

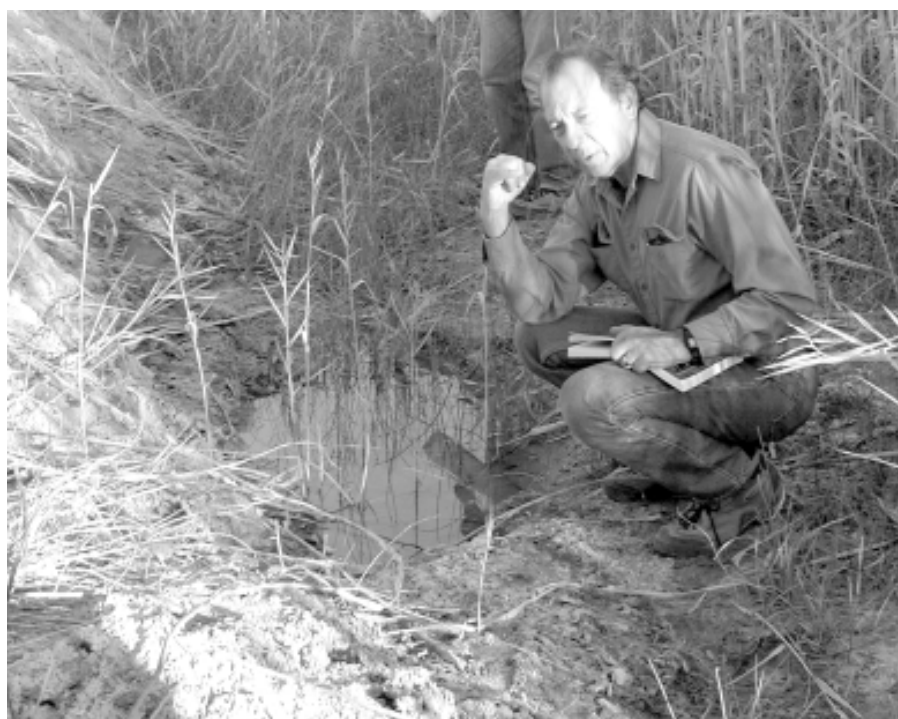
# SPANISH TRACES



Volume 6

Winter 2000

No. 1



**Nick Saines, President of the new Las Vegas Chapter, reacts to the water at Bitter Spring in Ft. Irwin, CA while consulting Col. Hal Steiner's new guide to the OST in the Mojave Desert.**

On November 20, 1999 Desert Historian Cliff Walker led the Southern California Chapter on a field trip into the Mojave Desert. The first stop was the Forks of the Road east of Yermo. One OST branch went northeast to Bitter Spring and the other went east to Soda Springs via what is now called the Mojave Road. The group took the left fork to Impassable Pass at the head of Spanish Canyon in Alvord Mountain and then used the power line road to reach Bitter Spring in Ft. Irwin. The tour threaded its way (with permission) through maneuvering Bradley Fighting Vehicles to Bitter Spring and to its redoubt, a legacy of Carleton's 1860 Campaign.

## Las Vegas Chapter off to a Roaring Start!

The new Las Vegas, NV Chapter has roared off at a thundering pace. The group has had several field trips, one jointly with the Southern California Chapter, and a formal installation meeting.

Nick Saines of Las Vegas is the Chapter President. Officers include Hal Steiner, Vice President, Karen Early, Secretary and Chris Macek, Treasurer. The directors are Liz Warren and Helen Mortenson. This group comprises the Executive Committee.

The Chapter leadership has a proven track record for historic preservation. Liz Warren was a prime mover in the successful effort to preserve the Las Vegas Big Springs. Many of the Chapter members have been active participants in past preservation efforts and will now be given new challenges.

An effort is now underway to preserve part of a visible trail remnant in Las Vegas that is pressed by development. This has generated substantial, positive publicity.

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All matters relating to **Spanish Traces** should be directed to the Editor:

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**Spanish Traces** is the official publication of the Old Spanish Trail Association, a nonprofit organization incorporated under the laws of the State of Colorado. **ST** welcomes submission of letters, articles, and OSTA related news. The next deadline is April 1, 2000.

## **National Park Service Study Status**

The NPS Study of the OST should by now have an internal draft of the preliminary report in circulation among historians internal to the NPS. Following further internal review and limited external review, the report will be printed and made public. This should happen about June 1, 2000, more or less. The public will have a ninety day period for providing written comments. The final report will be prepared after the public comment period. John Paige has replaced Larry Beal as the NPS Feasibility Study/OST Job Captain and can be contacted at: NPS, Box 25287, Lakewood, CO 80228, 303-969-2356, (john\_paige@NPS.gov)

## **Call for Help: Where are all the old and new OST markers?**

The OSTA board has appointed Ron Jewkes as Chairman of the OST Mapping and Marking Committee. The M&M Committee is tasked with standardizing OST markers and it would be very helpful to know just what is already in place. **We are asking OSTA members who know the whereabouts of existing OST markers to provide details of the location, configuration and a photo, if possible, to board member Ron Jewkes, 74 Bryner Street, Helper, UT 84526-1025, (435) 472-0719, wdload@afnetinc.com. The sooner, the better! Thanks for your help.**

OSTA's efforts will help preserve one of America's great long distance trade routes and increase appreciation of the West's multi-cultural heritage. Please join us!

### **Membership Dues:**

|                          |                  |
|--------------------------|------------------|
| <b>Institutional</b>     | <b>\$25/year</b> |
| <b>Family/Individual</b> | <b>\$12/year</b> |
| <b>Student</b>           | <b>\$ 5/year</b> |

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## President's Corner

This issue of *Spanish Traces* marks the advent of three issues per year. At the January, 1999 OSTA board meeting, the board asked that the number of issues be increased as soon as practicable since *Spanish Traces* is the principal tangible benefit of being an OSTA member. Publishing three issues per year will be sustainable if OSTA members continue to contribute manuscripts for publication.

The Fall 1999 and Spring 2000 issues were intended to concentrate on specific topical areas to help buttress our case for OST inclusion in the National Trail System. This issue is supposed to be an olio with no specific theme. We have room in our association and in *Spanish Traces* for a broad range of interests centered in some way on the OST. Please provide feedback about how the OSTA and *Spanish Traces* are doing, how they can be improved and better serve the interests of the membership. Above all, please keep the manuscripts rolling in. The sheer weight of this and the last issue should convey some idea of the response to date. Keep up the good work.

The Spring 2000 issue will concentrate on the military use of the OST. Because we still need authors for some of the articles, please contact me if you can provide material.

The Southern California Chapter has been active for a year. They have had excellent programs with equally good participation. Because John Robinson, the Chapter President and the OSTA California director, has become the Deputy Sheriff of a Westerners Corral in Los Angeles, he will relinquish his job as Chapter President, but not as an OSTA director. John has provided outstanding leadership in launching the new chapter. We wish him well in his new endeavor and many, many thanks for a fine job. Please help to sustain the chapter's momentum.

Cliff Walker, Director of the Mojave River Valley Museum in Barstow, CA, contributed heavily to the excursion to Bitter Spring mentioned above and on the front cover. The museum merits a stop when you are near Barstow. The museum offers exhibits and many books of interest. It is located at the corner of Barstow Road and Virginia Way just off I-15, Barstow Road exit.

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## *The Old Spanish Trail Across the Mojave Desert*

*By Harold Steiner*

A history of the trail and a guide to its route across the Mojave Desert. This is the first detailed guide that will let you find and follow the trail from Paragonah, Utah through the desert to Cajon Pass near San Bernardino, CA.

*The Old Spanish Trail Across the Mojave Desert.* 258 pages. 8.5 x 11, double soft cover, 58 maps, 45 photos, appendix, bibliography and index. ISBN 0-9614517-1-8. \$ 24.95

The Haldor Company, P.O. Box 12354, Las Vegas, NV 89112-0354.  
Call 702-458-1723 or email [hsteiner@nv.net](mailto:hsteiner@nv.net) for orders or information.

# Experiencing the Old Spanish Trail from a Bicycle Saddle

*by Kenn and Lorraine Carpenter*

The fall of 1999 was our fourth consecutive year of bicycling the OST and we have developed a very intimate feeling towards the Trail. We have experienced its best, its worst, and its toughest, and yet in hindsight we have loved every

very pleasant trip, and so our enthusiasm for trails was running high. Suddenly here was a trail we had never heard about, and we immediately put it on our schedule for the fall of 1996.



**We've had so many flats while bicycle touring that fixing one is now routine. Sometimes it is easier to just change the tube, and repair the leaking one at a more convenient time.**

moment of those 168 days and 5500 miles.

We first "discovered" the trail in 1995 when we spotted Crampton and Madsen's book "In Search of the Spanish Trail" at a Santa Fe book store. We had just finished bicycling the popular Santa Fe Trail between Missouri and Santa Fe, which was a

moderate and the 1370-mile OST as very strenuous both physically and mentally. There are still 350 miles of dirt and gravel and sand "roads" on the OST, all of it remote in the sense that on any given day we might not meet a single car. Our experience has been about 15 cars total per trip on those 350 miles.

Historically the Santa Fe Trail was a wagon route, whereas the Old Spanish Trail was a horse and mule pack train route because of its terrain difficulties. Similarly, from the bicycling aspect, we rate the 1150-mile SFT as

We travel as a team, just the two of us, with identical Bruce Gordon touring bikes, four panniers on each bike, self-contained for camping and for any kind of weather. We have experienced 118 °F heat, snow and freezing rain, overhead lightening, winds we could not bike into, but so far only very mild sandstorms. We take along a good toolkit, a variety of spare parts, lubricants, two extra tires, and three spare inner tubes. We overhaul the bikes before each trip, replace all the wheel bearings, re-tension all the wheel spokes, put on new tires, a new chain, and new derailleur and brake cables. This seems to have paid off because on all four OST trips combined we have broken only one cable, and had two tire blowouts from sidewall cuts. On the other hand we have had well over 50 flats, about equally from "goat head" stickers off-pavement and from the automobile and truck tire-wires protruding from the thousands of pieces of tires scattered along the paved road shoulders. We have fixed flats along the freeway, in motel rooms, on the remote desert under the hot sun, in the rain, in the dark by flashlight, in fact just about anywhere. At the end of this last trip, one of the inner tubes now has 14 patches!

Traveling quietly and slowly on bicycles has given us many experiences with wildlife. We see many snakes up close, from rattlesnakes to the rare white snake which an old Indian we met said he had only seen three in his whole lifetime. Also we have gotten close to tarantula spiders, lizards, jackrabbits that run like the wind, coyotes that just look at us and then casually saunter away, antelope that are curious, but keep their distance, wild horses around

our camp in the Joshua trees one night, and owls hooting and coyotes yelping on many nights. Perhaps most memorable of all was waking up one morning at Amargosa Canyon [CA] and finding huge, fresh cougar tracks near our tent on top of last evening's bike tire tracks!

And then there is road-kill; traveling by car one hardly notices it, but by bicycle it's a real experience! The worst is the smell of death which you have to breathe long before you get to the carcass lying in the ditch, and these are usually deer, sometimes a calf or dog, about five per trip. But it is the number of road-kill that is astounding, which additionally includes birds of all kinds, skunks, snakes, rabbits, cats, ground squirrels, etc. totaling several hundred each trip.

Most days in the remote areas are physically very tough for us, partly because we each may be carrying 25 pounds of water plus food for perhaps three days away from all facilities. It's also tough because the trail is likely to be rough, sandy, uphill, across big dry washes, there is probably a bit of walking and pushing in very soft or steep areas, and probably it is very hot. Usually exhausted, we stop about an hour before sunset to make camp, then have our can of beans and can of salmon for dinner, and an apple and cookies for dessert. Then we literally force ourselves to complete our daily notes in the tent by flashlight. But we recover quickly, and at some time every night we go out to view the stars and constellations in their dark-night brilliance.

We often talk about the trail drovers during the day as we bike, and on our first trips we would look ahead and make a judgment as to which side of the valley the trail should go, or where should it cross through or over the next mountain range. We soon learned the Trail quite well, and now we could do the complete trail without any maps or notes. We also speculate about the trail life of the drovers and how tough their trips must have been: packing and unpacking the caravan every day, finding the springs and grass, good water for themselves, trail dust from the caravan, food, body lice, etc. Our trips by bicycle must be delight-



**Tenting on the open desert was comfortable for us because we always tried to prepare for the worst.**

ful by comparison. Did any drover make a round trip more than once? If so, he was out of his mind.

We free-camp about 60% of the time, and camping totally alone in the desert has its own special feeling. Usually in the evening the wind quiets down, the air chills considerably and smells pure, and there is a powerful stillness all about us. The desert with its sagebrush, cactus, and Joshua trees is very primitive. Our bikes are tied to a sagebrush to assure they won't get blown over

during the night. Our tent has been carefully positioned on the lee side of the bikes, and also oriented with a back corner facing windward. Even if no wind at the moment, all tent and fly hold-downs are reinforced with about 15 pounds of rocks each (and sometimes rocks are hard to find). We are intruders here in the desert, and yet we feel totally comfortable, and at ease with our camp. We have great respect for the many moods of the desert, and know that our bottom line is self-reliance through knowledge and preparedness. We don't try to conquer the desert, but rather we try to become one with its strength, stillness, peace, and power.

Many trail days are sunny and hot. By noontime it can be relentlessly hot, and on those occasions four quarts of liquids per day is absolute minimum. We use sunscreen, we wear long sleeved white shirts, at times we wear a bandanna over our ears and cheeks, and we also have thin white gloves as used in photography labs. At the top of a long and

sweating uphill we turn on the air conditioning (if it is a paved road), which means we then coast downhill at moderate speed and enjoy the marvelous wind chilling effect.

On these very hot days we are always on the lookout for shade, even the meagerest of shade, but there is not much of it. However, you would be surprised at how much shade and relief one can get just from a wispy bush, from a telephone pole, from a piece of angle iron on a structural steel power line tower,

from a highway sign, from a truck parked in a pullout area, by sitting in a large drainage culvert under the roadway, and best of all finding a railway or highway underpass. We've used them all.

What parts of the Trail do we like



**This aged juniper stands lonely on Iron Canyon Point just 1-1/2 miles south of where we descended into East Canyon on a very faint track. It has large, deep blazes axed into it a very long time ago.**

most? A lot of it; some places have a special scenic beauty, and some give us the perception that it might still be the 1840s. At 4.8 miles north of the Abiquiu [NM] market is a pull-out on the right at the top of the hill. Walk across to the viewpoint and look south for a while; this has to be one of the nicest valley views of the trip, and we believe the Trail is on the left side of the Chama River as you look back toward Abiquiu.

As we ponder past trips, it seems

that the sections of the trail that are the most difficult are the same ones we enjoyed the most. The East Canyon [UT] area is special because it is a major 15-mile wide and multi-canyoned obstruction to Trail passage. Discussion about it often elicits debate about where they would have dared to take their large caravans and herds both up and down this 900-ft step. We met Jim Butts whose grandfather homesteaded right on the trail at Piute Spring, and where Jim has always lived. Jim has traipsed the area since childhood and listened to many hand-me-down stories of Trail history; as a result he has some very personal feelings about where at least one of the traces of the Trail went over the end of Deerneck Mesa. He also showed us a burial site and headstone by the Trail dated 1879 (and would you believe the name was D. Carpenter!). We have biked two routes through here; one route descends into East Canyon from Iron Canyon Point via an obscure track which near the canyon bottom junctions with a very old mining road. The other route goes down from Three Step Hill on the Lisbon Valley Road and then across the Little Valley Road CR-109 to Big Indian Road. We still plan to do the South Canyon into East Canyon, and two routes over Deerneck Mesa.

The 5.4-mile dirt road along the south side of Casa Colorado [UT] is special, in spite of the two huge washouts that required carrying the bikes. A half-mile walk up and to the north along the power line gives magnificent views of the red sandstone massif with its huge weather eroded alcoves. The natural stone Baird Bridge is in this area also, at the big wash 0.3 miles west of the

power line, and on an east-side tributary of that wash and just downstream from a small reservoir. Also on this road at 0.9 miles from its west end are the faint remnants of a 100 ft diameter corral, originally made of a solid ring of poles but which are now nearly all rotted off to ground level; history?

Our most amazing experience this year was just after the Casa Colorado area, on our way to Looking Glass Rock. To set the scene, from where Steens Road CR-314 junctions with US-191, we crossed over onto the gravel Wilson Arch Road CR-179, and then at 2.6 miles exited west onto the unmarked Hatch Point Road CR-132. At first this road is easy dirt, then rocky, then very rocky as it drops down to Joe Wilson Wash, and it was here that we noticed a white 4x4 pickup truck slowly following us. We continued down to the wash, pushed across the 100 feet of deep sand, and then onto the now faint track through the sagebrush. The pickup was still following, but keeping its distance. In another 200 yards the track was impassable due to a washout, better called a crevasse, that was 30 feet wide with 12-ft vertical sides. To get around the end of it we pushed the bikes through brush and then up and across a quarter mile of steep boulder-strewn rock slabs spotted with trees, soon joining up with the Looking Glass Road CR-131. As we looked back, the pickup was still following, now creeping across the rock slabs, swaying dangerously side-to-side as it negotiated the smaller boulders. Part way across they seemed to feel it was safer to go straight uphill, they tried that for about 20 feet, apparently decided they couldn't make it and turned

their engine off. Unfortunately it was late afternoon and we had to hop on our saddles and get going to reach La Sal Junction by dark, so we have no idea how they ever salvaged their truck.

Some other areas that give us great pleasure are the 41-mile dirt Green River Cutoff [UT], the 15.3-mile dirt road through Long Valley from Joseph up and over to Marysvale, and the 22-mile route up the Bear Valleys and down Little Creek to Paragonah. It took us two trips to find the one last connecting link through the desolate 39 miles of mostly dirt roads from Enoch to Newcastle via Iron Springs, Antelope Road on the edge of the Escalante Desert, and the Sand Spring Road; it was eventually the Visiting Nurse we met that took us to the cow path that would connect us from Enoch across to Iron Springs. Holt Canyon is 14 miles between paved roads and has two small pioneer-day cemeteries; the more remote Hamlin cemetery has numerous grave sites unmarked except for the mounds of lichen covered field stone that hints of their antiquity. The 50 miles of paved road from Veyo to Beaver Dam [AZ] via Utah Hill is beautiful scenery. The desert crossing southwest from Las Vegas [NV] over to Blue Diamond via the gypsum mine is still primitive, although it is now a bit shorter due to the massive home construction and a golf course being added on to Las Vegas; nevertheless, there is still an instant transition from the suburb to the desert. From Blue Diamond the Trail goes south and is still just a trail; it's only one mile to Hwy 160, but the route is isolated and there is an OST marker. And of course the sandy Oak Hill

Road area leading in to Cajon Pass [CA] and then down the dirt forest road #3N45 always gives us the feeling that we've made it, as it probably did the drovers of old. The dirt road sections of the Old Spanish Trail are truly our favorites!

Just as the drovers must have had occasion to dicker with the Indians for safe passage, we also thought several times that we would have to dicker with flashing lights for our own passage. Four times we have been stopped by those lights, with various outcomes. On a short stretch of I-15 in Nevada we had paused for a drink (of water) and a patrol car pulled in front of us with lights flashing. He asked if we were



**At a shallow saddle in the East Canyon rim we found this meager trail heading down into the canyon. It was an awesome feeling to look miles down the canyon and wonder if this route would get us all the way through.**

having a problem, but his real interest was just in our bikes and what our trip was all about; nice chat. In New Mexico near Cebolla, on a paved road with only three-inch shoulders outside the white line, a deputy sheriff stopped us with lights flashing. He warned us to never bike in the car lane even if there was no shoulder, and if we didn't like it "then go somewhere else to bike." He also said if he caught us again in

the car lane then "you're mine." At San Gabriel Mission [CA] there were four motorcycle police in the parking lot waiting for the funeral procession to leave (no flashing lights); one of them immediately said, "I saw you guys last year," and another said he was a biker and operated a bike store. So we talked shop for 15 minutes. Also on I-15 in Nevada an official car stopped us with lights flashing; he was the highway engineer for this long repaved section from Arizona and wanted to know how we as bikers liked the new shoulders, the rumble strip design and location (it was the best). So he queried us about different shoulder and rumble strip situations we have experienced all over the country.

But the best police story happened on NV-160 after we had gone over the Spring Mountain Summit and down to where the road to Stump Spring takes off across the desert. The traffic here is 70 mph and quite heavy, and no shoulder at all for bikes, so we had pulled off onto the brushy gravel to wait for a break in traffic so we could cross over to the

Stump Spring road. Suddenly a state patrol car with lights flashing pulled off into the sagebrush beside us, the officer said it wasn't safe to be on this highway with bikes, and suggested we turn around and go back up over the mountain. We burst out laughing (really we did), told him where we were coming from and that we were looking for a desert road over there behind the huge gravel storage area. He said there



**Heading west on the track to Stump Spring was delightful, and finding the OST monument half way across gave us confidence.**

**There are numerous wash crossings and false tracks out there, and so a compass and trail sense are valuable assets to have along.**

was no such road, but we showed him our maps and chatted for ten minutes about the OST history. Finally he drove off in amazement as we pushed the bikes across the highway and went looking for our road. We did find it, and we had a wonderful ride across the sagebrush and Joshua tree desert to Stump Spring [NV], at times envisioning an endless mule caravan plodding along ahead of us. We camped half way across near the OST marker and the USGS benchmark, both of which are still in good shape.

The next day after passing by Stump Spring we had a sticker flat. It was blazing hot, and it was a slow leak, so we decided to pump the tire every ten minutes and keep going until we could get to some shade at the trees we could see a few miles away. This turned out to be several mobile homes called Charleston View [CA], and the dirt road to it was Carpenter Road, a good omen we thought. We rode into the shade and proceeded to fix the flat, but immediately a tiny black dog started yipping in the back yard. The yipping was non-stop for 15 minutes, and finally a very

elderly man with a cane came slowly out to us, looked us over quite grimly, and said "You are disturbing my guard dog." We proceeded to explain, got a big grin out of him, had a neat conversation for a half hour, and learned that as a kid he had run cattle

across the pass on the OST between here and California Valley. Would you believe his name was Paul Carpenter!

We have never viewed the approaches to Las Vegas and Los Angeles with the same happy anticipation as the drovers must have, but we have certainly come to appreciate what it must have meant to them to reach such important landmarks and oases after the long dry stretches of desert. Our stop at San Gabriel Mission is a moment for pausing and appreciating what we have come through, and our arrival at the Plaza in Los Angeles is one of genuine celebration at having reached Trail's end in one piece. Bicycling up to that beautiful new plaque commemorating the end point of the Old Spanish Trail is a thrill!

Just as our bikes got us close to the Trail, so did they give us the opportunity to meet up close with many people who contributed to the success and enjoyment of our trips. Some of those people we met only in passing, but some have become dear

friends.

In the end, because of all the things we have learned and experienced, the beauty and the hardships of bicycling the Trail, and all of the conversations and friendships made, we know that our lives have been



**Monument of Jedediah Smith, 1799 - 1831, trapper and trail blazer, shown here holding his bible. The monument is in La Verne, 28 miles east of the Los Angeles Plaza.**

changed forever. We have *lived* the Old Spanish Trail, and it has become part of us.

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**Editor's Note:** All photos and photo captions were furnished by Kenn and Lorraine Carpenter.

*Kenn Carpenter is a retired mechanical engineer. Lorraine Carpenter is a former school teacher. When they are not on a cycling trip, the Carpenters live in Marysville, WA. They receive e-mail at [knlcarp@earthlink.net](mailto:knlcarp@earthlink.net).*

# Celebrating Jedediah Smith's Bicentennial, 1799 - 1999: A Bibliohistory

*By John W. Robinson*

The era of the fur trade bolted across the American West like a fiery meteor, rising from the eastern sky shortly after 1800, flaring into dazzling brilliance during the 1820s and early '30s, and fading to obscurity by 1840. Lewis and Clark, in their epic 1804-06 journey up the Missouri River, over the Rockies, and down the Columbia to the Pacific Ocean and return, made known this fabulous wilderness where beaver and other forms of fur-coated wildlife were abundant. Close on the footsteps of the Corps of Discovery came a breed of hardy, fearless, self-reliant men seeking to exploit these seemingly inexhaustible animal resources. These were the mountain men who reached into the far corners of the Rockies and beyond, contesting for the land with Indians, grizzlies, and rival trappers from the Hudson's Bay Company, in a frantic search for beaver-rich streams. This was a time when beaverskin hats, coats, muffs, and collars were fashionable in the eastern United States and Europe. Top dollar was paid for the best pelts, and demand constantly exceeded supply while the fad lasted. When beaverskin went out of fashion the time of the mountain man was over, and the little fur-coated mammal that once plied the mountain streams in abundance was close to extinction.

The legacy of the mountain men was the opening of the West for travel and settlement. In their adventurous

journeys they learned the lay of the land and prepared the way for the great western migrations that were soon to follow. Their exploits became the stuff of legends.

Undoubtedly the best known of these legendary mountain men was Jedediah Strong Smith. Born in Bainbridge, New York in 1799, Jedediah Smith was no ordinary man. In contrast to the typical "mountain man," he was a literate, self-educated, ambitious, and deeply religious person, a born leader who was soon admired and respected by most with whom he came in contact. A restless soul in his youth, Jedediah wandered west and at the age of 23, in 1822, signed on with William H. Ashley and Andrew Henry on their pioneering journey up the Missouri to hunt beaver. Over the ensuing four years, Smith explored and trapped the northern Rockies. In 1824 Smith, after proving his mettle and leadership abilities, was given command of a trapping party that crossed South Pass into the little-known, beaver-rich country south of Yellowstone. South Pass, the easiest way across the Rockies, was Jedediah Smith's first major geographical discovery (actually rediscovery; the Astorians of the American Fur Company had used it in 1812, but it had been forgotten). South Pass later became the route through the Rockies for both the Oregon and California trails. In the summer of 1826, William Ashley

decided to give up his leadership of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company. He sold out to Jedediah Smith, David Jackson, and William Sublette. The partnership of Smith, Jackson, and Sublette now was the major American fur enterprise in the West, in direct competition with Britain's Hudson's Bay Company.

While his two new partners went north for the fall hunt, 27-year old Jedediah Smith led a party of seventeen trappers south from Salt Lake with the intention of hunting beaver in the little-known country between the Rocky Mountains and the Pacific Ocean. Smith and his men trapped their way south through present-day Utah, then southwest along the Colorado River to the Mojave villages. They crossed the great river and made their way west, following the ancient Mojave Indian Trail, to Mission San Gabriel. They were the first white men to travel overland from the American frontier to California, blazing a path that a few years later became the western portion of the Old Spanish Trail. Their return route in this memorable 1826-27 expedition was north through California's great Central Valley, then east across the snowy Sierra Nevada and the arid wastes of the Great Basin to Salt Lake. Smith led a second expedition to California in 1827-28, following the same route to the Mexican coastal province. From California, he and his men this time trapped their way north through the Oregon country to the Hudson's

Bay Company's Fort Vancouver on the Columbia River before turning east to the Rockies. Smith seemed to lead a charmed life on this second excursion; he barely escaped with his life while most of his men lost theirs when attacked by Mojaves while fording the Colorado and later



**Jedediah Smith**  
by George Mathis

ambushed by Umpquas in southern Oregon. Sadly his luck failed to hold. Jedediah Smith's incredibly adventurous life came to an untimely end when Comanches attacked and killed him at a waterhole near the Santa Fe Trail in 1831. He was not yet 33 years of age.

During his short life, Jedediah Smith became arguably the greatest of the Western mountain men. He made the effective discovery of South Pass through the Rockies, was the first white man to reach California overland from Missouri, was first to cross the Sierra Nevada, first to travel the width of the Great Basin,

and first to go by land from California to Oregon. True, he was no saint as some writers make him out to be; he flouted Mexican sovereignty, broke the rules, and lied to officials and priests alike during his two sojourns in California. But his leadership qualities, his persistence in the face of hardship, his fearlessness, and most of all his adventurous spirit, placed him in the front ranks of Western explorers. And he pioneered the way for what first became a trickle, then a stream, and finally a flood of Americans into California.

With his great achievements, one might think that Jedediah Smith would have been accorded immediate fame. But such was not the case. He received a warm eulogy titled "Jedediah Strong Smith", written anonymously, in *The Illinois-Monthly Magazine*, June 1832, and then he, and the short-lived era of the mountain men, were virtually forgotten. Smith had collected voluminous notes and maps for a book he planned to write, but his early death cut this short. His notes became fragmented and ended up in the hands of various Smith relatives. His maps were lost. Fortunately, a large collection of his notes and copies of some of his maps eventually reached the archives of the Missouri Historical Society where, almost seventy years after Smith's death, they were studied by a middle-aged army officer named Hiram Martin Chittenden.

Hiram Chittenden (1858-1917) graduated from West Point, class of 1884, and was assigned to the Army Corps of Engineers. While stationed at various posts in the West, Chittenden became interested in the fur trade. Assigned to St. Louis in the late 1890s, Chittenden discov-

ered the fabulous collection of fur trade material in the possession of the Missouri Historical Society. He decided to write a history of the fur trade and mountain men of the Far West. Chittenden's *The American Fur Trade of the Far West* (New York: Francis P. Harper, 1902), published in three volumes, almost singlehandedly reawakened interest, on the part of scholars and the general public alike, in the era of the mountain men. He included a biographical sketch of Jedediah Smith, who he called "one of the most remarkable men that ever engaged in the American fur trade. He was like that distinguished character of later years, Stonewall Jackson, in combining with the most ardent belief in, and practice of, the Christian religion, an undaunted courage, fierce and impetuous nature, and untiring energy." Chittenden's history of the Western fur trade, carefully researched and clearly written, remains the basic history of the enterprise nearly a century after its initial publication. Somewhat outdated by more recent research, and rightly criticized for its omission of the trappers of the Southwest, it remains the cornerstone, the veritable foundation for any study of the fur-trade, in the Far West.

As previously stated, Chittenden's work awakened a general interest in the fur trade as a whole, and the adventures of Jedediah Smith in particular. Next to make a detailed study of the subject, and concentrating on the exploits of Jedediah Smith, was Harrison Clifford Dale, a college professor long associated with the University of Idaho. Dale's *The Ashley-Smith Explorations and the Discovery of a Central Route to the Pacific, 1822-1829* (Cleveland: The Arthur H. Clark Company,

1918; revised, Glendale: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1941) is the first serious account of Smith's association with William H. Ashley, and the former's expeditions to California, based on the material in possession of the Missouri Historical Society at the time of Dale's research. Included in the book are partial narratives written by Smith and the day book of Harrison Rogers, Smith's trustworthy lieutenant on his journeys to the Pacific.

John G. Neihardt, a Nebraska poet and historian, came out with *The Splendid Wayfaring* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1920) two years after Dale's more scholarly study. Neihardt's little volume includes the first, sketchy, book-length biography of Jedediah Smith, concentrating, in rather romantic fashion, on Smith and his comrades, discoveries and exploits in the Far West. Neihardt fancied himself a poet in his later years and wrote "The Song of Jed Smith" in 1941.

Maurice S. Sullivan, a Redlands, California historian and writer, was able to locate several Smith descendants who had in their possession verbatim copies of Jedediah Smith's writings - the originals were destroyed by fire. Using these, and thorough, diligent research at the Missouri Historical Society (the starting point for any study of Jedediah Smith) and other repositories across the nation, he published *The Travels of Jedediah Smith: A Documentary Outline* (Santa Ana: Fine Arts Press, 1934). Sullivan includes several portions of Smith's writings never before published, including his daily journal from June 1827 to July 1828, dealing with Smith's return trip to Utah at the end

of his first expedition and his second visit to California and travels north to Oregon. Included in *Travels* is the diary of Alexander R. McLeod, describing the Hudson's Bay Company expedition to recover Smith's property lost in the Umpqua River massacre.

Two years later Maurice Sullivan's *Jedediah Smith: Trader and Trailbreaker* (New York: Press of the Pioneers, 1936) appeared, the first thoroughly researched, full length biography of the remarkable mountain man. It was highly acclaimed upon publication, thought to be the definitive work of Smith for years to come. Sadly, Maurice Sullivan died at the young age of 41 in 1935, never seeing his masterpiece in print.

Sullivan's work was superseded seventeen years later by Dale L. Morgan's *Jedediah Smith and the Opening of the West* (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1953), which still today and probably for many years to come will be considered the definitive biography. Dale Morgan, a Utah-born scholar, was one of the premier historians of the

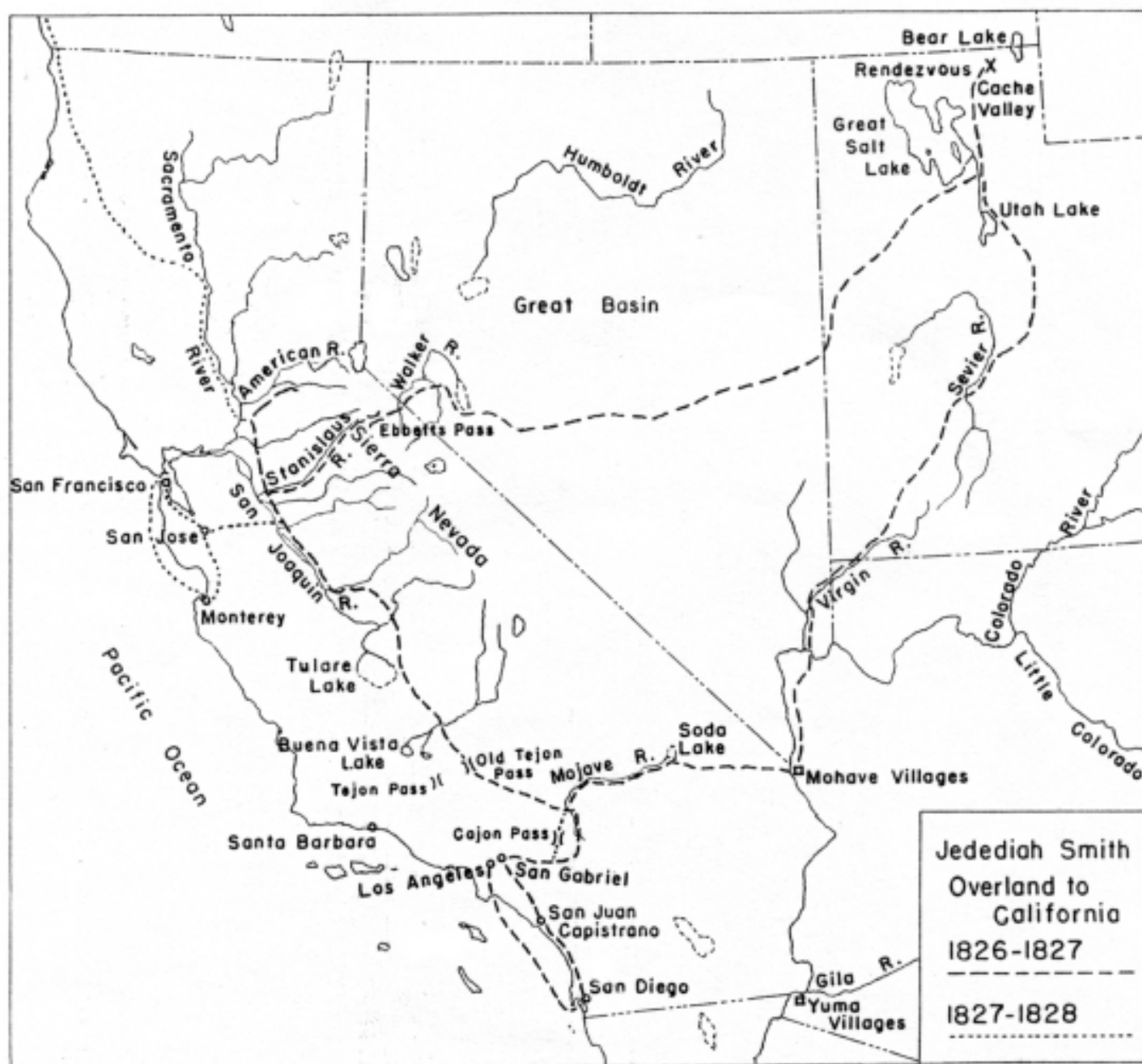
American West before his untimely death in 1971, just as he was beginning work on a thorough history of the Western fur trade. Morgan's meticulous scholarship was painstaking, thorough, and impeccable. Besides visiting every research institution possessing Smith material, he sought out descendants of the mountain man and unearthed more of Smith's fragmented writings. Morgan's work remains today, forty-six years later, one of the great Western American biographies and a



**Jedediah Smith arrives at Mission San Gabriel, 1826**

"must read" for any Western history buff.

A year after Dale Morgan's benchmark biography, Morgan and Carl Wheat, the leading cartographic historian of the American West, combined their talents to produce



### Jedediah Smith's Two Journeys to the Southwest

Jedediah Smith and his *Maps of the American West* (San Francisco: The California Historical Society, 1954), a large folio-size volume reproducing several rare mid-19th century maps that are believed to have been copied, at least in part, from Jedediah Smith's lost original maps. Equally as valuable as the maps are Morgan's essay on Smith and Wheat's comments on the signifi-

cance of the maps. This extremely valuable volume, produced in a limited edition, is a rare find today and commands a price in excess of \$400 from rare book dealers.

Next to appear was Alson J. Smith's *Men Against the Mountains: Jedediah Smith and the Southwest Expedition of 1826-1827* (New York: John Day, 1965), a

well-written account of Smith's two excursions to California, based upon published sources and geared for the general reader. Of little value to the professional historian, it is nevertheless an interesting "read" for the Western history buff.

During the late 1960s and early '70s, the distinguished Utah historian Leroy R. Hafen edited the

ten-volume *Mountain Men and Fur Traders of the Far West* (Glendale: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1965-72). Colorado historian Harvey L. Carter wrote a fine condensed biography of Jedediah Smith in Volume VIII of the series (1971). Fortunately, Carter's short, but well-researched biography was reproduced in Hafen (editor), *Mountain Men and Fur Traders of the Far West: Eighteen Biographical Sketches* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1982), a soft-cover volume for the general reader.

In 1967, after most historians had given up on finding any more of Jedediah Smith's lost writings, a Smith descendent showed up at the Missouri Historical Society in St. Louis with a trove of never before seen papers written by the now legendary mountain man. George R. Brooks, director of the Missouri Historical Society, was startled when he looked them over: The papers included a previously unknown journal written by Smith that covered his first expedition to California in 1826-27. The journal was part of a larger work assembled by Smith in 1830, a year before his sudden death at the hands of the Comanches, intended for a book never published. Brooks immediately realized the importance of the long lost journal and set to work editing it. The result, ten years later, was George R. Brooks (editor), *The Southwest Expedition of Jedediah S. Smith: His Personal Account of the Journey to California, 1826-1827* (Glendale: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1977). To complement Smith's journal, Brooks include Harrison Roger's day book entries, making this volume the most complete account of the famous first overland trip to California and a significant contribution to the history of West-

ern exploration.

In his dealings with Mexican authorities in California, Smith presented himself as an innocent victim of circumstances, and most historians have tended to accept his version of events. Newly found documents in the Mexican archives present a different story, suggesting that Smith was more devious in his dealings with Mexican officials than had been supposed. The documents, and some of Smith's own writings, reveal that he disregarded Mexican sovereignty in California, broke the rules, and lied to officials and priests alike about his intentions. This revisionist interpretation of Smith's sojourns into Mexican California is well covered in David J. Weber's *The Californios versus Jedediah Smith, 1826-1827: A New Cache of Documents* (Spokane: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1990).

For a fuller understanding of the adventures of Jedediah Smith and the fascinating era of the mountain men in the Far West, books on Smith's associates and business partners need to be consulted, as well as general histories of the fur trade.

For William H. Ashley of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company, Smith's first employer and later partner, see Richard M. Clokey, *William H. Ashley: Enterprise and Politics in the Trans-Mississippi West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980), the only full-length biography. An excellent biographical sketch is Harvey L. Carter, "William H. Ashley," in Hafen (editor), *Mountain Men and the Fur Trade of the Far West* (previously cited), Volume 3. Much can be gleaned on Smith's Rocky Mountain experiences in Donald McKay Frost, *Notes*

on General Ashley, the Overland Trail, and South Pass (Worcester: American Antiquarian Society, 1945), and Dale L. Morgan, *The West of William H. Ashley* (Denver: Old West Publishing Company, 1964). The latter oversized volume contains virtually all the known documentation of Ashley's years in the fur trade, with much on Smith's activities. As is characteristic of all Dale Morgan books, it is a monumental compilation with extensive annotation.

Andrew Henry, Ashley's original partner in the Rocky Mountain Fur Company has no full-length biography, The best source is Louis J. Clements' biographical sketch, "Andrew Henry," in Hafen (editor), *Mountain Men and the Fur Trade of the Far West* (previously cited), Volume 6.

For Smith's associates in the partnership of Smith, Jackson, and Sublette, see John C. Jackson, *Shadow on the Tetons: David E. Jackson and the Claiming of the American West* (Missoula: Mountain Press Publishing Company, 1993), a full length biography. A biographical sketch is Carl D. W. Hayes, "David E. Jackson," in Hafen (editor) *Mountain Men and the Fur Trade of the Far West*. (previously cited), Volume 9. An excellent recent account of Jackson's adventures is Vivian Linford Talbot, *David E. Jackson: Field Captain of the Rocky Mountain Fur Trade* (Jackson, Wyoming: Jackson Hole Historical Society and Museum, 1996). William Sublette is the subject of one full-length biography, John E. Sunder's *Bill Sublette: Mountain Man* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1959).

Knowledge of the fur trade in the

Far West as a whole is paramount to an understanding of the part played by Jedediah Smith and his associates. There are several books, some adequate, some excellent, that attempt to cover this subject. Already mentioned is Hiram Chittenden's monumental three-volume *The American Fur Trade of the Far West* (1902) which, although somewhat out of date, remains the cornerstone of any study of the fur trapping era in the West. The big flaw in Chittenden's study, his omission of the fur trade in the Southwest, is corrected by Robert Glass Cleland, *This Reckless Breed of Men: The Trappers and Fur Traders of the Southwest* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1950), and David J. Weber, *The Taos Trappers: The Fur Trade in the Far Southwest, 1540-1846* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1971). Paul Chrisler Phillips, *The Fur Trade* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1961) is an exhaustive, fully documented two-volume history of the fur trade in North America, from the early French entrepreneurs to the English, Canadian, and American trappers of the 1840s. Don Berry, *A Majority of Scoundrels: An Informal History of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1961) is written like a novel and geared to the general reader, as is Bernard DeVoto's *Across the Wide Missouri* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1947). Both the Berry and DeVoto books are splendid examples of literary craftsmanship and, although neither is annotated, both are guaranteed to get the reader "hooked" on the saga of the mountain men. David J. Wishart's *The Fur Trade of the American West, 1807-1840* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1979) gives an excellent overview of

the Rocky Mountain trapping system. Fred R. Gowans' *Rocky Mountain Rendezvous: A History of the Fur Trade Rendezvous, 1825-1840* (Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 1976) covers the annual rendezvous of the trappers. Carl P. Russell's *Firearms, Traps and Tools of the Mountain Men* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1967) explains what the title suggests. Lewis O. Saum, *The Fur Trader and the Indian* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1965) explores the effect the mountain men had on Native Americans. The real victim of all this activity was the furry little beaver; Carl Burger's *Beaver Skins and Mountain Men: The Importance of*

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***Jedediah Smith  
became arguably the  
greatest of the Western  
Mountain Men***

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the Beaver in the Discovery, Exploration, and Settlement of the North American Continent (New York: Dutton Company, 1968). Finally, the most recent history of the fur trade, Robert M. Utley's *A Life Wild and Perilous: Mountain Men and the Paths to the Pacific* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1997) is an excellent overview, fully annotated, of the mountain men and the trails they blazed to the western ocean. Utley, a former National Park Service historian and the foremost authority on the Indian wars of the West, has produced a volume that not only encompasses the latest scholarship on the fur trade, but also approaches the Berry and DeVoto books in literary craftsmanship.

Not mentioned here (to prevent this essay from approaching thesis length) are literally hundreds of periodical articles that delve into

Jedediah Smith's short but adventure-filled life, his partners and associates, and the era of the mountain men in general. Few aspects of Western history have been so thoroughly covered, and mostly in the last thirty or forty years.

A Western history library is not worth its salt unless it includes at minimum two books on Jedediah Smith: Dale Morgan's definitive biography, *Jedediah Smith and the Opening of the West*, and George Brooks, *The Southwest Expedition of Jedediah S. Smith: His Personal Account of the Journey to California, 1826-1827*. Fortunately, the University of Nebraska Press has performed a great public service by reprinting both of these volumes in inexpensive soft-cover editions. Nebraska has also made available Maurice Sullivan's *The Travels of Jedediah Smith: A Documentary Outline*; Harrison Dale's *The Ashley-Smith Explorations and the Discovery of a Central Route to the Pacific*, retitled *The Explorations of William H. Ashley and Jedediah Smith, 1822-1829*; and even Hiram Chittenden's classic *The American Fur Trade of the Far West* in two soft-cover volumes. Two more soft-cover issues of Nebraska are *Mountain Men and Fur Traders of the Far West: Eighteen Biographical Sketches*; and *Trappers of the Far West: Sixteen Biographical Sketches*; both excerpted from Leroy Hafen's ten volume *Mountain Men and the Fur Trade of the Far West*. Included are mini-biographies of Jedediah Smith, William Ashley, William Sublette, and David Jackson. If your Western library is to include only one volume on the fur trade in general, it should be the latest and the best, Robert Utley's *A Life Wild and Perilous*.

# The Southern Route of the Old Spanish Trail through Grand and Northern San Juan Counties, Utah

*By Lloyd M. Pierson*

The recent renewed interest in the Old Spanish Trail so many years after the Hafens [1] brought it to the attention of the history world forces me to add my meager input to the knowledge of the trail. Over the past three years I have been searching for and recording old roads and trails through Grand and Northern San Juan counties in Utah. This fascinating, to me at least, study is made much more interesting by the fact that in this desert environment any disturbance of mother earth remains visible for a long, long time and changed little even after the severe arroyo cutting of the 1880s.

In studying the route of the trail through this part of the world there are several things that must be kept in mind. First and preeminent is the fact that one can't just go anywhere, even on foot, much less on horseback or with wagon or automobile through the maze of canyons and mountains the earth has provided here. Secondly the surface material dictates what one can do easily. Sand, clay and rock are the usual surfaces each with its own problems for the traveler. Less important today are the sources of water, animal feed and fuel for cooking fires which, in the past, were vital to survival and ease of passage.

Also of importance was the reason for use of the trail. The first users of the general route were the early

inhabitants both pre-Columbian and European. Most accounts indicate that they were using the trail mostly for trade, an important part of their economy. The Utes produced fine leather products and dried meat from deer and other game animals. The New Mexicans grew corn, tobacco and other agricultural products, made wool blankets and raised horses, sheep and goats. Both groups had need of slaves to ease their life style. This trade formed the basis of the early use of routes from New Mexico into southern Colorado and Utah.

Although the Old Spanish Trail's southern route has been advertised as starting in Santa Fe, New Mexico, in actuality the jumping off point was Abiquiu, New Mexico. This was a settlement permanently established in 1754 as a frontier outpost and populated with Christianized Indians from many tribes including Utes, Apaches, Navajos, Comanches and various Pueblos. As such these people made good traders, especially among the Ute, because they spoke the language, were dealing with relatives, and knew much of the country to the northwest.

Unfortunately for historical documentation, their actions were clandestine most of the time. To give some idea of the importance of this trade to the people of Abiquiu at least, there are reports of traders

coming on foot with a fanega (1.5 bushels) of corn from Abiquiu to the La Sal Mountains to trade. [2]

The Ute Indians practiced transhumance: living in the valleys during winter and spring and in the mountains in summer and fall. From reports they had large camps in the Provo, Utah area, the Grand Valley of Colorado where Grand Junction is located, the valley near Montrose, Colorado, and lesser use of the valley at Green River, Utah and Moab, Utah in the 19th Century.

While the New Mexican traders were interested in getting to where the Indians were at any particular time, the next group of trail users, the American Mountain Men, were mostly interested in getting to the streams and areas that had beaver. Some of the Mountain Men, who included French Canadians, Spanish and many North European ethnic groups, did take up trading as did Antoine Robidoux and Jim Bridger, but most were after the beaver pelt.

So the first use of the southern branch of the trail as it was forged further and further into the country northwest of Abiquiu was probably mostly determined by past Indian usage. As the Mountain Men became involved there was more exploration, searching for beaver and avoiding certain antagonistic Indian groups. But eventually the

trail route as we know it today, with a few branches or short cuts, was pretty well established, certainly by 1830 when the entire reach of the trail from New Mexico to California was opened.

Some consider the trail to have been retired by the 1850s but there is argument over this as after 1830 the trail was used by immigrants in both directions as New Mexicans went to California. (California, incidentally, wasn't settled until 1769 so there was no reason to go there from New Mexico earlier). Settlers from Mormon Utah used the trail in their moves to settle the west and explorers, miners and others continued to use the route, if not the trail itself, up until the present.

Our research indicates that the trail served as the route in many places for the first so-called wagon roads. Sometimes the trail was improved, widened, with large boulders removed, and dugways made. As time went on technology and equipment improved and so did the trail. Some time after the turn of the century increased trail use, a need to reduce travel time and grades for both wagons and automobiles and newly available heavy equipment allowed route changes that required considerable movement of earth.

With all of this in mind here are our findings about the Old Spanish Trail

through Grand and Northern San Juan Counties. These findings are based on field work using General Land Office plats dating from 1878, U.S. Geological Survey Quads dating from the 1950s, various other military and exploration maps (some as old as the 1850s), diaries and various printed material.

Once the trail left Paiute Spring and came down East Canyon into Dry Valley, it entered the realm of this



**Casa Colorado seen from the South**

*Photo courtesy of the Editor*

paper. The 1855 diary of Ethan Pettit [3], one of the Mormon missionaries trying to establish a mission at what is now Moab, indicates that the trail to Santa Fe takes off from a south-bound trail to the San Juan region where Peters Canyon wash and East Canyon wash join. He describes Church Rock as being west of his trail.

Fran Barnes of Moab has traced out the Macomb exploration route which

followed the trail as far as Ojo Verde on Hatch Ranch Wash. [4] Early descriptions of the trail (Macomb [5]; Choteau/ Pratt [6]) indicated an important landmark was Casa Colorado and associated natural stone tanks (tinaja in Spanish) containing a supply of water. Choteau/Pratt calls them "tewaja" and Macomb says "La Tenejal." There are at least two natural tanks and probably more in the sandstone bottom of the drainages heading

south from the Casa Colorado. Barnes also reports a reservoir in Bairds Bridge drainage, but with the historic erosion in the area and the predilection of the Bureau of Land Management to build such things just how old this reservoir might be is open to discussion.

At any rate it would be difficult to water animals at the stone tanks since they are steep sided. Their water supply would not always have been dependable and they are difficult to locate, but they were

available much of the year. Other water was sometimes available west of Casa Colorado some four miles in what is known as "Tank Wash." From there it is only an additional five miles to the "Ojo Verde," which Barnes locates in Hatch Ranch Canyon, a southern branch of Hatch Wash just west of Hatch Rock. Undoubtedly the trail went with the water and as this is open, fairly flat country the trail wound around the hillocks and sandstone outcrops and

through the patches of pinyon, juniper and brush.

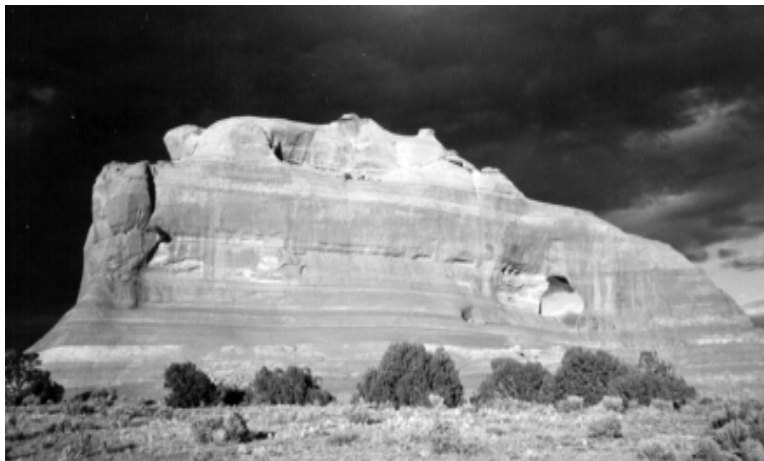
Although the Ojo Verde in Hatch Ranch Canyon still has water, it looks nothing like it did in the 19th Century. The alluvium in the canyon bottom is now cut by a deep arroyo. During the 19th Century a ranch near the spring served as the point of exchange on the mail route between Moab and Monticello. The mail came by stage over a road that still appears on the Hatch Rock and La Sal Junction 15 minute U.S. Geological Survey quads. The road now passes to the west of Looking Glass Rock, a natural arch in a sandstone outcrop, but in the 19th Century it passed to the east where a primitive road still exists.

Both the Ojo Verde and Looking Glass Rock were important landmarks on the trail. When Ethan Pettit passed this way headed south to trade with the Navajos in August, 1855, he wrote in his diary that they passed on the east side of a "big rock with a hole in it" which from the trail description could only be Looking Glass Rock.

Pettit also describes going in and out of Mule Shoe Wash. Today one can see three crossings of the narrow, deep wash: the present highway, an older one just upstream with masonry and concrete bridge abutments (but no bridge) and another one hundred yards up stream, an old wagon road fording the dry stream bed in a "mule shoe shaped crossing," hence the name(?). This latter is where the trail crossed the canyon after heading north from Looking

Glass Rock, crossing West Coyote Creek, an easy crossing, and following along the sandstone cliff to Muleshoe.

On the cliff face on the road to Muleshoe are some Anglo names from 1901 written in what appears to be axle grease and one of the few Hispanic-style glyphs that I know of from this area. The glyph is that of a cross in the style of the patron saint of Mexico, the Virgin of Guadalupe. That is, the cross is surrounded by



**Looking Glass Rock from the West after the storm**

*Photo courtesy of the Editor*

lines radiating out from it as are depictions of the virgin. Next to it is a heart scratched in the sandstone and with at least four bullet holes piercing it. I believe them to be 20th Century, but it is interesting to note here that in all the explorations along the Old Spanish Trail there seem to be no rock recordings of the passing of those peoples. Perhaps we haven't looked hard enough or in the right places.

From the Muleshoe crossing the trail had little room for maneuver and it followed along the face of the cliff, the same route as the old highway still there today on its way to Kane Springs. There is a large drainage to be crossed here, which is most easily headed without too much trouble as

the old highway did. There are also the remains of an old wagon road paralleling and destroyed by the old highway in the area.

Just when Cane Springs became Kane Springs is not known, but it seems logical that the original name was "Cane" for several reasons. The 1878 map of the route of the Ninth Cavalry detachment in support of the boundary survey between Utah and Colorado spells it "Cane" as does the 1917 General Land Office map of Township 27 South, Range 23 East. There is no record of a family name of Kane in the annals of Grand County. Choteau/Pratt refer to "Corisite" for the site which appears to be a corruption of the Spanish "carrizo" (cane) or perhaps a form of "corriente" (running or flowing) referring to the stream of water flowing out of the sandstone at the spring. (Steven Madsen [7])

reaches a similar conclusion in his recent article in Spanish Traces) The difficulty is that Pratt, an Anglo, was writing down what Choteau, a French-Canadian, was saying as he tried to pronounce Spanish names.

Kane Springs was referred to as "St. Louis Rock" by Pettit. It served as the first camp for the group headed from the Mormon Fort in Spanish Valley to the San Juan, a matter of some 16 miles covered by horseback. Pettit says it was a "very rough and rocky road" referring to the trail over what the early 1880 settlers in the Moab area called "Blue Hill."

The trail leading north from Kane Springs is now a much eroded dugway on the east side of the small

draw while the present highway is located on the west edge with an older highway on the cliff above it. The dugway was made by the pioneering party for the Hole-in-the-Rock settling of the Bluff area. They came through the Navajo country determining the routes and places to settle in 1879 and returned to Central Utah via the Moab area. [8] The dugway is a gentle grade and could easily have been navigated by horses sideling along the slope of the hill when it was a trail.

Once on top of the hill it is a flat mile and a half until the descent begins. Today there are four roadways descending the hill into Spanish Valley. Three of them, the present highway and two older ones, are the products of modern highway construction. The fourth, located within 200 feet east of the present road cut, is a primitive wagon road with little more done to it than to remove the large boulders. It parallels the present highway on a gentle grade. The lower portion has been destroyed by the present highway, Utah Highway 191.

Early accounts of Blue Hill tell of shod horse marks on the rocks there in 1877. [9] The old wagon road fits the needs of the Old Spanish Trail for access to the Spanish Valley. At the bottom of Blue Hill is a drainage which ties into Pack Creek within three miles. Pack Creek is a live stream today, but its waters are entirely diverted for irrigation in the valley. It was called Pack Saddle Creek by the Elk Mountain Mission men. As one descends Pack Creek there are several springs on the north side. Pratt camped at one of them some four hours by trail from the Colorado (called the Grand till 1921) River. Springs are to be found at the present day Moab Golf Course and

the Old Moab City Park. Others may still be present since Pack Creek, after it is dried up by irrigation needs, later picks up enough spring water to flow through town.

Some indication of the route of the trail through Spanish Valley is the route of the old highway paralleling Pack Creek to the upper end of the valley. The lower end of it is called Spanish Valley Drive today. The memory of the trail is also kept alive by Spanish Trail Road, the Spanish Trail Arena and other names in the valley.

Pratt [5] indicates that the crossing of the Colorado River was some 600 yards above what is now called "The Portal," where the river plunges back into a sheer sided canyon after crossing the end of the valley. A swampy approach today through tamarisk (a recent introduction), willow and cottonwoods brings one to a large island where the crossing may have taken place. Ferdinand Dickert's [10] General Land Office Survey of 1878 shows a road just south of the abandoned Mormon Fort leading due west to this crossing.

Later river crossers of record used another island closer to where the river came out of the canyon and located at the mouth of the small stream draining Moab Canyon, the continuation of Spanish Valley to the northwest. This crossing is about a half mile downstream from the present highway bridge.

The Mormon Fort was located near Skakel Spring, another important source of water for the Mormon Missionaries, the town of Moab today and probably people on the trail.

Once across the river, the route of the trail was up the stream bed of the drainage some refer to today as "Bloody Mary Creek," because when it rains it looks like a Bloody Mary as it drains the red sandstones up stream. The bottom of the creek is sandy to begin with, but soon turns into bedrock with many boulders strewn over the surface.

One obstacle that caused problems for the Elk Mountain missionaries getting their wagons over this route is the limestone ledge some 25 feet high near the Arches National Park Visitor Center called The Jump. The present highway cut the ledge down but remnants can still be seen. The first missionaries in 1854 took their wagons apart and lowered them over the ledge. The next year the group cut a dugway around the north side of the slope leading to the ledge. This dugway is still visible although construction of the present highway circa 1958 destroyed part of the dugway and altered the rest as a bulldozer worked its way up the dugway, bulldozing as it went, so that drilling machines could be brought up to the top of the limestone to drill holes for blasting the ledge. The dugway, which brought horses and pack animals around the ledge, was an improvement over the earlier trail route.

Pratt's diary reports that the road to Green River was "over a rocky country." No complaint about the "dropping off place" as the Mormons called it. There is a possibility that travelers could have climbed the hill to the south of the limestone ledge above where the railroad runs today thus avoiding the ledge, but there is no physical or historical evidence of this.

The remains of an old wagon road

are visible in Moab Canyon following the bottom of the wash and eventually climbing out in the same general area as the present highway on the south side of the canyon. Once on top the country is fairly flat until one reaches Corral Canyon, a small canyon a mile beyond the mouth of Sevenmile Canyon.

There are two springs two miles beyond Corral Canyon, either one of which could have been on the trail. They are Upper Courthouse and Lower Courthouse Springs. Both lie close to the 12 miles to water on the trail Pratt reported in his diary. Both have a history of use, Upper Courthouse in the days of horse and buggy and Lower Courthouse from the first automobile days. The problem is the sandy area at the base of the cliffs along the route. Wagons could make it up the steep road on the north side of Corral Canyon leading to Upper Courthouse Spring easier than they could through the sand between Corral Canyon and Lower Courthouse Spring. Early automobiles and trucks had a difficult time getting up the steep grade to Upper Courthouse Spring and so opted for the sandy route to Lower Courthouse Spring.

General Land Office township plats for 1916 and 1917 show the old road to Thompson Springs going past Upper Courthouse Spring. Just north of here about one mile is a road shown branching off to the west, which is called the Green River to Moab road. This road stops by Brink Spring after crossing the mouths of Tusher Canyon and Bartlett Wash. The road is still in use today, slightly improved because of time and the mineral explorations in the area.

Brink Spring has been developed for

livestock, but an inspection on the ground shows that it has been used prehistorically by people using Shoshone style pottery, probably Ute. The old wagon road to Green River ran north from Brink Spring paralleling the present improved road across the mud flat. A rock road marker indicating it is 22 miles to Moab was found along side this road during a cultural resource inventory completed by my wife and me ahead of a potash mining development in 1977. Brink Spring fits well with the 30 mile distance from the Green River and the 20 mile distance from the Colorado River shown for Grand River Spring in Choteau's Log of the trail. [11]

The "small run of living water" passed by Pratt and reported in his diary [12] as 12 miles from the Grand River could have been either of the Courthouse Springs, but most likely it was the upper one as it had more water and even today, little grass.

Beyond Brink Spring the trail heads northerly for a meeting with the north branch of the Old Spanish Trail. Old roads in the area from the south meet the east-west route at a place called variously Floy Junction in the road system or Little Grand(e) siding and section house on the Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad narrow gauge built in 1883 across northern Grand County. This is wide open country and as yet we have encountered no definitive route across it for the trail.

The crossing of the Green River near present day Green River, Utah is described by LeRoy Hafen, translating Col. W. W. Loring's report [16] as just south of the present railroad bridge where a wide spot in the river is divided by several small islands

shown on the USGS Green River 15' Quad. The 1881 General Land Office plat shows a ford at Blake, the forerunner of Green River, in the bend of the river that later was left high and dry as the river changed its course to the east. This is about one quarter mile above the highway crossing into Green River at the county line. As the county boundaries had been set at the middle of the river, this left Grand County with a chunk of land on the west side of the river much to the chagrin of people living in Green River.

Hafen, in his seminal "Old Spanish Trail" [13], reports that, based on Bert Silliman's study, using diaries of Powell's men from the 1871 trip exploring the Green and Colorado Rivers and Silliman's personal knowledge of the country, the crossing is placed at an island shown on the USGS Gunnison Butte 15' Quadrangle 5 miles above the highway bridge crossing the Green River. This is also given as the crossing used by Gunnison in his 1853 exploration for a railroad route that took him and his party across the northern end of Grand County according to the description given by party member Jacob Schiel [14]. He puts the crossing "several miles" from the camp they made on the west bank of the river after crossing it. It also fits the sketch of the crossing made by Henry Gannett [15] in his report for the Ninth Annual Report of the U.S. Geological and Geographical Survey in 1875.

Crossing both the Grand and the Green Rivers was complicated by the fact that both rivers have dramatically increased flows from melting snows in far-off mountains that culminate in mid-June. Rains can cause a similar rise, but usually

for a shorter period. At low water from late fall through early spring, fords can be made. Here again the river frequently changes its course and there are places where it could be forded as erosion and deposits of silt take place. There were no dams on the rivers then and even today with dams in place, the river can be treacherous during flooding. Floating a raft across the Green River, as Kit Carson did on his trip east from California in 1848, was the usual method of crossing in high water, and was a real adventure. When wagons were used on the trail, a boat of sorts could be made from the wagon bed, but the stock had to swim across, posing another problem as some livestock were not entirely cooperative.

Col. W. W. Loring's [16] description of his route eastward in 1858 after crossing the Green River brings him, the first day, to about Browns Wash where it leaves the Books Cliffs in Horse Canyon. The USGS Crescent Junction 15' Quad shows a seep there. The next day he passed between Hatch and Horse Mesas north of Floy Junction through Green River Gap. Loring encountered a Mormon trail near here which Hafen footnotes as the trail the Mormons took to the Elk Mountain Mission in 1854/55. However, this may be another trail used by Mormon pioneers as Loring encountered another trail further east near the state line between Gunnison's road and the mountains, which he assigns to the Mormons.

W. D. Huntington, a member of the exploring party for the Elk Mountain Mission in 1854, says in his letter to the editor of the Deseret News, December 21, 1854 that he left the Gunnison Road 25 miles from the Grand River. This would have had

him leaving the Gunnison Road somewhere near present-day Floy Junction.

It is apparent in reading the routes taken by various explorers over the broad expanses of desert at the foot of the Book Cliffs it was frequently the travelers' option as to whether they followed previously used trails or took off on what they determined to be the shortest and best route.

That there were other routes through this part of the world is not doubted, but they fall from consideration as the main route of the Old Spanish Trail for lack of steady references and lateness of use. That the so-called southern branch of the trail was the main branch is borne out by the fact that R. S. "Uncle Dick" Wooton, mountain man, refers to it as the "Great Spanish" trail. [17] Similarly, Jacob Schiel, after coming from the east over Cochetopa Pass with Gunnison, writes that Antoine Leroux, their mountain man guide, told them where they would come to the "Spanish Trail" further west. [15]

One of the alternate routes of the trail from the south left the main route on the Great Sage Plain and came down Three Step Hill into Lisbon Valley. Lisbon Spring provided water on this route, which took the traveler to the vicinity of present day La Sal, Utah. This is indicated as the route of a company of Ninth Cavalry who were in support of the boundary survey between Utah and Colorado in 1878. From near La Sal the cavalry troop went down West Coyote Creek to join the main trail near La Sal Junction.

There is some indication that this trail from La Sal went just north of

the Nipples, a prominent rock along the trail. The 1916 General Land Office Plat shows a road through here. (I have been told that the correct name is Neva's Nipples after a local Moab woman, Neva Kirk).

Another possible alternative route of the trail continues from present-day La Sal around the west slope of the LaSal Mountains to the head of Pack Creek and then down Pack Creek to join the main route of the trail near the foot of Blue Hill. A jeep trail is indicated on this route on the La Sal Junction 15' USGS Quad. Early settlers in the Spanish Valley in the early 1880s seem to have used this route to get to La Sal and the mail went this route by horseback as early as 1879. [18]

In all of this we have studiously avoided using the route described by Rivera [19] in 1765. Various researchers have decided that his route came to present day Moab or to a crossing of the Colorado River at the mouth of Castle Valley. My own impression, based on the report and the later description by Escalante, is that Rivera's route came into eastern Utah, but quickly went back into Colorado and ended somewhere on the Uncompaghre or Gunnison Rivers.

From the foregoing it can be seen that there are many places where the Old Spanish Trail can be specifically identified while many other locales are in doubt as to exactly where the trail went; a problem for future researchers. Recent research efforts have shown that there are documents buried in various archives that will shed further light on the trail.

Specific sites that have been identified as important places on the trail and still extant today are: Casa

Colorado with its rock tanks; Looking Glass Rock; Kane Springs and Blue Hill; the spring at Moab's Old City Park; Colorado River Crossing at Moab; Moab Canyon and The Jump; Upper Courthouse Spring; Brink Spring; and the Green River Crossing at Green River. These are prime candidates for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places and the National Trails System.

The national significance of the trail lies in its importance to western history, not only the Spanish/Mexican period, but also in the era of western expansion. To New Mexico and Chihuahua the trail was important because it provided deer hides and other materials made by the Utes in trade for New Mexican products. The hides, in turn, were used by New Mexicans to acquire exotic goods from Chihuahua over the Camino Real. Economically the trail made life a little more bearable in isolated New Mexico.

The users of the trail provided the geographic and demographic information for the various governments involved, especially the United States. Those familiar with the trail, through their trapping and trading expeditions, provided information vital to those interested in military matters and development of a trans-continental railroad. The Mountain Men and their New Mexican cohorts also provided eastern cities like St. Louis with some of their wealth through their trading/trapping work.

The military was unsure of the intentions of the Mormons in Utah and through the work of Macomb attempted to identify wagon roads into Utah Territory for military purposes.

Lastly the Old Spanish Trail pro-

vided an access route for immigrants from New Mexico to the new area of California. Some of these immigrants were political refugees needing a place to avoid possible political problems. Mormon immigrants from the Wasatch Front used the trail to gain access to the Moab area. Miners from western Utah used the trail to get to the newly-found gold fields of the San Juan Mountains of Colorado.

Once the route of the Old Spanish Trail was found, it was never abandoned and our present-day highways through eastern and southeastern Utah still follow the route, sometimes right on top of it.

### Endnotes:

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[2] Frances Leon Swadesh, *Los Primeros Pobladores: Hispanic Americans of the Ute Frontier* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1974).

[3] Ethan Pettit, collected papers, Utah State Historical Society, Salt Lake City, UT.

[4] F. A. Barnes, *Hiking the Historic Route of the 1859 Macomb Expedition* (Moab: Canyon Country Publications, 1988).

[5] John N. Macomb, *Report on the Exploring Expedition from Santa Fé, New Mexico to the Junction of the Grand and Green Rivers of the Great Colorado of the West in 1859* (Washington: U. S. Engineer Department, 1879).

[6] Hafen and Hafen, *Old Spanish Trail*, pp. 341 – 369.

[7] Steven K. Madsen, "Retracing the Spanish Trail: Across the Colorado Plateau in Utah," *Spanish Traces* 4 (spring 1998): 9.

[8] David E. Miller, *Hole-in-the-Rock: an*

*epic in the colonization of the Great American West* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1959), p. 29.

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

[10] Ferdinand Dickert, General Land Office Township Plats, 1878.

[11] Hafen and Hafen, *Old Spanish Trail*, p. 366.

[12] *Ibid*, p. 349.

[13] *Ibid*, p. 305-6.

[14] Jacob H. Schiel, *Journey Through the Rocky Mountains and the Humboldt Mountains to the Pacific Ocean* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1959), p. 59.

[15] Henry Gannett, "Topographical Report on the Grand River District," in F. V. Hayden, Ninth Annual Report of the U.S. Geological and Geographical Survey of the Territories embracing Colorado and Parts of Adjacent Territories, US Government Printing Office, 1877.

[16] William W. Loring, "Colonel Loring's Expedition across Colorado in 1858, with an introduction and notes by L. R. Hafen," *Colorado Magazine* 23 (1946): 60 – 61.

[17] R. S. Wootton, Letter to the Editor, Missouri Democrat, in *Central Route to the Pacific*, LeRoy R. Hafen and Ann W. Hafen, eds. (Glendale: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1957) p. 271.

[18] Frank Silvey, "History and Settlement of Northern San Juan County, Utah," papers, p. 10.

[19] Joseph P. Sánchez, *Explorers, Traders, and Slavers: Forging the Old Spanish Trail 1678 - 1850* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1997).

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**Communication from Elder P. P.  
Pratt.  
G. S. L. City, Nov. 21, 1853**

*Contributed by Steven K. Madsen*

Ed. News:— On the 13<sup>th</sup> of Nov. inst., there arrived in this city from New Mexico, Senores Jose Damian Giron, Tomas Chocon, Bicinte Charves and others.

They have for sale some hundreds of woollen blankets, or “serapes,” some of which are manufactured by the Navijo [sic] Indians. As a specimen of the arts among that people, and as an article of home manufacture, they are worthy of patronage.

They have also for sale a number of horses and mules.

They have taken room in the 2d Ward.

They were thirty four days on the journey, which they have sometimes performed in sixteen.

They live at a small town some 50 miles north or northwest Santa Fe, on a stream called the Chama, a tributary of the Rio Grande del Norte.

They traveled northwesterly from their town, crossing the river St. John [San Juan], a tributary of the Colorado, which rises in the mountains northwest of Santa Fe, and pursued a southwesterly [northwesterly] course, entering the Colorado below [above] the mouth of the Grand river. Where they crossed it, it was about the size of the Jordan [River], opposite our city.

On the south of this stream is the country of the Navijos; and further down on the same side, are

the villages of the Moquis [Hopi Indians], built of adobies. They are seven in number; the principal of which is called the Oriba [Oraibe pueblo].

The country of the Navijos and Moquis is a fine, good soil, well timbered, mild climate, not much winter, abundant in pasturage, and produces large quantities of cattle, horses, mules, sheep, wheat, maize, peaches, melons, etc.

The country in the north side of the St. John [San Juan] is well watered by tributaries of that river, which fall into it from the N., among which is, el Rio de los Peadres [Piedras], (River of Stones) el Rio de los Pinos, (River of Pines) el Rio Floredo [Florida], (River of Flowers) el Rio de los Anemos [Animas], (River of Spirits) Rio de la Plata, (River of Silver) averaging the size of the Provo [River] in Utah Valley; and numerous smaller streams.

After crossing the St. John, their road continued westerly a little north, crossing all these streams. The country is well calculated for cultivation; everywhere abundance of fuel, and in places good pine timber; but above all abounding in fine pasturage, their largest distance without water being eighteen miles.

They crossed Grand [Colorado] river a little below the river Dolores; then over a worthless plain of about 25 miles, to Green river, which they crossed a little below the mouth of White [Price] river, and above the San Raphael [San Rafael]; both the Grand and Green river fords were good, being about mid-sides to their animals. On Green river at that

point is a fine valley, some ten or twelve miles long, with a good soil, and well timbered with cottonwood, and limited by kanyons above and below.

From this ford on Green river, they passed over table lands of a worthless character, till they struck White [Price] river, a stream the size of Big Cottonwood, which heads on the other side of the mountain from Spanish Fork. Following up White [Price] river, they crossed the mountain at a very good pass, and came down the Spanish Fork to Utah Valley.

The whole route is abundantly supplied with grass and water, at proper distances; and the valleys have little snow or cold in winter. The rains in the Navijo country, and on the St. John and its tributaries, are said to be sufficient for cultivation without irrigation.

Such is the account in part which we have been able to gather from conversation with the traders above named; which is at the service of the editor of the News [Deseret News].

Respectfully,  
P. P. PRATT

Source: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, History Department, Archives Division, Journal History of the Church, November 21, 1853.

(Published in the Salt Lake City *Deseret News*, December 1, 1853)

*Steven K. Madsen is the author (with C. Gregory Crampton) of the well-known book In Search of the Spanish Trail, 1829 - 1848.*

# *Horse Stealing, Mountain Man Style*

*By Charles L. Convis*

From *True Tales of the Old West*, Vol. 4, "Mountain Men," published by Pioneer Press, P.O. Box 216, Carson City, NV 89702. Reprinted with permission of the author.)

Horses brought to California by early Spaniards multiplied so fast they became a nuisance. Some town alcaldes ordered wild horses rounded up and killed to protect gentled horses and their pasturage. With an inexhaustible supply of wild horses available for breaking, gentled horses weren't worth much.

When the first pack train from Santa Fe reached Los Angeles in 1830, the New Mexico traders exchanged their woolen goods for California horses and mules. A ten dollar horse or mule in California brought five times that much in the Rockies.

About the same time, trapper Pegleg Smith reached California to trade furs. Mexican authorities ordered him out of the country. Perhaps they were not interested in furs; perhaps they thought Pegleg should first buy a trader's license. At any rate a spiteful Pegleg and his party stole about four hundred California horses as they rode away.

Other mountain men soon learned that they could supplement their trapping income by stealing California horses. By 1833 Alcalde Carrillo of Los Angeles wrote Governor Figueroa that at least one thousand mules had been stolen by men from New Mexico. "If the matter is not checked soon, everything in the country will be taken away by the robbers," Carrillo complained.

Californians began calling the Old Spanish Trail to New Mexico the Thieves' Trail. Governor Figueroa immediately ordered all trappers out of California. The thieves were using the Tulares Valley, north of Los Angeles, as a place to gather the stolen horses before starting across the desert. The governor decreed that all horses in the Tulares Valley and the Mohave Desert were to be considered stolen and their possessors immediately arrested. Military commands at San Diego, Santa Barbara, and Monterey scoured the country for horse thieves.

The stealing continued. The most spectacular raid by mountain men came in 1840, after the beaver trade began its decline. The attacks started in mid May at Mission San Gabriel. Follow-up attacks on ranchos from San Bernardino in the east to Mission San Juan Capistrano in the south appeared to be well coordinated. Separate bands of thieves struck as far north as Mission San Luis Obispo, midway between Los Angeles and San Francisco. That mission lost twelve hundred horses in one night's raid. Mexican authorities released prisoners throughout the southern part of California to beef up their pursuing posses.

By the time three thousand stolen horses had been accumulated, the thieves had trouble keeping their herd together. They divided their forces. Some drove the captive animals up the Old Spanish Trail. Others stayed behind, waiting to ambush pursuers.

An advance party of Mexican Cavalry caught up with the thieves at Rabbit Springs in the Mohave Desert. But when the Mexicans dismounted to rest and plan their attack, the Americans captured their

horses and rode on. The cursing cavalymen went back down the trail on foot.

Another pursuing party of Californians caught up with the thieves, who abandoned their horses and fled. The Californians said that half the stolen horses had already died from thirst and exhaustion. Reports of horse skeletons along the Old Spanish Trail for years to follow showed that many of the stolen horses did perish.

Different men have been accused of leading the mammoth raid. Pegleg Smith, Old Bill Williams, and Philip Thompson are most often mentioned. Horace Bell, early California Ranger, said Smith led fifteen white men and 150 Indians on the raid. Walkara, the notorious Ute chieftain, provided Indians for Smith. Apparently it was Smith's group that raided at Mission San Luis Obispo.

Lieutenant George D. Brewerton said Williams was in overall charge of the raid, leading thirty men. He mentioned the capture of the cavalry horses at Rabbit Springs. Brewerton, traveling over the Old Spanish Trail with Kit Carson in 1848, reported seeing many horse skeletons.

Rufus Sage, who met Philip Thompson driving horses to the Missouri River in 1841, said Thompson led twenty-two men on the raid the year before, capturing between two thousand and three thousand horses. Sage also mentioned the capture of the Mexican Cavalry horses.

Probably all three mountain men were with the marauders. It is doubtful that any one man was in overall command. But the raid they led in 1840 was certainly the largest horse-stealing operation in the West.

# Cultural Interaction Along the Old Spanish Trail During the Mexican and Early American Periods

*By Peter Gough*

The Old Spanish Trail, far more than simply a transportation route, was the primary avenue through which cultural interaction and convergence were achieved and expressed across the vast territory of the Great Basin region and what would become the American Southwest. Indeed, the extensive travel on the Old Spanish Trail introduced various groups of peoples and cultures to each other. These meetings took place throughout the diverse and fluctuating ethnic make-up of the region, affecting existing social structures. In the pre-Columbian era the route facilitated a complex trade which encouraged the 'coming together' and cultural exchange of numerous aboriginal peoples. For the first Spaniards to travel the route during the eighteenth century, the Old Spanish Trail provided a pre-existing avenue of initial meeting, as well as an exchange of information and goods. During the subsequent Mexican Period and the eventual Anglo-American rush westward (which is the scope of this essay) the Trail allowed for a complex interchange among emigrants, Mexicans, Indians, and other groups inhabiting the region.

Of the thousands of Anglo-American overlanders who traversed the Old

Spanish Trail during the middle decades of the nineteenth century, perhaps none began the journey with greater physical disability than an emigrant who departed Marion County, Iowa, in the spring of 1864. The "Diary Kept by Mrs. Rousseau, Wife of Dr. James A. Rousseau," details the remarkable journey of a woman who, crippled by rheumatism and unable to walk, joined a wagon caravan of 150 persons and traveled across the Plains to Salt Lake and then southwest along the Old Spanish Trail to San Bernardino.[1] Despite her physical challenges, Mrs. Rousseau remained the primary care-giver to her four children during the trek, and engaged in the various and often strenuous workings involved in such a monumental undertaking. She was also determined to keep a record of events, even as Plains Indians circled and attacked her wagon. The narrative of this obviously perceptive and intelligent chronicler provides compelling reading.

The Rousseau journals contain all the elements of a classic Western thriller—personal heroics, Indian skirmishes, even celebrity; the captain of the wagon train was "Nicholas Earp of Pella," whose five children included sixteen-year-old

Wyatt who "with his rifle kept his family in meat to California," and would later grow up to become the famous frontier gunman. It is the day-to-day perceptions of Mrs. Rousseau's experiences which are often the most telling, however, providing insights into the prevailing social dynamic along the Old Spanish Trail.

Mrs. Rousseau's changing attitudes toward the Indians she encounters, for example, illuminate the relationship between the Anglo emigrants and the various tribes along the Old Spanish Trail. During the first portion of the journey across the Platte River Trail, the party experienced hostilities from various Indian tribes. Twice the "Sioux & Cimmanches" began to "circle around" the caravan but were "stood off." Upon reaching the Black Hills of Wyoming, the party heard that fourteen men had recently been massacred by the Indians there and three women and one child had been captured. Word also spread that "Arrapahoes & Snakes are fighting together against the emigrants."

Like so many other emigrants, Mrs. Rousseau's initial opinion of the Paiute Indians along the Old Spanish Trail was one of abhorrence, based

certainly upon earlier experiences with Indians to the east who had become resentful of White incursions. Following her first encounter with the Paiute southwest of Salt Lake City she writes of the “miserable ...creatures” and that “I am afraid of them.” By the time the caravan had left the Virgin River in southern Utah, however, Mrs. Rousseau recorded:

“Thursday, [November] 10th. Traveled on till we came to Beaver Creek. We have a rather pretty camping place. The Indians have the care of our stock at night which we pay them for. They have proved faithful as yet taking them where there is good grass.”[2] Mrs. Rousseau’s preconceived notions of Paiute aggression were typical of the Anglo overlanders during the mid-nineteenth century. In actuality most of the Indians who approached the emigrants simply sought to satisfy their curiosity, engage in trade or sometimes, due to the steady depletion of many of their traditional resources, begging. In the case of Mrs. Rousseau, the Old Spanish Trail provided an avenue through which representatives of these two cultures could meet, assess each other’s intentions, and engage in an exchange of services. It also becomes apparent from the various accounts that the Old Spanish Trail overlanders came to realize that not all Indian cultures were alike.

Prior to the arrival of Anglo-American gold-seekers and homesteaders and the subsequent acquisition of the territory by the United States in 1848, the Trail served as the primary travel route of the Mexican Period. In 1821 Spain lost control of the region through which the Old Span-

ish Trail traveled, and in an effort to develop their northern borderlands the Mexican government departed from the mercantilist policies of Spain and embraced free trade. Subsequently, the Mexican North experienced travel from Anglo-Americans as well as other European traders and trappers. During the next several decades the Trail would link several isolated Mexican communities while providing a corridor of cultural and material exchange. Additionally, the twenty-seven years of Mexican sovereignty in the region witnessed a changing and expanding social dynamic involving Indian relations; technically, Indians achieved legal equality in the emerging republic, but also acquired guns and other weapons of war.[3]

It was during the Mexican era that many of the social dynamics which would develop in the American Southwest began to emerge. As in the Spanish period, commerce remained the primary source of movement along the Old Spanish Trail. This trade continued to involve both a material and cultural exchange. Traffic in Indian slavery persisted as well. During the Mexican period Anglo-Americans entered the region in substantial numbers, a development which led to the eventual conquest of the territory. The Old Spanish Trail would be the primary route for all of these interactions.

Material and cultural exchange during this period continued the patterns put in motion during Spanish control. Mexican traders engaged in fur trading with the Indians of Utah and also exchanged their woolens in southern California for herds of horses and mules. The

majority of Anglo-Americans present in the region of the Old Spanish Trail engaged in hunting and trapping.

Caravans along the Old Spanish Trail were often multi-ethnic affairs. An 1841 expedition from Santa Fe to Los Angeles, known as the Workman-Rowland Company, totaled approximately 134 persons; among these included New Mexicans, Indians, Americans and other foreigners, and naturalized Anglo citizens with Mexican wives and families. Authorities in California had been forewarned of the large assemblage and, given Mexico’s recent troubles with Texas, were quite apprehensive. Upon arrival Governor Juan B. Alvarado found their intentions anything but subversive:

“The object of all according to those who talked to me, is to exchange woolen goods for horses and mules as has been done on other occasions. At the same time they wish to observe the country and see if it would be suitable place to bring their families and property.”[4] It should not be assumed, however, that the Old Spanish Trail during the Mexican Period witnessed multi-cultural harmony in an ordered social structure. On the contrary, Mexican authorities never maintained more than a marginal command of the vast region between New Mexico and Alta California. During this period Indian hostilities would intensify, as the natives realized that both their land and resources were being ravaged by the increased traffic along the Trail. Lawlessness and thievery flourished. As social scientist Sylvia M. Broadbent astutely writes, “In the case of California, the

advent of the horse, with other factors, led to the development of a raiding complex where there does not seem to have been one before.”[5] Father Cabot of the San Miguel mission observed this traffic along the Old Spanish Trail: “Since the New Mexicans have come into this province with the commerce of wool and the purchase of horses, the mission has suffered a great loss of horses and 108 mules. He has reason to suspect that the animals have been taken to New Mexico. At the close of 1832 several of them passed by the Rancho of Asunción and four colts and a mule were taken from a herd. After a few days others passed and took with them a mule with a forged brand.”[6] Isolated robberies as well as grand-scale raids of California horses and mules to be sold further up the Trail brought about the following 1840 order to Lieutenant Colonel Flores, Military Commander of Santa Barbara: “...go with an armed force to aid in the suppression of the New Mexican party which has just arrived. He is to be on the watch for the party of robbers, who are called the Chaguanosos and are adventurers of all nations, who are about to arrive. He is authorized to find the necessary resources if these are not sufficient.”[7] The collusion of these multi-ethnic “robbers” represents a unique aspect of cultural convergence along the Old Spanish Trail. The term “Chaguanosos” is of somewhat uncertain derivation, but was used at the time to describe the various bands which swept across the desert to raid southern California ranches during the first part of the nineteenth century. Anglo-Americans Bill Williams and Pegleg Smith were the most notorious of these

outlaws, and were usually accompanied by Indian allies and foreign adventurers. The city of San Bernardino, as discussed in an earlier article, developed primarily in an attempt to prevent this illicit traffic across the Old Spanish Trail.[8]

Most of the traffic along the Old Spanish Trail during the Mexican period, however, adhered to the designated route. Traders and trap-

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***It was during the Mexican era that many of the social dynamics which would develop in the American Southwest began to emerge.***

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pers rarely strayed from the course or areas where beaver could be captured. Accordingly, many indigenous peoples, seeking to avoid conflict, simply withdrew from these regions.[9] Charles C. Rich, a Mormon missionary, recorded on November 8, 1848, that south of St. George, Utah, his party “met some Indians traveling up the creek. [T]hey left all and ran for the mountain, they had some cowhide which shows they had been on the Spanish Trail.”[10] The narrative of an 1848 journey from Los Angeles by another Mormon missionary, George Q. Cannon, also describes the timid reaction of the Paiute: “We found the Indians all through this country very shy; they would run away from us like rabbits, they were so scared. We were convinced that many of them had never seen white men before, and our appearance in their country terrified them. White men had been on the Spanish Trail, and some of them might have seen them there, but only at a distance.”[11] The Indians had, of course, encoun-

tered Anglos along the Old Spanish Trail for several decades. This passage is instructive, however, in that it demonstrates that as the coming emigrant traffic increased, the Paiute were driven further away from what had been their primary trade route. Both Rich and Cannon were members of the first Anglo-American group intent on settling permanently in the Great Basin region. Some members of the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-day Saints, who arrived in the Mexican northern wilderness in 1847, realized the importance of maintaining good-will with the indigenous inhabitants. Though initial contacts were marked with hostility, by the early 1850s the Mormon policy on Indian relations strove to be both conciliatory and practical:

“We always consider it cheaper to feed and clothe the Indians than to fight them, and so long as we can get access to them to feed them & c. we have no trouble with them; but when they get out of the settlements into the mountains there is danger of depredation & c. by them.”[12]

The Mormon hierarchy sought to maintain positive relations with the Ute, Paiute, Shoshone and Mojave, and to a degree they were successful. Often the Indians associated far more favorably with the Mormons than with the ‘gentiles.’ The Saints’ missionary efforts remained largely unproductive, however, as the Indians usually preferred their traditional life-ways to what Brigham Young described as “the benefits of civilized life.”[13] Evidence of a cordial relationship between Mormons and Indians, however, is demonstrated in numer-

ous diary accounts. John Armstrong, sent on an exploratory trip by Brigham Young southwest along the Old Spanish Trail, wrote in an unpublished diary:

“Sunday Dec 2nd 1848- Visited by three SanPitch [Northern Paiute] Indians, one of them joined in with us when we were singing prior to evening prayers ... It was edifying.”[14]

Also telling is the 1849 unpublished journal by Robert Campbell along the Old Spanish Trail near present-day Cedar City. Herein the writer differentiates the Mormons from non-Mormons:

“Sat. 8th Dec. Parley, Jones & Dimic goes & prays for the Indians [and] rebukes their meazles by laying on them in the name of Jesus .... Smoke the Pipe of Peace ... Dimic tells them we were Mormons, not Americans.”[15]

Throughout the diary accounts the Mormons consistently differentiate themselves from the ‘gentiles,’ a distinction the Indians tended to accept.[16] Another Mormon missionary, Eli Bell, also found the Indians hospitable near the Santa Clara River as he traveled down the Trail en route to Hawaii in 1854: “We stopped for the night and the Pieuter [Paiute] Indians soon flocked in our camp by droves. [They were] friendly and wished to stay with us all night. We granted them the privilege and gave them some blankets to sleep.”[17] And during roughly the same time period, Brigham Young encouraged Mormon men to marry “the Indian maidens” whom they encountered during their missionary activities

along the Old Spanish Trail. Subsequently, a number of these men married Indian women, in addition to their white wives.[18]

Yet, despite the efforts of Young and the Mormon hierarchy, the goal of assimilating the Indians along the Old Spanish Trail was by and large not accomplished. The objective was hindered, certainly, by the negative feelings many of the Mormons continued to harbor toward the Indians. These attitudes are typified by Mormon John C. Dowdle’s unpublished diary description in 1865 near Las Vegas of the “dum brute” Paiutes who “would steal everything they could get there hands upon.”[19] Ultimately, the degree of assimilation depended upon the Indians’ willingness to accept Mormon lifestyles. In some regions this influence proved quite substantial; various tribes of Southern Paiute were particularly receptive to the Saints’ farming techniques and a number even converted to Mormonism.[20] The Old Spanish Trail, by now sometimes referred to as the Mormon Corridor, remained the primary avenue of cultural contact.

The acquisition by the United States of all of northern Mexico in 1848 increased Anglo-American traffic along the Old Spanish Trail. Unlike the Latter Day Saints, the new arrivals rarely intended to establish residence in these lands. These overlanders accorded scant importance to the maintenance of peaceful relations with Indians, whom they often treated quite harshly. As in the earlier example of Mrs. Rousseau, most overlanders brought with them negative attitudes about the Indians formed by their experiences in the

East. Mrs. Rousseau’s party was initially so suspicious of Indians that on November the 6th, 1864, she wrote: “Last night two of them [Paiutes] stayed with us as prisoners. It would not do to let them leave camp after dark, as they might get some other Indians, come back and do some mischief.”[21] Less prejudicial white travelers, however, sometimes found the Indians along the Old Spanish Trail to be friendly and enjoyable. W.C. Randolph, who followed the entire route of the Old Spanish Trail in 1849, wrote in an unpublished recollection that: “we got along very pleasantly until we got among the Mohave Indians. We doubled our guard, but one evening the Indians got up a stampede of our animals and ran them off.”[22] German emigrant Hans Hoth, in a fascinating unpublished diary, writes of quite a different experience with the Mojave some twenty-five miles south of Las Vegas:

“All preparations had been made and today they were holding some sort of war ceremonial. After that dancing and singing were in order and that furnished us with most hilarious entertainment. The musicians had some sort of drum and a triangle, were sitting in a tree and pounding away for all they were worth, at the same time singing at the top of their voice. The others of the tribe were dancing and jumping about, executing some most comical maneuvers. Each was trying to outdo the others in showing his suppleness. To show our appreciation we joined them in cutting capers, sang along with them and danced with their squaws. Our wives and daughters in turn were taken as dance partners by braves and not a one of them misbehaved; I had never seen such happy-go-lucky

Indians as these.”[23]

Such encounters proved the exception, however, as emigrant notions of the Indians along the Old Spanish Trail remained largely negative. These attitudes go far in explaining the almost casual violence the intruders inflicted upon the natives. Addison Pratt, a member of the Jefferson Hunt wagon train of 1849, made an incidental entry in his journal on November 7 near the Santa Clara River that “they shot an Indian for stealing some of their oxen.”[24] And John Ginn, who traveled the Old Spanish Trail in 1857, wrote in an unpublished diary account that on November 27, 1849:

“At [Las] Vegas lived the last band of Indians we would have to pass, and as they were understood to number but fifteen or twenty, and we had been so much annoyed by the red devils, my mess of five men determined that we would exterminate this band, if they annoyed us, and push on to California before those in our rear heard of it.”[25]

On at least one occasion in which the Paiute responded with aggression, even the Anglo chronicler of the event felt compelled to justify the Indians’ reaction. Gold-seeker W. W. Hollister in an unpublished recollection recalled an incident in 1853 along the Old Spanish Trail south of Salt Lake City:

“We had a bullock stolen on the Rio Virgin, about midway between Salt Lake City and San Bernardino. It was afterwards, by the next train that came after us, that the Indians killed two of the men of that train, in retaliation for the two of their men killed by us.”[26]

Despite growing antagonism and violence, the increasing travel along the Old Spanish Trail during the early American period resulted in the continued convergence of Euro-American and indigenous cultures. Anthropologist Carling Malouf and historian John Findlay write that during this time:

“A clear record of escalating Indian-White interaction is the sequence of shifts seen in aspects of native material culture, entailing changes in form, design, technique of manufacture, and range of materials used.”[27]

Often materials procured from Whites supplanted previous aboriginal articles; other trade items, such as firearms, produced an entirely new demand. The most desired exchange for the Indians was metal, which could be used to make jewelry, weapons, and tools.

The Indians gained more than just material culture from the overlanders. Some learned the Anglo practices of begging and collecting a ‘toll’ to allow passage. Ruth Shackleford, for example, had written that “the bothersome Indians have been around the wagons all day begging,” and Mrs. Rousseau recorded that when traveling the Santa Clara Valley “The Indian chief told the guide we must all give them something for traveling through their country.”[28] The emigrants looked upon these behaviors with contempt. One older chief of a Northern Paiute village explained the origin of such practices to Trail overlander William Wright:

“It was a dirty whiteman’s trick, and he would see that it was not again

repeated. He said that they had caught the idea by seeing water sold at some of the wells on the deserts.”[29]

The mid-nineteenth century diary accounts of contact between Mormons and non-Mormon Whites also reveal some animosities. Certainly most of these attitudes were formed long before the two groups met along the Old Spanish Trail. An 1849 unpublished journal entry by a Mr. Shearer maintains that the Saints “are more troublesome beggars than the savages, and to take the united voice of the emigrants for it, they are worse thieves.”[30] Likewise, emigrant Henry Hazard describes the Mormons during his journey in 1853 as “being a sect of religious fanatics and having been driven out of Missouri ...had a deep seated hatred against Gentiles.”[31] Other accounts demonstrate the Saints’ continued efforts to distinguish themselves from the overlanders. Thomas Flint wrote in 1853:

“As we were driving along two men on horseback met us and one of them asked me if we were “Saints or sinners.” I replied that it depended very much how he interpreted the question, when he said somewhat testily, “Are you Mormons or not?” Not was the reply.”[32]

A number of the overland diaries, however, relate quite positive encounters with the Mormons. It appears likely that the Mormons accorded privileged treatment to emigrants of greater financial means; it was these overlanders, after all, who had the money necessary to pay for Mormon goods and services. Harvey S. Brown, for example, joined a party in 1849 which in-

cluded lawyers, judges, war heroes and other wealthy overlanders. In an unpublished reminiscence, he described his experiences with the Saints:

“At Salt Lake we found the Mormons. We found them very hospitable indeed, and a very industrious people. We saw Young frequently, and attended a service in one of his houses. I was never treated better than by those people.”[33]

The Mormons usually encouraged travel along the Old Spanish Trail rather than the more direct route to the gold-mines; this was often a source of bitterness if the emigrants later believed they had been misled. Leonard Babcock’s often illegible yet highly absorbing unpublished recollection elucidates this point. Babcock was a member of Brown’s caravan, and came to resent the additional miles added to his journey because of the Mormon’s direction:

“Informed by Mormons -- Indians had burned grass on Humboldt emigrant route. I was fool enough to believe it. Left ... for Los Angeles on Old Spanish Trail 25th day Sept. 1849 ...”[35]

Gentile overlander Thomas S. Wylly agreed, writing that “It is impossible to tell what motive actuated those people to mislead the emigrants so grossly. But there was one thing certain, no Mormon of that time was acting on his own volition. Everything he did had to have the approval and was generally instigated by his leaders.”[36] Regardless of their motivations, the Saints’ persistent efforts to direct overland traffic southward along the Old Spanish Trail accentuated the contact be-

tween the various groups of the region.

The majority of mid-century overlanders did not generally exhibit strong feelings about the Saints. Salt Lake City and the burgeoning communities along the Old Spanish Trail were simply seen as stop-overs and supply centers; the primary objective of these emigrants was to reach the gold fields or the California settlements as quickly as possible. Relations between Mormons and gentiles would deteriorate dramatically, however, in the period just prior to and following the infamous Mountain Meadows Massacre near St. George, Utah, in 1857.

Instances of Anglo cultural contact along the Trail during the mid-1800s, however, involved a social dynamic representing more than simply Mormons and non-Mormons. The white overlanders included not just Americans but large numbers of European immigrants: Irish, English, Swedes, Germans, Danes, Poles, and Czechs. Religious groups besides Latter-day Saints included Catholics, Jews, and members of various Protestant denominations and are often referred to in diary accounts of travel on the Old Spanish Trail.

A number of the overland diaries also mention African-Americans on the Old Spanish Trail. Though the references are too limited to draw conclusions about prevailing cultural attitudes, they do seem to suggest an acceptance of Blacks as social equals—certainly an exception in pre-Civil War America. In several instances, African-Americans were depicted as heroes. In the fall of

1849, for example, Peter Derr joined a caravan of 300 men, women and children headed from Salt Lake to Los Angeles. The party suffered extreme hardship when provisions ran out while crossing the Mojave Desert, and, reminiscent of the Donner party and the aborted Death Valley expedition, were nearly forced to resort to cannibalism. According to Derr’s unpublished recollection:

“For the last 7 days they had absolutely nothing. Some of the party were determined to kill the Spaniard to eat, not consenting to Derr’s claim that he had a right to a chance with the rest. Finally they reached Chocomonga where they found a negro who had been with Fremont, and knew how to treat them, giving them but a little at a time, thus saving their lives.”[37]

Other references to African-Americans do not imply an inferior status. An overlander from a large party, Isaac Haight, made a brief note in an unpublished account that on August 18, 1849, near Cedar City “we saw the other man and the black boy come.”[38] And while heading for California late in 1849 Thomas Morris recorded the following near the Santa Clara River, suggesting the personal independence of the black man in question:

“December 5, 6 and 7. Weather is stormy. We have received information that General Rich traveled 15 days off the track. Brother Egan passed us. Here a Negro took offense and went ahead. He overtook Egan and went in company 4 days, but afterwards fell a prey to the Indians for we were in the Piute Territory.”[39]

Unquestionably the most well known African American to have traveled the Old Spanish Trail during the mid-nineteenth century was mountain man James P. Beckwourth. Born the son of a slave, Beckwourth took an Indian wife and was one-time chief of the Crow. Legendary for his courage throughout the West, Beckwourth's life demonstrates a degree of racial acceptance not evident in other regions. In 1844 he is said to have taken trade goods to California along the Old Spanish Trail and returned with 1800 horses following the outbreak of the Mexican-American War. Though much has been written about Beckwourth, surely other African Americans traveled the desert route during the nineteenth

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***The Old Spanish Trail  
united Mojaves and  
Mexicans, Mormons and  
Utes, Spaniards and  
Mojaves, Europeans and  
Paiute, Africans and  
Mexicans.***

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century without leaving record.

The variety of humanity that used the Old Spanish Trail during the mid-1800s reflected quite a cosmopolitan assemblage. John C. Fremont described his expedition across the Mojave Desert on April 15, 1844:

*guided by a civilized Indian attended by two wild ones from the Sierra—a Chinook from Columbia, and our mixture of American, French, German—all armed—four or five languages heard at once—above a hundred horses or mules, half wild—American, Spanish, and Indian*

*dresses and equipment intermingled—such was our procession, stretching a quarter a mile along our weary path.[40]*

This quotation epitomizes the multi-cultural convergence along the Old Spanish Trail during the Mexican and early American periods. Language, dress, and social sensibilities combined to produce a unique cultural amalgamation. The Old Spanish Trail united Mojaves and Mexicans, Mormons and Utes, Spaniards and Mojaves, Europeans and Paiute, Africans and Mexicans. It is the importance of these varied relationships, rather than the presence of geographic similarities or the characteristics of a single group, which would most distinguish the contemporary American Southwest. And it is the Old Spanish Trail which, more than any other material construct, facilitated this cultural convergence.

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# IMPACT OF THE OLD SPANISH TRAIL ON CATHOLIC CHURCH EXPANSION IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

(ALONG THE OST CORRIDOR FROM THE NEVADA BORDER (BAKER, CA) TO THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY  
BORDER AT RANCHO CUCAMONGA)

*BY R. BRUCE HARLEY*

Pioneer missionaries had expanded the realm of New Spain's Catholic Church to Baja and Alta California during the latter half of the 1700s and the first quarter of the 1800s. However, for the most part this chain of Franciscan missions was confined to locations near the Pacific shore along El Camino Real and thus had little impact on colonization of the interior prior to 1830. An exception to this early status of Southern California's interior was Mission San Gabriel, founded in 1771, followed by its church outpost at Los Angeles in 1782. San Gabriel established many ranchos along the Sonoran Trail, a parallel predecessor of the OST dating from the de Anza expeditions of the mid-1770s.

With San Gabriel's favorable location at least part-way into the interior, American traders were stopping at the mission for supplies by the 1820s. It would be but a short matter of time until New Mexican traders would complete a hookup which created a 1200 mile trail from Santa Fe to Los Angeles by 1830. Although the latter trail, located a few miles north of the earlier Sonoran one, was primarily a route for transient traders of many kinds of goods and animals, a few men aimed to become permanent settlers. Their numbers increased over the following decade, leading to the Rowland- Workman Party which accompanied the trade caravan from Santa Fe in the fall of 1841. The following year and again in 1843 and 1844, a group of colonists with the intent of founding a town made successive treks from Abiquiu, New Mexico.

Since no priest accompanied these pioneers as in the days of Spanish expeditions such as the de Anza ones, this meant that church-minded trekkers would soon insist on religious services. The people initially who settled at Politana (near today's Colton, CA) under the leadership of Lorenzo Trujillo quickly contacted the one priest remaining at San Gabriel. Father Tomas Estenega agreed to journey out once a month to say mass for the faithful at an open air spot. When the settlers moved five miles downstream along the Santa Ana River after two years, he and his successors continued that routine at Agua Mansa/La Placita for a decade.

In 1852, the first parish east of San Gabriel was formed and the first church erected under the leadership of the first resident pastor, affectionately known as Padre Amable. Although he served only three years before retiring due to a medical condition, San Salvador Parish flourished during its initial decade of existence. As the only church in a wide area, its membership increased as '49ers and other people moved to the valley from Mexico and Los Angeles. In 1860, a second new parish was established in Anaheim. With the initial shortage of priests, the bishop regularly exchanged pastors, both ways, between Agua Mansa and Anaheim assignments for another decade until more priests became available.

The Agua Mansans also soon had neighbors. In 1851, a large contingent of Mormons moved down the Salt Lake/Old Spanish Trail to found the city of San Bernardino. This name

continued the one used by the preceding San Gabriel outpost near the close of the Mission Era, 1819-1834. In 1857, the Mormon faithful were called home to Salt Lake City by Brigham Young. The resulting real estate sale meant that other Americans would soon be on the move. Within a year, the Catholic bishop held the first mass and plans were made to establish a congregation. With a continuing shortage of priests and money, however, that intention did not reach fruition for several years.

In 1862, the Agua Mansa area experienced a devastating flood which destroyed everything except San Salvador church and one house. Diocesan attention became focused on San Bernardino, and the Agua Mansa pastor was assigned the extra duty of also ministering to a fledgling congregation which met in the old Mormon hall. In 1867, the bishop determined that the relationship of the two Catholic congregations should be reversed. The lone pastor was reassigned as a resident priest to serve the newly established St. Bernardine's Church and also to travel to Agua Mansa once a month for celebration of mass.

As San Salvador was the mother church for St. Bernardine's, the situation was reversed so that historically speaking St. Bernardine's not only became the mother church for a declining one at Agua Mansa but also was instrumental in founding many new churches in San Bernardino County. This political jurisdiction was split in 1893, creating Riverside County, which meant two of the largest counties in the U.S. were adjacent to

each other -- a vast area larger than New England and one not further subdivided despite population growth. After a century, more than 100 new churches and chapels had been established. This number also included a dozen Indian chapels to serve various reservations.

The expansion was not necessarily a steady one but proceeded by a series of growth outbursts reflecting national migration patterns and major events such as wars. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century Southern California experienced its second population expansion (the first being the '49ers). Between 1900 and World War I the revolutionary unrest of Mexico brought another wave. The interwar period before World War II witnessed a steady growth augmented by the "Dust Bowl" migration of the Great Depression. After the pause during a second major conflict, another tremendous expansion occupied the quarter century after 1945. After a slowdown in the 1970s, another expansion, aided by a renewed wave of migration from Mexico, carried through the remainder of the twentieth century with no prediction voiced as to when the next lull would occur.

The formation of Catholic parishes in inland Southern California closely mirrored those growth periods much of that 125 years. The phenomenon also in many cases followed the Old Spanish Trail corridor from the Nevada border to Los Angeles County as it crossed a varied terrain. These new churches in the corridor numbered almost half the eventual total for San Bernardino County and spilled over the boundary line into Riverside County. This boundary was a few miles south of the trail and roughly paralleled the trail from San Bernardino city to Los Angeles County. Geographical features also led to parish geographic groupings such as high desert, low desert, mountain district, southern district, western district, etc. The trail itself crossed

mostly the high desert and western district.

These general comments can be bolstered by a chronological analysis of parish formation. Although it specifically traces Catholic expansion, Protestant churches and other faiths followed much the same pattern.

After the decline of the pre-American Agua Mansa parish of San Salvador, the new St. Bernardine church became the mother church for the huge county in the 1860s. This did not mean that the city of San Bernardino itself would soon acquire additional parishes, for it was some sixty years before a second parish was created there. However, as Los Angeles County expanded, additional parishes were needed in the western district and in the area destined to become Riverside County plus a few to the north in the high desert.

Specifically, the first "child" of "mother" St. Bernardine's was the church needed at Needles in 1886 to serve that new railroad town. In that same year a parish was placed in Riverside, soon to be another inland county seat. Between 1899 and 1922, churches were provided at Colton, Ontario, Upland, Chino, and Rancho Cucamonga to the west; and at Barstow, Oro Grande and Victorville in the northern high desert. In the 1920s and 1930s, four additional parishes were added at San Bernardino. During that same period parishes appeared in Guasti, Fontana (2 more), Ontario, and Bloomington. Construction was held to a minimum during World War II with only San Bernardino (2 more), Riverside, Colton and Loma Linda being fortunate in adding churches.

After the conflict ended, the pent-up demand for churches was met as quickly as possible. New parishes by 1970 in or near the OST corridor included Riverside (7), San Bernardino (3), Rialto (2), Fontana (2), Upland, Etiwanda, and Alta Loma to the west

of the San Bernardino hub, plus Hesperia, Adelanto and Baker to the north. The placement of a church at Baker in 1966 marked the completion of the OST corridor from Baker to Cucamonga with nearly 50 churches serving an ever-growing population. By 1994 the list included Lenwood and Chino Hills along with additional parishes at Ontario and Victorville.

Another pause set in after 1994, but the demand was still increasing so that predictable establishment of additional parishes would in all likelihood resume soon after the turn of the century.

It can be seen from this brief survey that the Old Spanish Trail was as responsible for the spread of churches as the factors of agriculture, mining, military bases, industries, schools, etc. History is a continuing flow of events which in some cases may have "fits and starts" but eventually the flow resumes along pathways already charted.

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## Book Reviews

***Contested Eden, California Before the Gold Rush.*** By Ramón Gutiérrez and Richard J. Orsi, eds. (Berkeley and Los Angeles, the University of California Press in association with the California Historical Society, 1998, 396 pp., illustrations, maps, extensive documentation, index, \$ 22.00)

*Contested Eden* is not an easy book to read. It was not designed to be an easily absorbed “coffee table” book filled with quick rejoinders, but rather one which provides much food for thought. The editors did an excellent job of compiling the works of a dozen different historians into an smoothly flowing narrative on a complex subject. Taking Alta California from its primordial beginnings up to statehood, through a skillful blending of short essays covering many disciplines, the editors created a must-read journal that provides an in-depth overview usually ignored in most historical studies. While appearing repetitious at times, careful study reveals the different authors each with his own direction and purpose.

The geographical area called California is approached from every conceivable angle. Of particular interest to this reader was the description of the human impact on the intertwining of various cultures and its lasting and permanent effect on the California environment. This description includes the notion that California, located as it is in a semi-isolated region surrounded by inhospitable country, was historically invaded by groups bent upon changing what they found. These changes ranged from physical subjugation to the introduction of unseen diseases, pollens, and

unintended biological impacts. It was a situation where the genie, once out of the bottle, was released for all time during an extremely short period of time, historically speaking.

In their various essays, the authors give the usual historical overviews of general knowledge, but each manages to insert his own twist of specific information. This makes very interesting reading. A general scattering of illustrations and maps lend a fascinating touch—especially the section on historical art.

I highly recommend this collection of essays to any student of historical California. It is done in a scholarly manner, well documented and informative. Presented as it is, *Contested Eden*, offers additional material to the scholar and a knowledgeable overview to the interested reader.

Jack Nelson  
*Grand Junction, CO*

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*The following book review is reprinted, with the kind permission of the author and publisher, Gregory M. Franzwa, from folio, August 1999, The Patrice Press, Tucson, AZ.*

Lamar, Howard R., ed., ***The New Encyclopedia of the American West*** (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998, 1,324 pp + xv, hardcover only, \$60.00)

The dust jacket of this book quotes the assessment of Stephen E. Ambrose: “...this magisterial and indispensable reference volume.” Another from Alvin M. Josephy, Jr.: “This is an absolutely marvelous book—not only an unmatched reference tool but a rich collection of engaging, authoritative, and highly readable

writings on almost every facet of Western American history.”

The only trouble with those observations, it seems to this researcher, is that they are grossly understated. Looking at this massive volume—an eight pounder with nine-point type (this newsletter [*folio*] is set in eleven point), one can not help but wonder how the hell one man could do all this work. Actually, Howard Lamar *didn't* do all the work—but he selected the authors—several hundred of them—and coordinated their work. Just looking at the list one notices many of the most accomplished (as well as some of the most notorious) western historians. We see Marc Simmons, Bunny Fontana, John Porter Bloom, Abe Nasatir, Merle Wells, Dale Walker, and even the Old Man [Franzwa]. We also see Patty Limerick and Richard White, but one can always skip right over the “new westies.”

It is not only the massiveness of content, it is the marvelous readability of the text that so captivated this reviewer. Some of that copy just sings, but at the same time the authors display considerable erudition. There is a strong suspicion that Lamar had to do lots of editing, and perhaps even some rewriting, to even out the overall quality of the text. The book also offers several hundred illustrations, many of them historic views.

No writer or editor worth his salt could afford to be without such a reference work. No good writer would go to press without checking his work against a book such as this.

Howard Lamar has served as Sterling Professor of History at Yale, and

even had a stint as president of the university. But it is doubtful that he has ever done anything in his amazing career that could match this—one of the most important books of the twentieth century.

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***The Old Spanish Trail across the Mojave Desert—A History and Guide.***

By Harold Austin Steiner.  
(Las Vegas: The Haldor Company, 1999, 254 pp., index, notes, appendix and maps, paper, \$24.95 )

“So look, enjoy and leave the remnants for future generations to see”—these were the last words of Harold Steiner’s valuable book about the Old Spanish Trail. These words capture the dilemma historians, archaeologists, BLM, National Parks and local museums have. They want to explore, analyze and share what is discovered, yet they realize the risks from looting and vandalism. Steiner explored for us, created a useful guide to allow us to share the sites of this wondrous trail, and by publicizing it, we can take the necessary steps to help preserve the remnants of the trail.

Here is a book we can use at the Mojave River Valley Museum to familiarize our docents with the “trail.” The historical perspectives in Part I are well written and easy to comprehend. From Native Americans through the Spanish explorers, American trappers, New Mexican traders and the Mormons, Steiner has highlighted the main facets of Utah to California early history. Therefore all tourist centers, museums and book stores along the route should have many copies of this book. Our

museum in Barstow ran out in less than a month; now we keep an extra supply.

Excerpts from journals are craftily chosen to exemplify most locations on the trail. Since many camping sites had several names, Bitter Spring, for example, Steiner clearly explains the variety of names used.

Historical maps capture the desolation and the vastness of the “longest and crookedest” trail in the American west. Wheeler’s 1869-73, Mallory-Wood 1877 Map, Lt. John Chandler’s 1855 Sketch Map—all contribute to some aspect of the roads from Parowan Valley, Utah, to the Cajon Pass in California. With modern detailed maps, it is easy to find old remnants. Buying these maps (over 60) would cost perhaps three times the price of the book. The maps, the historic background, along with written excerpts and descriptions, woven together by Steiner’s clear and concise writing, *The Old Spanish Trail across the Mojave Desert* is certainly a good buy.

The weakness is the same as other recent books on the Old Spanish Trail: going interchangeably between the mule trail and the later-used wagon roads. Though Steiner acknowledges the point in the Preface, he strays from the mule trail—used up the 1848—to wagon trail(s) that followed the New Mexican mule trail. I am bothered a bit by the caption for a wagon road reading “Old Spanish Trail.” Pointing to I-15 and saying, “There’s the Old Spanish Trail” would be illogical. Steiner, of course, does not do that. The mule trail is different from the later roads that followed it. This debate becomes

an asset, however, in the respect that readers can analyze with Steiner the numerous names, variations and uses the road has had and the reasons for calling it the “Old Spanish Trail.”

Lovers of trail walking and trail exploring will be able to drive near the paths and walk on parts of it. They can benefit from years of Steiner’s work and love. Historians will have accurate maps to see the variations in the routes and see where there are multiple trails and where the trails may be disputed. These are certainly valuable contributions to Western History and to the Old Spanish Trail heritage itself.

Go ye forth and look, enjoy and leave the remnants for future generations to see—thanks Hal Steiner, for enabling us to look and enjoy for ourselves.

Clifford J. Walker  
Barstow, California

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***More Things To Do...***

Museums along and near the Old Spanish Trail can be especially helpful for materials about the OST. Santa Fe has the Palace of the Governors. The Dan O’Laurie Canyon Museum in Moab, UT has an Old Spanish Trail page on their web site. The John Wesley Powell Museum at Green River, UT has OST displays. Las Vegas has the Nevada State Historical Society Museum. The Mojave River Valley Museum in Barstow, CA has an excellent collection of desert items. The San Bernardino County Museum in Redlands, CA includes material about that area. Please visit the museums near you and see how Old Spanish Trail ‘friendly’ they are. *Please send the museum name and location to ST’s editor.*



**Horse Lake lies northwest of Taos, New Mexico on the Old Spanish Trail.**

*Photo courtesy of the Editor*

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