Trail.

Using data supplied by the expedition, we are able to retrace the historic path from the spot where Gunnison encountered it to Green River crossing and beyond.

***Gunnison's party,
following the Spanish
Trail, continued along
the yet unnamed
wash, then left the
trail three miles north
of Trail Spring to cir-
cumvent the difficult
badlands interior of
the San Rafael Swell.***

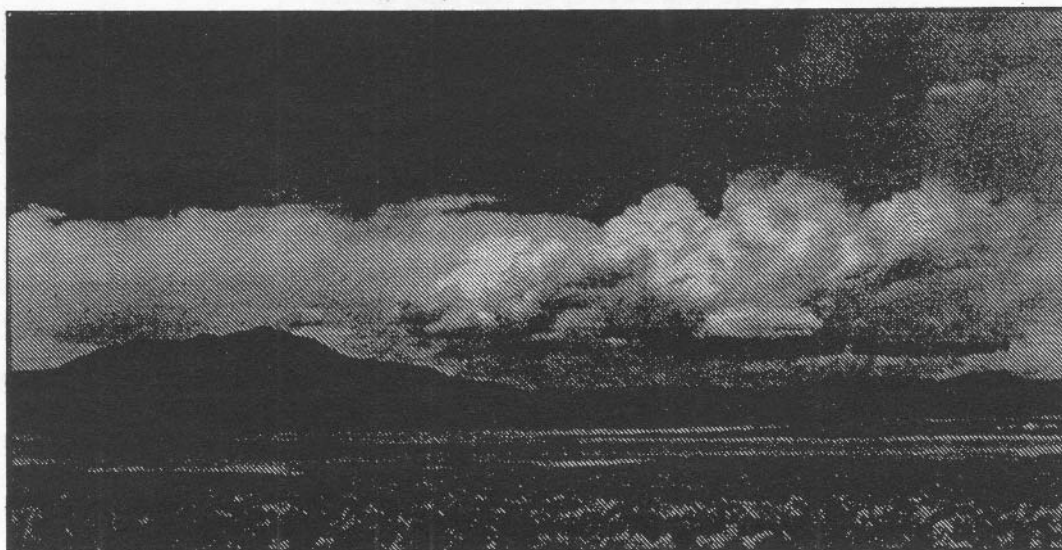
Gunnison's survey notes help us pinpoint the Spanish Trail ford of the Green River at 3 + miles above the J. W. Powell River History Museum. (On John Wesley Powell's two epic voyages down the Green River, his men stopped at the famous crossing and helped fix it on the map.)

From the Green River ford, some 112 miles from the Colorado border, the Spanish Trail angles off to the southwest along the bed of Saleratus Wash, then continues up the channel as it swings to the northwest. Following the streambed, the trail runs northward to

the present Trail Spring, some 13 miles from the Green River, which was known as Akanaquint Spring and as Green River Spring in the trail's heyday.

Gunnison's party of 1853, following the Spanish Trail, continued along the yet unnamed wash, then left the trail three miles north of Trail Spring to circumvent the difficult badlands interior of the San Rafael Swell. From the point where Gunnison left it, the trail swings up Lost Spring Wash to Cement Crossing on the unused Denver & Rio Grande Railroad grade. The D & R G, extending its track westward in 1882, built a 50-mile railroad bed through the northern sector of the San Rafael Swell, but canceled the route in favor of a more direct line from Green River to Price, Utah, paralleling the modern north-south trending highway. Portions of the grade closely follow the Spanish Trail.

The D & R G, however, enters the Swell on another route ascending Cottonwood Wash. From Cement Crossing, the trail follows Big Hole Wash to Big Holes in Pack Saddle Gulch, nearly 17 miles from Trail Spring. Orville C. Pratt complained of having to discard a packsaddle here in 1848. At Big Holes, rock basins carved into bedrock form small reservoirs, which provided trail riders with abundant water. Beyond Big Holes, the trail runs nine and a half miles to Little Holes, where water is found in the gulch below the trail. Here in 1855 the Mormon Elk Mountain Mission party, on its way to found Moab, stopped to quench its thirst. From



The idyllic Parowan Valley awaited trail travelers who successfully negotiated the myriad obstacles of the Colorado Plateau in present-day Utah.

Photograph courtesy of Steve Madsen.

Little Holes, the trail ambles westward over open country to Furniture Draw and, after threading its course, crosses Buckhorn Flat south of Cedar Mountain, which towers 1,000 feet above the trail. Below, to the south, the land drops into a maze of canyons and eroded cliffs. To intrepid overlanders, the "standing up country" of the San Rafael Swell must have been a frustrating impediment for direct east-west travel. They manifested little, if any, appreciation of the corrugated landscape. Some, like Orville C. Pratt in 1848, expressed a distaste for the scenery: "The country continues . . . sandy, hilly & utterly barren. Water is also scarce, & if there is no mineral wealth in these mountains I can hardly conceive of what earthly use a large proportion of this country was designed for!" [9]

The luxury of time, and advanced technology, allows modern explorers to pause and soak in the natural beauty of the trailside. The magic of the landscape's compelling solitudes is felt by even the casual visitor. A number of vantage points in the pristine air near the Spanish Trail reveal panoramas magnificently diverse, yet unified by a succession of standing up rocks - temples of sandstone and flat-topped monuments. Rock sentinels, gleaming in the hot sun, provide a grand color-fest for the artist's palette. Clouds shift to create new intensity of light and shadow on another cliff, another canyon, another view. A haunting wind scrapes the desert floor and creates a whisper as it circles cliffs and passes through eroded canyons and stone notches. Soft talus slopes form broad, apron-like bases below

hardened sheer cliffs - a pattern that echoes across a vibrant landscape. Upthrust rocks, while retreating from erosion, seem to retain their profiles - their basic shapes remain. It is a "land of living rock."

After crossing the San Rafael's Buckhorn Flat, the Spanish Trail via Red Seep eases over the low Black Hills to reach Huntington Creek, its northernmost point. The trail crosses the stream not far from the spot where Gunnison's railroad survey team reentered the historic path. After circling north around the rugged canyons of the San Rafael Swell, the Gunnison party returned to the well-worn trail in Castle Valley. Lieutenant E. G. Beckwith, second in command of the Gunnison expedition, described the trail where his party rejoined it:

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"The Spanish trail, though but seldom used of late years, is still very distinct where the soil washes but slightly. On some such spaces to-day we counted from fourteen to twenty parallel trails, of the ordinary size of Indian trails or horse paths, on a way of barely fifty feet in width." [10]

Beyond the junction of the trails, the route dips south-southwest through Utah's Castle Valley, bordered on the west by massive castle-like formations. The valley floor, watered by the upper branches of the San Rafael River, is today under cultivation. Moreover, sufficient water exists to supply Castle Valley's enormous coal-fired power plants dotting the terrain. Below Castle Dale, the seat of Emery County, the trail pursues a course generally parallel to Utah Highway 10, and crosses Ferron Creek, one of the headwaters of the San Rafael River. Known in the trail days as Garambullo (Spanish: Gooseberry), the stream is today named for Augustus D. Ferron, a county surveyor who in the 1870s accurately laid down the Spanish Trail/Gunnison Road on the early township survey maps of the area.

Moving south, the Spanish Trail roughly follows present Utah Highway 10 to the area of Walker Flat, then crosses the paved route and proceeds to Oak Spring Ranch, approximately 40 miles from Castle Dale. At this location in October, 1853, the Gunnison party drank from the spring's "abundance of cool water" before resuming their march over the Spanish Trail. [11] From the ranch site, the trail as-

cends Ivie Creek Canyon, known in the trail days as El Rio del Puerto (The River of the Pass). Going up Ivie Creek (to which Gunnison gave the Indian name Akanaquint), we find evidence that we are on the right track. Adorning a high wall above today's Interstate 70 near the mouth of Ivie Creek canyon, is a prehistoric pictograph which Gunnison observed in 1853 while following the Spanish Trail; which the Elk Mountain Mission party fully described two years later. [12]

Beyond the pictograph, where Red Creek enters Ivie Creek, a branch of the Spanish Trail veers away from the canyon and crosses the mighty Fish Lake Plateau. The 72-mile Fish Lake Route rejoins the main trail in Sevier River Valley, south of Junction, Utah. Ascending the main trail along Ivie Creek on a natural passageway followed by prehistoric peoples for thousands of years, and used by Spanish trading parties as early as 1813, the trail crosses Wasatch Pass. At the summit of the pass, six miles from Oak Spring, at an elevation of some 7,800 feet, the trail enters the Great Basin.

Here we leave behind the red rock wonders of canyonland country to cross a belt of high plateaus running through southern Utah and continue our journey westward toward the Pacific settlements.

Steven K. Madsen grew up in the Salt Lake Valley and today is a historian, author, and high school history teacher.

ENDNOTES

[1] In 1876, Wm. H. Holmes of the Hayden Survey, climbed Abajo Peak (elevation 11,360 feet), the highest point in the Abajo Mountains, and made a detailed panoramic sketch of the surrounding country to the north and east, including Canon Pintado and other landmarks on the Spanish Trail. The panorama drawn by Holmes accurately shows the region between the Great Sage Plain and the La Sal Mountains, and beyond. (See F. V. Hayden, *Tenth Annual Report, 1878*.) Using Holmes' panorama, it is easy to identify Canon Pintado with today's East Canyon Wash as it is shown on modern topographic maps.

[2] Charles H. Dimmock, *Field Notes, Macomb Expedition of 1859*. Library of Congress, Manuscripts Division, Rodgers Family File, Series I, vol. 17 (Miscellany) folder entitled, "San Juan Exploring Expedition Topographica! Memoir, ca. 1856-58," p. 9.

[3] LeRoy R. Hafen and Ann W. Hafen, *Old Spanish Trail*, (Glendale, California: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1954), p. 348.

[4] Dimmock, *Field Notes*, p. 10.

[5] 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, in 1859, with Geological Report by Prof. J. S. Newberry*. (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1876), p. 92.

[6] Ibid. B. Choteau's "Tewaja" is, indeed, a corruption of La Tinaja. See LeRoy R. Hafen and Ann W. Hafen, *Old Spanish Trail*, pp. 366, 369. Photographer William H. Jackson of the Hayden Survey "intersected the old Spanish Trail at La Tinaja" on August 26, 1875. The next day he visited "some red rocks containing some peculiar caves," Casa Colorado. His notes indicate that La Tinaja may have been five miles south of

Casa Colorado where the trail from Cold Springs (Peters Canyon) joined the Spanish Trail. Jackson, however, may have meant the "the area of the tanks" as did Dimmock and Macomb when they labeled the Macomb Camp No. 27, "El Tenejal." Today, large water holes in rock are to be found along the drainage of Casa Colorado flowing into Hatch Wash, and some may possibly be found in the main wash itself. See William H. Jackson, *Diary. 1875*. Typescript. Collection of James H. Knipmeyer, Lee's Summit, Missouri; Microfilm of ms. in the State Historical Society of Colorado, Denver. See also Dimmock, *Field Notes*, p. 10.

[7] C. Gregory Crampton, "Utah's Spanish Trail," in *Utah Historical Quarterly*, 47 (Fall, 1979), p. 369, note 9.

[8] Faun McConkie Tanner, *The Far Country: A Regional History of Moab and La Sal, Utah*. (Salt Lake City: Olympus Publishing Company, 1976), p. 40.

[9] Hafen and Hafen, *Old Spanish Trail*, p. 350.

[10] E. G. Beckwith, "Report for a Route for a Pacific Railroad, by Cap. J. W. Gunnison, Topographical Engineers, near the 38th and 39th Parallels of Latitude, from the mouth of the Kansas River, Mo., to the Sevier Lake, in the Great Basin," in *Reports of Explorations and Surveys to Ascertain the Most Practical and Economical Route for a Railroad from the Mississippi to the Pacific Ocean. . . II* (Washington, D.C.: A.O.P. Nicholson, Printer, 1855), p. 65.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Ibid. p. 66; See entry for May 27, 1855. A. N. Billings. *Journal of Travels of the Elk Mountain Missionaries to the Elk Mountains*. Typescript copy, p. 2. Manuscript file, Spanish Trail. Utah State Historical Society, Salt Lake City.

Washington residents bicycle the Spanish Trail

Dear OSTA members,

We bicycled 1,370 miles from La Plaza in Santa Fe to La Plaza in Los Angeles last year.

This included about 200 miles of dirt/mud/gravel roads.

We had all kinds of weather, including snow, cold rain, heavy winds, and temperatures over 100 degrees. We tent-camped 18 nights and "motelled it" another 26 nights, for 44 nights on the trail.

The camping was a wonderful part of the trip, often on remote sage plains, and frequently with coyotes howling and owls hooting in the night. When we encountered antelope, they seemed more curious of us than fearful.

There was only one real disappointment on the trip. At La Plaza in Los Angeles we could find no plaque or monument to signify the end of the Spanish Trail. We nonetheless toured La Plaza with the director of the nearby historical museum and have since written her urging her to find the means to mark the trail's end.

It was a wonderful trip. The teamwork and companionship was the best. We have seen the geography that the packtrains traveled through and we felt their hardships many times as we ourselves toiled through the

remote and barren and near-waterless sage plains and canyons and worked our way over and through the many mountain ranges. It was those historic feelings we wanted to take home with us. And we did!

The perspective from a bicycle is totally different. Certain matters loom large: the weather, finding a campsite, the smell of roadkill, food and water, traffic, the road surface, road shoulders, bicycle repairs in the middle of nowhere, and certainly the energy and stamina necessary for going up and over the mountain passes, some of which rose over 8,000 feet in elevation.

Since returning home from our trek we have been trying to get our home and life back to what is called "normal life." We had 40 pounds of mail to deal with, the lawn and flower gardens to get ready for winter, family visiting to do, and now the paperwork to follow-up on this trip.

We do at least two major bicycling tours each year. In spite of all the pre-trip planning and post-trip cleanup that each trek entails, we are always excited about what we have done and what we are going to do next.

Kenn and Lorraine Carpenter
P.O. Box 7
Marysville, WA 98270

Book Bag

(Editor's note: The following books are not being reviewed critically, but merely described for the reader's information. As always, this information is provided by the editor.)

Valley of Shining Stone: The Story of Abiquiu

By Lesley Poling-Kempes

University of Arizona Press, 1997,
paper, 272 pp. ISBN: 0-8165-
1446-1

Poling-Kempes lives near Abiquiu on the Chama River northwest of Santa Fe and has made New Mexico her home for a quarter-century. So she is comfortable with her subject and not surprisingly, organizes it well.

She divides her narrative into two parts: first, La Tierra de Guerra, "The Land of War," which details the physical setting and the cultures which fought over the upper Rio Grande, from the prehistoric Piedra Lumbre cultures, to the Pueblos and Navajos, genizaros, Spaniards, Mexicans, and Americans.

Part Two is titled "The Good Country" and gives an overview of the land grant battles and legal entanglements that seem to mock the stark simplicity of the land itself, before it moves on to the late 19th and early 20th century history of ranching interests, indigenous people, artists such as Georgia O'Keefe, and modern developments.

In a "Prologue to the Next Century," the author also delves into the political activism of the 1960s and 1970s that played out across this landscape.

The author's notes are citations only, but the selected bibliography will supply the answers to many inquiries shy of a full investigation.

An ample number of well-reproduced maps and photographs accompany the text, including many unfamiliar to those who may be familiar with the country itself.

Signs of Life:

Rock Art on the Upper Rio Grande

By Dennis Slifer

Johnson Books, 1998, cloth, paper,
275 pp. ISBN: 1-58096-004-9
(cloth)
ISBN: 1-58096-005-7 (paper)

Ancient images on stone offer intriguing glimpses of the tapestry of prehistoric cultures that made a home on the upper Rio Grande.

Slifer places the abundant rock art of the upper river in the context of the Southwest and takes the reader on a tour of sites from the Colorado-New Mexico border south to Texas.

A section of the book is devoted to sites with public access so that responsible readers can witness the rock art itself.

This book is filled, as it should be for a graphic subject, with more than 200 photos and illustrations of rock art, many of which have not been seen in print before now.

Slifer is a geologist with the state

of New Mexico, based in Santa Fe, and has also co-authored a book on Kokopelli.

People of the Red Earth: American Indians of Colorado

By Sally Crum

Ancient City Press, cloth, paper,
296 pp. ISBN: 0-941270-88-2
(cloth) ISBN: 0-941270-89-0
(paper)

Crum describes each tribe that once lived within the present-day boundaries of Colorado in detail. She writes about their religious and cultural beliefs, their material culture (the objects of their daily lives), their contact with Anglo and Spanish explorers and cultures, stories of noted native leaders.

According to *Colorado Libraries*, "This marvelous book will delight readers looking for an extremely well-written overview of the earliest people."

Utes: The Mountain People

By Jan Pettit

Johnson Books, paper, 224 pp.
ISBN: 1-55566-065-7

Pettit writes of the Utes' deep history, from the archaeological features of prehistoric Ute sites to elements of modern Ute culture.

The Denver Post writes of Pettit's book: "Generously illustrated with rare photographs, the book is less about battles than about beliefs and lifestyle, including a look at present-day Indians."

Prehistoric Astronomy in the Southwest

By J. McKim Malville & Claudia Putnam

Johnson Books, paper, 112 pp.
ISBN: 1-55566-116-5

The authors provide an introduction to practical astronomy, then discuss the amazing alignments and orientations of stones and buildings at major Southwestern sites, including Mesa Verde.

The evidence seems to establish that ancient natives of this region understood and took advantage of measuring and marking celestial events such as solstices and equinoxes.

Indian Running: Native American History and Tradition

By Peter Nabakov

Ancient City Press, paper, 208 pp.
ISBN: 0-941270-41-6

An overview of native running traditions throughout the Americas,

with an account of the 1980 Tricentennial run commemorating the successful Pueblo Indian Revolt against the Spaniards of colonial New Mexico - one of few triumphs of native unity against European colonization in the history of the Americas.

Across the Northern Frontier: Spanish Explorations in Colorado

By Phil Carson

Johnson Books, 1998, cloth, paper, 240 pp. ISBN: 1-55566-215-3
(cloth) ISBN: 1-55566-216-1
(paper)

The author, who serves as editor of this newsletter, describes the physical setting of the upper Rio Grande and - due to the book's primary focus - the vast lands that lay beyond to the north, and the peoples who inhabited them when the first Spaniards appeared.

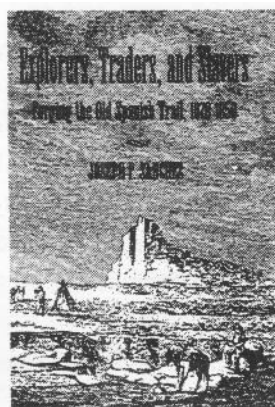
Moving swiftly from Columbus' landfall in the Caribbean and Cortes' victory in Mexico, this book

touches upon the handful of explorations that led to the settlement of New Mexico.

Then, in a series of chapters determined by political and cultural events in the region, the narrative sets up the conditions that sent explorers across New Mexico's vast northern frontier. In company with those explorers, the narrative traces those explorers' motivations, their routes, descriptions of the land and encounters with the disparate native peoples who inhabited colonial New Mexico's hinterlands.

The book demonstrates how familiar Spaniards were with the vast lands west of the Mississippi prior to the American westward movement, and adds an epilogue on the deep native and Hispanic influences that still predominate in northern New Mexico and southern Colorado.

A series of maps illustrates the Spanish empire's New World holdings at the time of New Mexico's founding, the Camino Real to New Mexico, native Pueblos and explorers' routes.



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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Brits on the Old Spanish Trail: OSTA's first international chapter

27 December 1997

Dear Ron,

Many thanks for your most interesting reply to my letter to you of 15 November.

We have had a meeting and like the idea, not only of becoming members of OSTA, but also of forming the first international chapter as you suggest. It may help your cause and we support the aims of OSTA wholeheartedly.

Enclosed are our membership forms and fees.

You ask if I know of anyone in California who would form a chapter. You should write: Workman & Temple Family Homestead Museum, 15415 East Don Julian Rd., City of Industry, CA 91745.

Perhaps the museum would take an institutional membership, or mention your organization in its newsletter.

I enjoyed reading *Spanish Traces* and look forward to further issues.

Ron, we have other things in common, which I learned from the biography in your book. We're about the same age and as the son of a cavalryman I've done my share of riding in my time.

**Yours sincerely,
David Fallowfield**

PLEASE NOTE: Membership dues are due in May-June and must be paid to receive *Spanish Traces*.

The following two letters from David Fallowfield in England were received at OSTA headquarters by President Ron Kessler and, though we do not have Kessler's letter responding to Fallowfield, one can infer much from the Brit's second letter. Read on...

53 Croft Avenue
Penrith, Cumbria
CA11 7RL
England
15 November 1997

Dear Ron,

You may be surprised, and I hope pleased and interested to know there are at least a few Old Spanish Trail buffs here in England.

I fortunately caught sight of and purchased your excellent book, *Retracing the Old Spanish Trail*, North Branch, whilst visiting the Kit Carson Home and Museum in Taos on 1 November 1997.

I was one of a group of four people from our county here in England and were in Taos on a side trip from the route of the Old Spanish Trail, South Branch.

We were doing a modern day re-enactment of William Workman's trek of 1841. He is credited with having led the first group of Anglo settlers along the OST from Santa Fe into Southern California. Like him we also

arrived in Los Angeles on 5 November and visited the Workman Homestead Museum in the City of Industry.

The following day we were guests at the annual luncheon of the (LA) First Century Families at the Beverly Wilshire Hotel, Beverly Hills, who this year were honouring the Workman Family of Los Angeles.

The two Workman brothers, David & William, left the Penrith area in 1822 and set up a saddlery in Franklin, Missouri, employing the young Kit Carson as an apprentice. In 1825 William joined the mule train to Santa Fe, soon to be followed out West by Kit Carson. Both men settled at Taos. David Workman & his family joined William in California in 1854 and there are many descendants in the Los Angeles area.

I myself am descended from the same local Workman family and I have other family connections with the Western U.S. This was my sixth visit to California. Basically we used the Hafens' book to research our route, and our overnight stops were at the following places: Santa Fe, Durango, Green River, Cedar City, and Las Vegas. I made a video of our journey, as well. Maybe another time we should do the North Branch. Hope this letter is of interest to you.

**Yours sincerely,
David Fallowfield**