

SPANISH TRACES



Volume 6

Fall 2000

No. 3

Francis “Frank” Wheat’s Legacy to the Old Spanish Trail

OSTA member Francis Millspaugh “Frank” Wheat, passed away in late July. Mr. Wheat was a prominent Los Angeles lawyer who was well known for his efforts at desert preservation. The Spring 1999 *Spanish Traces* included a review of his well known history of the struggle to create the East Mojave Desert Preserve. More recently Mr. Wheat had assumed the task of working with Senator Dianne Feinstein’s office to persuade the National Park Service to recommend the Old Spanish Trail for inclusion in the National Historic Trail System.

Mr. Wheat is survived by his wife, the former Nancy Loring, also an OSTA member, and three sons, Douglas Loring Wheat, Carl Irving Wheat and Gordon Warner Wheat. Mr. Wheat was the son of Carl I. Wheat, author of the justly famous work, *Mapping the Transmississippi West*.

Wheat’s legacy to the trail and to OSTA members...[excerpts from his letter to the Senator in February]

Crossing the Mojave Desert through the Mojave National Preserve is the southern section of the Old Spanish Trail from Santa Fe to Los Angeles. A

northern section led from Las Vegas westward into California’s northern Mojave Desert, reaching Resting Spring, then through the Amargosa Canyon and southwest to the vicinity of Barstow. Those traveling the southern section went south from Las Vegas to the Mojave Villages, then straight across the Mojave Desert, through the Preserve, to join the northern section east of Barstow. (This section is often called the “Old Mojave Trail.”)

Both of these sections are of the utmost historic importance to Californians. The northern route was traversed by Fremont, Kit Carson, Antoine Rubidoux and other historic characters. One party, with its wagon, finally encountered the northern section of the trail after escaping Death Valley in 1849 and was then able to follow a well-traveled route to safety. In the 1770s, Father Garcés, following the Indians’ directions (for it was their trail across the desert for countless generations before a white man set foot on it), crossed the desert on the southern section; thereafter it was used beginning about 1830 by Mexican and white traders from Santa Fé, emigrants and countless others.

Both sections were passable by wagons and the ancient wagon ruts can be found today in stones over which the trails passed. As you know, the U.S. government put several small forts along the Old Mojave Trail to protect emigrants and traders from the Indians.

We have crossed the desert on the southern section and parts of the northern section. Hundreds of historically-minded Californians have done the same. There is a very active

Inside this Issue	
Wheat’s Legacy	1-2
NPS	2
President’s Corner	3
Chapter Reports	4-5
Trail Travelers:	
Isaac Slover	
by Harley	6-9
Kit Carson	
by Simmons	10-14
William Workman	
by Sharpe	15-19
Four Legs Out...	
by Parker	19-25
Los Chaguanosos	
by Robinson	25-32
Contemporary Traveler	
by McCombs	33-36
Book Reviews	36-40
Notices	32

Southern California Chapter of the Old Spanish Trail Association that offers Californians the chance to follow these historic tracks and both go through magnificent desert country.

In 1996 Congress passed a bill (sponsored by Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell) containing a directive to the National Park Service to study the eligibility of the Old Spanish Trail, passing through several states as well as California, for National Historic Trail status. We had heard reports that the Study Team had decided, or was directed, to reject the Old Spanish Trail all of it, including the enormously interesting section through the California desert - our desert.

...Please contact...the National Park Service, and tell them you want this trail considered favorably for National Historic Trail status. It fully merits such status, and it would be a blow to our state for it not to receive it. Marc Simmons, Ph.D., past president of the Santa Fe Trail Association issued a statement to NPS Long Distance Trail Superintendent David Gaines saying, "The Old Spanish Trail stands as the most exotic and culturally diverse of American pioneer thoroughfares. Unlike other trans-Mississippi routes which had a single primary function - e.g., the Santa Fé Trail, commerce; Oregon Trail, emigration; California

Trail, miner's route; Chisholm Trail, cattle drives - the Old Spanish Trail was uniquely multifaceted."

We of the Old Spanish Trail Association are deeply concerned that this trail may not be receiving a full, careful and unbiased review, followed by ample opportunity for public comment before the Interior Department makes up its mind.

We hope our great Mojave National Preserve will be able to add to its other attractions the fact that it is crossed by a National Historic Trail!

Frank Wheat will be missed by all.

NPS: All OSTA members were sent copies of the press release of July 17 announcing the draft report of the *Old Spanish Trail National Historic Trail Feasibility Study* was being made public and how to obtain a copy. The draft states that the OST meets two of the three criteria, but fails to meet the third. You have until October 16, 2000 to offer comments.

OSTA President Hal Steiner and Nevada Director Liz Warren are co-chairing the committee to prepare the official OSTA response to the NPS. Please contact Steiner or Warren for guidance on how to best respond or to offer your assistance.

Please visit our web site at <http://www.slv.org>

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

Judy Querfeld, PO Box 47, Niwot, CO 80544 Telephone: 303-651-3403
E-Mail: querfeld@uswest.net

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 January 1, 2001.

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

Membership Dues:

Institutional	\$25/year
Family/Individual	\$12/year
Student	\$ 5/year

Send your checks to:

Treasurer, OSTA, PO Box 7, Marysville, WA 98270

Officers and Directors: 2000-2001

PRESIDENT:

Col. Harold A. Steiner
P.O. Box 12354
Las Vegas, NV 89112
702-458-1723
hsteiner@anv.net

VICE PRESIDENT:

Willard E. Lewis, Jr.
PO Box 6073
Santa Fe, NM 87502
505-984-2978
weljr@uswest.net

SECRETARY:

Lorraine Carpenter
P.O. Box 7
Marysville, WA 98270
360-653-5330
knlcarp@earthlink.net

TREASURER:

Kenn Carpenter
P.O. Box 7
Marysville, WA 98270
knlcarp@earthlink.net

DIRECTORS:

Reba Wells Grandrud, Ph.D.
2322 East Cholla Street
Phoenix, AZ 85028
602-992-0339
rgrandrud@juno.com

Richard Greene
P.O. Box 483
Angel Fire, NM 87710
505-377-6342
ramverde@newmex.com

Ronald K. Jewkes
74 Bryner Street
Helper, UT 84526-1025
435-472-0719
wdload@afnetinc.com

Patricia Joy Richmond
P.O. Box 101
Marvel, CO 81329
970-588-3793
patsjoy@pocketmail.com

John W. Robinson
1345 Cameo Lane
Fullerton, CA 92831
714-528-8609

Elizabeth von Till Warren
PO Box 19039
Jean, NV 89019
702-874-1410
mizlizzard@aol.com

President's Corner

THE STATE OF THE ASSOCIATION

This is my first letter as your new president and I welcome the opportunity to review the state of the association. Personally, I present this message with great pride and anticipation. Pride because the diligent work of past officers and members has brought the OSTA to the forefront of the community of historical organizations. Anticipation because we are on the brink of a great awakening from which our potential is unlimited.

We communicate to our members through our newsletter – *Spanish Traces* – and I consider it to be the most important and most tangible product our association produces. It is the catalyst that binds us together and is the only means of keeping the entire membership informed of association news, policy changes and the results of historical research.

For the past several years we have been blessed with editors – Judy Querfeld and her assistant, Charles – who fully understand what a newsletter is supposed to do. This dynamic duo has made the *Spanish Traces* one of the best newsletters ever. We will never see the likes of them again. But, unfortunately, people move on and Judy and Charles will soon pass this important function on to others.

When the Old Spanish Trail Association was founded in 1994 its founders could never have envisioned the strides that have been made. We are like a pyramid. At the top are the officers that see to the day-to-day operation of the association. My job is to keep apprised of trail information and

develop policies that will allow our association to grow and assume a leadership role in the community of national trails.

We have an exceptionally fine Secretary and Treasurer who keep our records and membership moving forward and our finances solvent. Membership is our key to success. We have grown significantly in past years, but we cannot rest on our laurels. At a time when membership in most organizations is falling, each member of the Old Spanish Trail Association must be a recruiter. I challenge every member to bring in a new member by the time of the year 2001 annual meeting.

Last, but not least, in the pyramid are the members that form the base and support the structure. We have chapters in almost every state through which the Old Spanish Trail passed. Chapters strengthen the association because it is here that the work gets done. The individual members are the sinews that bind us together and any greatness the Old Spanish Trail ever achieves will be the result of all members pulling together toward a common goal. Personal ambition and conflict will have no place during our journey.

As the population grows the need for recreation and improved life style becomes more important. Within this context, trails – all sorts of trails including historic trails – have captured the imagination of the American people who are insistent that multi-use trails be included as part of their life style. Government is beginning to heed this call and my experiences in southern Nevada suggest we, as members of Old Spanish Trail Association, can capitalize on the people's needs and insure that the Old Spanish Trail is part of this awakening.

I began this letter in early July and at that time had no way of knowing if this public opinion has filtered into the National Park Service and influenced their decision on whether to make the Old Spanish Trail part of the National Historic Trails System. Now we know it has not. The feasibility study has been released with the recommendation that the Old Spanish Trail not be made part of the National Trails system. High hopes were dashed on the rocks of disappointment. And our most logical plan of action was to use the powerful tool of public opinion to try to get the NPS recommendation reversed. And we have developed a plan to try to achieve this objective. You will read this letter before we learn whether we are successful.

If reversal does not come to pass then we must regroup and strive to motivate State preservation agencies to see what the National Park Service apparently did not see – the public's desire for positive government trail action. Perhaps not as glamorous as national status, State preservation agencies are our next best hope to find ways to preserve the Old Spanish Trail for future generations. This is the major challenge I see for the governing board and all members of the Association at large.

I am happy to conclude this letter by saying that the state of the Old Spanish Trail Association is good. The path to our present position has not always been easy. There have been rough spots along the way but we are now stabilized and I look forward to seeing still more significant improvements before I pass the banner to my successor.

I will need the help of each and every one of you to reach these goals!

Chapter Reports

Mesa County

Here it is Spanish Traces time again. Several of us enjoyed the conference in Taos. However, we were all a little butt sprung by day's end. My only criticism is that we need more small-group, face-to-face time. Listening to some very-well-known author is okay, but what we are doing in each chapter appears to be more useful and gives each of us a chance to get to know one another.

The North Branch Chapter is alive and well. We had our statue ceremony for planting the old gal (The Spirit of Pioneer Woman bronze) in her final resting spot. It is beautiful site overlooking the North Branch Trail for at least thirty miles as it winds its way along the banks of the Colorado River on its way into Utah. The trail shows what a coalition of dedicated believers can do. We have just now received the plaque back from the engraver for the boulder we recently placed at the site of the "Crossing of the Grand." As soon as the dust settles we will get the word out on another dedication cer-

emony. Now that the Park people recognize the fact that we have two-thirds of a Trail through here we can breathe easier.

We are working very closely with the staff of our Congressional offices. Our letter writing campaign for support of National Historic Trail Status for the Trail is well on its way by now. We urge each and every one to get with it. We further urge you to draft a brief letter to your Chambers of Commerce, County Commissioners, City Councils, etc, to support our grass roots effort. Write the Park Service in support. After all, the Trail runs through your backyard and look at all the tourist money you're losing. We need a National Historic Trail designation for the entire Trail, not some mickey mouse sign hanging on a fence post in each separate state. Read your USNPS Study! Realize what the study is proposing and tell them WE WANT FULL NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAIL STATUS!!! If the Park Service can urge each separate state to accept the Trail for historic recognition, care and maintenance, why can't the Feds?

Jack Nelson, President
Grand Junction, Colorado

Salida del Sol

As previously reported in *Spanish Traces*, the Salida del Sol Chapter had an active Spring 2000 program series.

Our final Spring program at the Parish Hall in Abiquiú focused on the history of Abiquiú, an important staging area for the Old Spanish Trail trade coming out of New Mexico. Prior to that program, our chapter members contributed dozens of volumes to the Abiquiú Public Library to strengthen its collections, particularly in Southwestern history. Book contributions resulting from that meeting are still coming in.

The Chapter Annual Membership Meeting was conducted in connection with the late April program meeting. Our steadfast Secretary/Newsletter Editor (and Crampton Awardee), Richard Greene of Angel Fire, was elected chapter president. Kaye Coffman of Albuquerque, who served as past year Treasurer, was elected Secretary-Treasurer. Three Santa Fe board members, Charles Bennett, Pat Kuhlhoff, and Dr. Dorothy Parker, agreed to serve another term as directors. Greene will continue to produce the chapter newsletter, and

Chapter contacts and addresses

Jack Nelson
Mesa County Chapter
2276 Windwood Court
Grand Junction, CO 81503
970-241-8143

Richard Greene
Salida del Sol Chapter
P. O. Box 483
Angel Fire, NM 87710
505-377-6342
ramverde@newmex.net

Charlotte McKee
Saguache County Chapter
P.O. Box 448
Saguache, CO 81149
719-655-2551 Work
719-852-5229 Home
cmckee@csn.net

John Sharpe
William Workman Chapter
Brackenbank, Clifton
Penrith
Cumbria CA10 2AE England

Rick Whitaker
Southern California Chapter
#11 Tennessee St. #197
Redlands, CA 92373
909-792-6315
rwhitaker5@juno.com

Nick Saines
Las Vegas Chapter
1587 Figueroa Drive
Las Vegas, NV 80123
702-896-4049
GREATUNC@aol.com

Willard Lewis, outgoing president, will chair the Program Committee.

Dates for two Fall programs have been selected, and programs are being developed. The two Saturday dates are October 7 and November 4, at 2:00 p.m. in the Palace of the Governors Meeting Room. An announcement of program subjects will be sent to chapter members in early September. For details, contact Willard Lewis, 505-984-2978, in Santa Fe.

My thanks to a number of Salida del Sol chapter members who assisted in making our Taos National Conference such a success.

Willard Lewis, Past President
Santa Fe, New Mexico

Las Vegas Chapter

On April 8 the reconstructed Mormon Fort on the OST in downtown Las Vegas was dedicated. In 1855 a Mormon mission came from Utah along the OST to start the first settlement in Las Vegas. The dedication was presided over by Chris Macek, Park Ranger for the Old Mormon Fort State Park, and Treasurer of the Las Vegas chapter of OSTA. Chris provides information on the OST and OSTA at the fort, which receives hundreds of visitors a year.

The same day Nick Saines led a combined Sierra Club/OSTA field trip along the OST to the Amargosa gorge, near China Ranch in California, where Frémont traveled in 1844. We also stopped at Resting Springs ranch where an Indian attack occurred on Mexicans the day before Frémont

arrived, and Emigrant Pass, where you can see the mule trail and the wagon trail almost side by side.

In May the chapter participated in the state-wide Archaeological and Historic Preservation Week. On May 14 we had a table set up at the Southern Nevada Archaeology and History Festival in Floyd Lamb Park, and on May 14, Hal Steiner led a walk along the OST in Blue Diamond (Cottonwood Springs).

Several members from Las Vegas traveled to the annual meeting in Taos, New Mexico in June. In July a planning meeting of the Executive Committee was held. Our first meeting in the fall will be held on September 26. The subject will be the NPS OST feasibility study draft.

Nick Saines, President
Las Vegas, Nevada

Saguache Chapter

The Saguache Chapter has elected new officers, Charlotte McKee has become the new President, Ruth Meade is the new Vice President and Connie Casteel is the new Secretary/Treasurer. The new officers and chapter members have been discussing the direction the chapter should pursue – particularly the place of the chapter in the wider San Luis valley and Colorado context.

A chapter picnic was held at Chapman Park in Monte Vista on August 20, 2000. We discussed progress on the response to the NPS Study, new directions for the chapter, and to learn more about information that members would like to hear and to schedule future activities. The picnic actually

served another purpose: it brought a much needed downpour!

Charlotte McKee, President
Monte Vista, Colorado

Southern California Chapter

Rick Whitaker has volunteered as Chair of the Southern California Chapter. He is a Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Technician with the city of Colton. Rick is currently contacting some of the key people in the chapter for the purpose of planning several fall field trips. One may be planned for the LA Basin and the other for the desert. Discussions are also on going with Nick Saines, President of the Las Vegas Chapter for another joint field trip in Las Vegas (we are hoping it will be as successful as the last joint field trip).

Several of the members are assisting on comment to the NPS Feasibility Study on designating the trail as a National Historic Trail. Other members are contacting politicians on the Federal, State, and local level for assistance in our cause. Discussions are also on going with other organizations such as the Sierra Club.

Dr. Ann Deegan, Curator of History, San Bernardino County Museum is working on a study of Agua Mansa Cemetery. The community of Agua Mansa was located within the city limits of Colton and all was destroyed by a flood in the 1860's except for the cemetery. Aerial photographs provided by the city were used by Rick to create a photographic mosaic and detailed maps of the cemetery to assist Ann in her study.

Rick Whitaker
Redlands, California

BUT THE BEAR WON:

Isaac Slover, First American at Agua Mansa

By Dr. R. Bruce Harley

For a man who lived a long life enduring pioneer hardships and who touched in some fashion several important southwestern locations along the way, very little is really known about a mountain man named Isaac Slover. During his lifetime he traveled on both the Santa Fe and Old Spanish Trails.

Slover was born, perhaps in Pennsylvania, in 1780 or earlier since his age at death is not really known. By 1819, he was farming in Arkansas. From 1821 to 1822 he was with the Glenn-Fowler trapping expedition into New Mexico, searching for beaver for a trade that had suddenly expanded to meet fashion demands. [1] This party would play an important role in opening up the Santa Fé trade to Americans, which in turn led to the origins of the fur trade throughout Colorado, New Mexico and California. This economic growth then created the necessity for another trading route beyond Santa Fé. The solution by 1829 was the caravan route that came to be called the Old Spanish Trail.

By early 1824, Slover, along with Ewing Young and William Wolfskill, began trapping the San Juan River and other tributaries of the Colorado River. When the group arrived back in Taos, N.M. in June of that year, the men had amassed about \$10,000 worth of beaver and other pelts. [2]

Later, Slover joined another party of fur trappers in 1828 that explored westerly from Santa Fé with James Pattie and the latter's father, Sylvester, who was about the same age as Slover. Mexican authorities arrested the Pattie group on March 12 at Mission Santa Catalina as unauthorized foreigners in Baja California. The men were then marched under guard to Upper California's Mission San Diego. There, the province's governor placed them in jail. After eight months, Slover and another trapper, William Pope, were given permission to return eastward by way of Sonora in Mexico proper. Earlier, the Pattie party had touched on portions of what became the Old Spanish Trail in its journey westward to California. [3]

After returning to New Mexico, Slover continued to participate in trapping and the fur trade. John Brown, Sr., who later became one of the leaders of the Mormon colony at San Bernardino, CA after 1851, recalled associating with Slover in the 1830s. The Brown party erected a fort on the Arkansas River in Colorado and called it "Pueblo." One day, Slover came into this fort trailing two mules loaded with beaver skins. Brown recalled at the time of Slover's death that the latter helped supply the fort with game. He found Slover to be "a quiet and peaceable man, very reserved. He would

heed no warning and accept no advice as to his methods of hunting. His great ambition was to kill grizzlies—he called them 'Cabibs.' He would leave our camp and be gone for weeks at a time without anyone knowing his whereabouts..." When Brown met Slover at Agua Mansa in 1851, the two talked of their companions at Fort Pueblo (today's Pueblo, CO) including James W. Waters, V.J. Herring, Alex Godey, Kit Carson, Bill Williams, Jim Bridger, Bill Bent, the Sublette brothers, and other trappers and traders." [4]

Sometime in the mid-1830s widower Slover married Barbara Aragón, a native of Taos. As with all of the American-Mexican marriages, this called for an "overnight conversion" on the part of the prospective groom so that the couple could be married by a Catholic priest. In many cases this also meant a new or Hispanicized given name. With Slover, it meant that "Isaac" was replaced by "Cristóbal" ("Christopher"). Another legal requirement was taking on Mexican citizenship since the groom no longer lived east of the 1803 Louisiana Purchase line. [5]

The next move occurred in 1837 when the Slover-Pope party emigrated from Taos to Southern California over the Old Spanish Trail, reaching Los Angeles in early 1838. Although most authors state that no wagons were used

on that trail until the Mormon caravans of the 1850s from Salt Lake City, there is some evidence that the small party of twelve people apparently did travel by wagon. Antoine Leroux, a noted trapper in the Southwest, wrote to Senator Thomas Hart Benton of Missouri in 1853 that: "Wagons can now travel this route to California, and have done it. In the year 1837, two families named Sloover (sic) and Pope, with their wagons and two Mexicans, went from Taos that way." [6]

The timing of the Slover couple's settlement at Agua Mansa is difficult to ascertain. Apparently, they first went to Los Angeles (as did Pope, 1838-1841). Intuition would then lead to speculation that Lorenzo Trujillo might have contacted Slover on his first trip to the San Bernardino area in 1838. Or, in the fraternity of the fur trade, Slover might have met Louis Robidoux on one of the latter's trips to Southern California in the late 1830s or early 1840s. From possible contacts such as these, Slover might have decided to move east from Los Angeles to the Rancho San Bernardino area, especially with the departure of the Pope family. The date of this change is also difficult to determine. The Slovers are not listed among the 1842 pioneer settlers of Agua Mansa, but are listed in the 1844 Mexican census of the area. Presumably, they migrated in 1843 and did not settle in the core village. What vague references there are about location indicate that they settled at the foot of what became known as Slover Mountain, on the east slope, and did not participate in subsequent moves of the colonists.

With the determination of settling down at last, Slover nevertheless continued to

trap the streams of California, possibly as far away as the Sierra range. As in his Colorado days, he could be gone for weeks at a time. In the San Bernardino Valley during the 1850s, there were still large quantities of trout, deer and bear to be hunted. [8]

In June 1851, two Mormon leaders from Salt Lake City, Amasa M. Lyman and Charles C. Rich, visited the rancho closest to their encampment. On their way to the San Bernardino spread, they spent the night at the home of the Slovers. Later that summer when the Mormons were settling in, Isaac delivered a wagon full of provisions to the newcomers. This welcome came from his rather modest personal larder and not from the Agua Mansa community as such. [9]

Antoine Leroux, a noted trapper in the Southwest, wrote to Senator Thomas Hart Benton of Missouri in 1853 that: "Wagons can now travel this route to California, and have done it. In the year 1837, two families named Sloover (sic) and Pope, with their wagons and two Mexicans, went from Taos that way."

Judge Benjamin Hayes, in his Pioneer Notes, wrote that Slover and his wife were "two old people who lived very independently and were most happy ... I fear life ha(s) of late become uneasy (for) him (due to more and more people moving into what had been a peaceful agricultural area) ... In the summer of 1850, riding with me, the

heavy rifle upon his shoulder as usual, his faultless eye detected (a) lurking bear's track, not half a mile from his home."

The judge frequently stopped with Slover and his wife while making necessary court trips into Los Angeles County's hinterland. Once he honored Barbara Slover, writing in his diary that "Dona Barbara, whose house one comes to first and never leaves without regret, who makes the lightest tortillas, wheat or corn, ever cheerful Dona Barbara, from year to year unchanged! How different from many I have known!" [10]

As an illustration of Slover's growing disenchantment with San Bernardino Valley, an episode as early as 1847 revealed the trend. Manuel Espinosa lived with the Slover family and later testified in a land lawsuit case in 1874 that the family's certificate of ownership was lost in 1847 at the time some members of the Mormon Battalion journeyed from San Luis Rey to the Bandini Donation of Agua Mansa to buy wheat and beans to feed their troops stationed in Southern California during the Mexican-American War. Barbara Slover, in the absence of Isaac, fled in terror from her home. While absent, some Indians looted the house and in the process the ownership papers were lost. [11]

Isaac Slover continued to hunt bears despite his age. As John Brown, Sr. described the fatal episode, "One day he went with his companion, Bill McMines, up the left fork of the Cajon Pass almost to the summit (near today's town of Wrightwood) where he came across a large grizzly and Slover fired at close range. The bear fell but soon

arose and crawled away and laid down in some oak brush. Slover, after re-loading his rifle, began approaching the monster in spite of the objection of McMines. As the old experienced bear hunter reached the brush the bear gave a sudden spring and fell on Mr. Slover, tearing him almost to pieces. McMines came down from the mountain and told the tale, and a party went back and cautiously approached the spot; found the bear dead, with Slover still breathing but insensible. He was brought down to Sycamore Grove on a crude litter ... The scalp was torn from his head, his legs and one arm broken, the whole body bruised and torn...." [12]

The men then took the hunter to his house, where, weakened by profuse bleeding, he died the following day on October 14, 1854. At this point, the story of his subsequent funeral and burial becomes rather confused. One account states he was initially given a Mormon funeral by his friends perhaps out of gratitude for the foodstuffs donated in 1851. He was then buried either (1) on the summit of Mt. Slover with the grave marked by a large wooden cross, (2) at the south base of the mountain or (3) in a pioneer graveyard at its northeast base. John Brown, Sr. reported later that he, along with Jefferson Hunt's son and other Mormon colony members, buried Slover along the southeast base of the hill. If he was buried somewhere in the mountain's vicinity, then an 1883 county history account might describe the resting place: "There is a small graveyard located along the east flank of Slover Mtn ... It is not improved ... containing but a small number of dead." [13]

Señora Barbara Slover, unhappy about

the funeral and burial arrangements, as a devout Catholic, about ten days after her husband's death went to the pastor of Agua Mansa's San Salvador Church to obtain permission to bury Isaac, a convert, in the newly-established Agua Mansa Cemetery on the bluff overlooking the church. The priest agreed to say a funeral mass the next day. One account concludes, "So they buried him on an elevation near their home." This would indicate that Slover had already been buried at least once, but was not necessarily again buried at Agua Mansa.

Mrs. Slover's name does not appear in the parish Book of Deaths, although she died about 1860. Her name, however, is included in Cornelius Jensen's 1856 census. Neither does her name appear on the various lists drawn up by several tombstone census-takers at Agua Mansa since 1951. However, such a list compiled by a Rubidoux descendant in 1968 does mention a Slover (no given name) "and many other oldtimers" as names on monuments no longer located in the cemetery. Whether this was Barbara or Isaac or someone else cannot be determined. To compound the mystery, Isaac Slover's name does appear under his convert name of "Cristóbal" on a marker at San Bernardino's former Holy Rosary Cemetery.

Peter C. Peters, a longtime trustee of the Agua Mansa Cemetery after 1889 until his death in 1934, maintained that (eventually?) the graves of both Slovers were located -- as might be expected -- in the first row of graves to the right of the cemetery entrance. Unfortunately, the wooden crosses of all those buried before 1859 were eventually destroyed by grass fires and vandalism.

Later, Mr. Peters also indicated that the pioneer graveyard dispatched some remains to the Catholic cemetery in San Bernardino, although he did not mention specifically the Slovers. This might account for a Cristóbal Slover headstone in the cemetery, but of course there is no solid proof for any of the proposed theories. [14]

After Isaac's death, the name of the mountain near his home of a decade was changed to honor him. This conspicuous peak had originally been named by the Indians as Catalmacay, but the Californians called it Cerrito Solo ("Lone Hill"). Slover Mountain was destined to be exploited by limestone and marble quarrying operations beginning in the late 1850s, a mining endeavor along with later cement operations which considerably reduced the size of the mountain after a century and a half. [15]

Two decades after Slover's death, a realty development bearing his name—Slover Mountain Colony—was started three miles outside the city of San Bernardino near Slover's former place of residence. The tract was 2,000 acres in size. Another purpose of the real estate firm in 1873 was to persuade the Southern Pacific Railroad to follow its plan of establishing its rail route through San Bernardino, running from San Francisco through the southern border states. As one author expressed it in commenting about such a possibility: "It is appropriate that Slover's name should be linked with the opening of one of the major lines of communication between the East and the West, for he had blazed some of the trails that later became highways (and railways)." [16]

FOOTNOTES

[1] Andrew F. Rolle, "Isaac Slover" in Leroy R. Hafen, ed., *The Mountain Men and the Fur Trade of the Far West* (Glendale, CA, 1965), Vol. I, p. 367. Judge Horace C. Rolfe stated that Slover was of German ancestry—George W. Beattie and Helen P. Beattie, *Heritage of the Valley* (Oakland, CA, rev.ed., 1951), p. 103, fn. 15. Judge Benjamin Hayes said in 1850 that Slover was "77 years old"; if so, he was born ca. 1773 and was therefore 81 at the time of death in 1854—Beatties, op.cit., p. 104.

[2] Rolle, op.cit., p.368. Although Ewing Young was not associated with the establishment of the Agua Mansa community in California, the first settlement on the Old Spanish Trail, he did have an illegitimate son who was connected to it. This son married Josefa Moya (1840-1933), who emigrated with her family from Abiquiú, NM to Agua Mansa in 1842—see the author's "Josefa Moya Young: Matriarch of Agua Mansa," *City of San Bernardino Historical Society Odyssey*, Vol. 19, No. 3 (Sept.-Dec. 1997), pp. 1-3.

[3] Rolle, op.cit., p. 368.

[4] John Brown, Jr. and James Boyd, *History of San Bernardino and Riverside Counties* (CA), Chicago, 1922, Vol. II, p. 681.

[5] Ian A. Smith, "Isaac Slover—Free Hunter," *City of San Bernardino Historical Society Heritage Tales*, 1977, pp. 1-32.

[6] As cited in John Robinson, "Traders, Travelers and Horsethieves on the Old Spanish Trail," *Overland Journal*, Vol. 15, Nr. 2 (Summer 1997), p. 36. It is also apparent that the Slover-Pope group did not use the protection of the annual trade caravan, for they traveled toward the end of the year after the caravan had already departed in late summer.

[7] See the author's *The Story of Agua Mansa: Its Settlement, Churches and People*, San Bernardino, CA, 1998, pp. 63-64 (Trujillo) and 65-67 (Robidoux). Another given name used by Isaac/Cristóbal Slover was "Luís," the same actual forename as Robidoux—an interesting coincidence. For example, the 1844 Los Angeles census of what became Agua Mansa lists Slover as "Luís Slover".

[8] Rolle, op.cit., p. 369.

[9] As cited by Beattie's, pp. 104-105.

[10] Ibid., p. 105. This praise of Señora Slover was similar to that voiced earlier by Major Horace Bell about Señora Trujillo (wife of Lorenzo). He wrote

in his *Reminiscences* that on one occasion "We adjourned to old Trujillo's casa (located in the La Placita portion of the community) where the señora had, by this time and by previous arrangement, prepared a most inviting breakfast, and I do say and ever will maintain that in getting up a substantial appetizing breakfast the Mexican women are superlative." Cited in the author's *Lorenzo Trujillo: Founder of Agua Mansa*, San Bernardino, CA, 1999, p. 11.

[11] Beatties, p. 118.

[12] Brown and Boyd, op.cit., p. 681.

[13] The author's "Where Was Isaac Slover Buried?," *San Bernardino Valley Genealogical Society Valley Quarterly*, Vol. XXVIII, Nbr. 2 (June 1991), pp. 55-56.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Beatties, p. 54, fn. 14. Kyle Alexander, "History of Slover Mountain and Cement Plant," *Colton* (CA) *Courier*, March 14, 1949. Another account states that the Indian name for Slover Mtn. Was Tahualtapa ("Hill of the Ravens"), Rolle, op.cit., p. 370.

[16] Rolle, pp. 370-371.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Documents, Published and Unpublished

1. McCrackin, Francis A., "Agua Mansa Pioneer Park," 1979.
2. "Campo Santo Memorial Park", 1976.

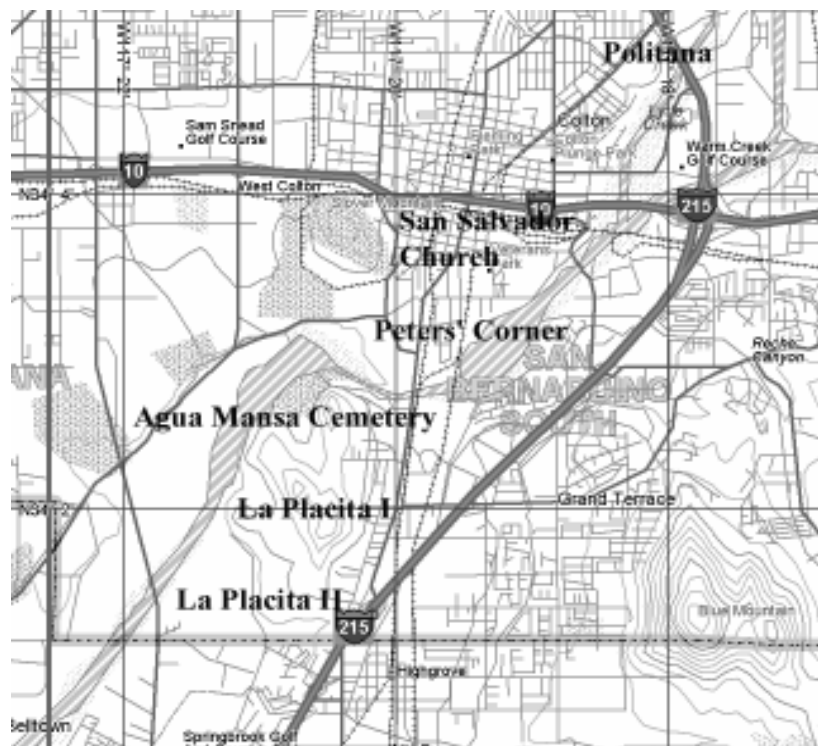
3. *Sacramental Records*, San Salvador Parish, Agua Mansa La Placita, CA, 1852-1893.

Books

1. Beattie, George W. & Helen P. Beattie, *Heritage of the Valley: San Bernardino's First Century*, Oakland, CA, rev.ed., 1951.
2. Brown, John, Jr. & James Boyd, *History of San Bernardino and Riverside Counties*, Chicago, 1922.
3. Elliott, Wallace W., *History of San Bernardino and San Diego Counties*, 1883, reproduced by Riverside Museum Press, Riverside, CA, 1965.
4. Richards, Elizabeth W., "Slover Avenue", in *Guideposts to History: Concerning Origins of Place and Street Names in San Bernardino County*, San Bernardino, 1976, np.
5. Rolle, Andrew F., "Isaac Slover", in Leroy H. Hafen, ed., *The Mountain Men and the Fur Trade of the Far West*, Vol. I, 1965, pp.367-373.

Periodicals

1. Alexander, Kyle, "History of Slover Mountain and Cement, Colton Courier, March 14, 1949.
2. Harley, R. Bruce, "Where Was Isaac Slover Buried?," *San Bernardino Valley Genealogical Society Valley Quarterly*, Vol. XXVIII, No. 2 (June 1991), pp. 55-56.
3. Ian A. Smith, "Isaac Slover-Free Hunter," *City*



Current map of the Agua Mansa area showing Slover Mountain and associated town sites.

KIT CARSON AND THE ROMANCE OF THE OLD SPANISH TRAIL

By Marc Simmons, Ph.D., Past President of the Santa Fe Trail Association [noted author and historian]

In my mind there is no question that Christopher “Kit” Carson was a romantic figure in the history of the American West. Lt. George Brewerton who accompanied Kit on a trip over the Old Spanish Trail in 1848 says as much in the book he wrote about their experiences. [1] Revisionists of the New Western History school, of course, will deny with their last breath that there was any romance associated with Carson’s career. They see him as a racist monster and wanton slayer of Indians, even though that view cannot be supported by historical evidence. [2] This morning I plan to present some of the evidence that will give a true picture of Kit and his trail travels.

I will also be contending that the history of the Old Spanish Trail (OST) was filled with romance. As an example, just consider the opening line of LeRoy and Ann Hafen’s classic book, *Old Spanish Trail, Santa Fe to Los Angeles*. They wrote; “The Old Spanish Trail was the longest, crookedest, most arduous pack mule route in the history of America.” As a romantic lead, that sentence is hard to beat. Perhaps that is why it is so often quoted. [3]

Those who already know something about the story of this historic trail might well question why I dare call it romantic. After all, journeys upon it were weighted with danger, hardship, discomfort, human suffering and tragedy. That sounds like an

enumeration in a chamber of horrors, so where is the romance?

The answer is certainly not an easy one. However, remember that people who used the OST in its heyday in the 1830s and 1840s thrived on challenges and danger. They were lured on by the romance of the open trail, and they craved any new adventure that might lie over the next mountain range or across the next desert. We today are so wedded to ease, convenience, and creature comforts that we can’t understand, or even imagine, how a jaunt over the perilous Old Spanish Trail could possibly be a romantic experience.

When the Hafens were describing the OST as the longest, crookedest, and most arduous pack mule route I believe they left out a superlative on their list of adjectives that should have been included. And it is this: The Old Spanish Trail, scenically, was without a doubt the most beautiful of our nation’s nineteenth century pioneer routes. While that is a subjective judgment on my part, probably most members of this Association would agree with me, especially if they have been out on significant portions of the trail. The earliest travelers saw this as spectacular and romantic country, its harshness notwithstanding, and much of it remains so to the present day.

The primary focus of my keynote

remarks this morning is the career of Kit Carson, especially as it relates to the history of the OST. It just so happens that Kit’s life as a frontiersman is closely tied to both the eastern and western ends of the Old Spanish Trail, that is, to New Mexico and California. So both states have a strong claim on his personal history.

Kit first landed in New Mexico in 1827, as a teenager who had run away from his apprenticeship with the Workman Saddlery in Franklin, Missouri at the head of the Santa Fe Trail. He soon gravitated to Taos, a place with which he would remain closely identified for the rest of his life. His ambition was to become a trapper, but as the mountain men would have put it, he needed “to add some tallow,” or gain weight and grow in experience. His break came in 1829 when veteran mountain man Ewing Young allowed Kit to join his company, which was preparing to set out on a two-year trapping expedition to California. By the time Young’s party returned to Taos in 1831, the youth had matured to become a full-fledged member in the fraternity of trappers.

After beaver hunting through the Rockies, Kit Carson brought in furs to sell at Taos during the summer of 1833. There by chance he met Captain Richard Bland Lee, on leave from the Army, who was preparing to carry trade goods to northern Utah and

exchange them for furs with trappers working there. Lee needed a few men to act as guides, hunters, and packers and one of those he engaged was Kit Carson. The party used Abiquiú as a staging and departure point.

In his memoirs, dictated in 1856, Kit declares; “We followed the Spanish Trail that leads to California till we struck White River . . .” [4] There is no evidence today that when Captain Lee made his journey in 1833, the route was known as the Spanish Trail. But twenty-three years later, when Carson recorded his memoirs, that term was in common usage. I bring this up because the origin and first use of the name Spanish Trail ought to be of considerable interest to us.

In his Keynote Address at OSTA’s Sixth National Conference in Las Vegas, Nevada last year, Dr. Joseph Sánchez reminded us that in the beginning the New Mexicans called this route, El Camino de California (The Road from California), whereas the natives on the West Coast, known as the Californios, spoke of it as El Camino de Santa Fé, or alternately as El Camino de Nuevo Mexico. [5]

Toward the latter 1830s, some of the Californios began referring to this route as El Camino de los Chaguanosos, best translated perhaps as The Horsethief Trail. That certainly has a romantic sound to it. Renegades who were ex-trappers, French-Canadians, New Mexicans, and Indians of assorted tribes would ride up the Old Spanish Trail and raid the vast livestock herds of California’s missions and ranchos. Collectively, these rustlers were designated as Chaguanosos, a word whose origins are obscure. Janet

Lecompte, however, plausibly suggests that it derived from the Hispanicized form of Shawnees, which became Shauanoos, and was afterward written Chaguanosos. At this period, displaced Shawnees from the Ohio Valley were engaged in these and other nefarious activities throughout the Far West. [6]



Dr. Marc Simmons, Keynote Speaker
Photograph courtesy of J.W. Coffman, 2000

Following his first venture over a part of the OST with Captain Lee in 1833 Kit did not return for a second ride until early 1844, his new experience providing a further bit of information on the trail’s naming. This was in connection, of course, with the Second Expedition of Exploration by John C. Frémont of the Corps of Topographical Engineers. For this well-planned enterprise, young Frémont hired several experienced frontiersmen as guides, among them Kit Carson, Alexander Godey, of French ancestry from St. Louis, and Lucien Maxwell, a figure whose career was closely linked to Taos.

Launched in 1843, this expedition went first to the Oregon country, then turned south to visit and re-supply at Sutter’s Fort in northern California, which was then Mexican territory. From there, Frémont pushed through rough country down to southern California where in his journal entry for April 18, 1844, he announced, “. . . we struck the great object of our search — THE SPANISH TRAIL -- which here was running directly north.” [7] He had reached the OST above Cajon Pass just before the trail began its bend to the east, descending the Mojave River Valley.

Since Frémont had not been in California before and he was searching for this route, it is clear his guides must have told him about it. Did they also identify it as the Spanish Trail, or did they possibly use some other designation and merely mention that they’d heard Spaniards long ago had traveled it? If the latter was the case, Frémont may have been prompted then and there to bestow the name Spanish Trail. Even had he first heard the term from Carson or one of his other western veterans, his use was to be definitive, since so far as we know, he first used the name in print, bringing it to the attention of the public.

That occurred in the next year, 1845, with publication of his journal as a U.S. Senate document. At once it was picked up and brought out in a popular edition by trade publishers, quickly reaching ten thousand copies sold. Americans on the East Coast were hungry to read reliable information on the Far West, while emigrants preparing to embark upon the Oregon Trail snapped up the book and carried it along as a guide. In turning Frémont’s

stirring pages, readers first saw the name Spanish Trail in print. The tacking on, a few years later, of the adjective “Old” gave it a bit more romantic luster.

Frémont had in mind to follow several hundred miles of the OST, as far as central Utah, before breaking off and taking another route back to his starting point in Missouri. As the party worked its way across the Mojave Desert, it encountered two New Mexican refugees -- a middle-aged man, Andres Fuentes, and a boy, Pablo Hernandez -- who were the only survivors of a small party from Santa Fé that had been massacred by Indians. These two had been out herding and managed to escape, driving the loose animals.

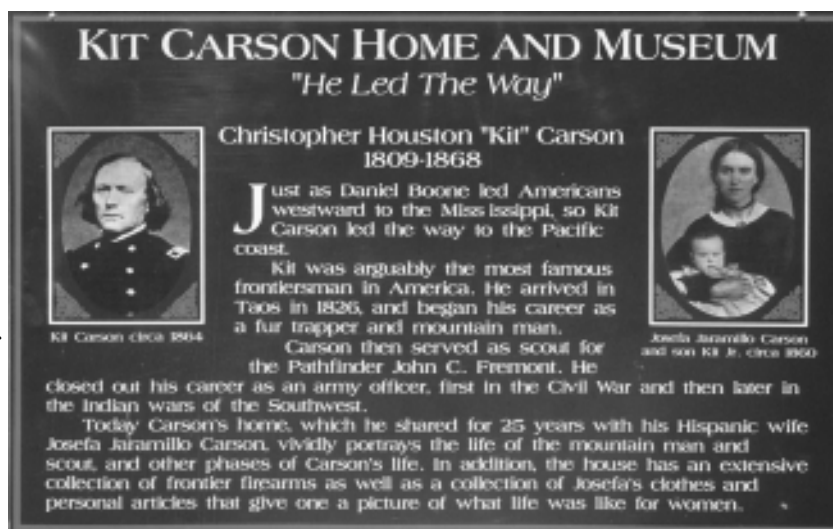
At the oasis of Bitter Spring, they left the horses and continued west until their chance meeting with the Americans.

The expedition reached Bitter Spring, only to discover that the stock had been driven off by the Indians. Carson and Godey promptly volunteered to go in pursuit and attempt a recovery. Upon their return a day and a half later, Frémont wrote dramatically in his journal: “This expedition of Carson and Godey may be considered among the boldest . . . in the annals of western adventure. Two men, in a savage desert, pursue day and night an unknown body of Indians . . . attack them on sight -- defeat them in an instant -- and for what? To punish the robbers of the desert and to avenge the wrongs of Mexicans whom they did not know. I

repeat: it was Carson and Godey who did this.” [8]

The recital of this thrilling episode on the OST was probably the very one, when published the next year, that launched Kit’s national reputation as a romantic and mythic frontiersman in the nature of James Fenimore Cooper’s

granted him a lieutenant’s commission in the Army. Polk also asked him to turn around and go back to the West Coast to deliver new dispatches to the U.S. military governor of California. Carson retraced the Santa Fe Trail on this journey, but once in New Mexico’s capital, he turned north to visit his home and wife in Taos.



Sign at Taos’ Carson Home

(Photo courtesy of C.W. Querfeld)

fictional heroes. Frémont’s extravagant praise of Kit caught the public imagination and within a short time he was recognized as a celebrity.

Two years later, Carson was back in California, participating in the Bear Flag Revolt, which led to United States annexation of the territory at the end of the Mexican War. In 1847 he was sent on a transcontinental courier mission to Washington, D.C., carrying military dispatches for the President and the War Department. On the trip east, he took the Gila Trail across southern Arizona to New Mexico and then he picked up the Santa Fe Trail, going horseback as far as Fort Leavenworth where he boarded a steamboat.

In Washington Kit delivered the mail and a grateful President James K. Polk

After a ten-day rest there, (well-earned) he and a 16-man protective escort rode out of Taos on the North Branch of the OST. As far as we know, this was the first time that Kit covered the entire length of the Old Spanish Trail. Of that 1100 mile trip, Taos to Los Angeles, he mentions in his memoirs only one small incident, described in a few lines. On the Muddy

River in Nevada, the party was surrounded and threatened by 300 hostile Indians. They may have been Southern Paiutes, or possibly Utes on their way to coastal California to rustle livestock. Through sheer bravado, Kit dispersed the Indians when they refused his order to withdraw.

There must have been other startling adventures on this long courier mission, and we sorely wish that some chronicler had been along to record them. After Kit arrived in Los Angeles and delivered his mail, he reported for military duty, since he was now a lieutenant. The governor assigned him to spend the winter in command of a detachment, guarding Cajon Pass on the OST. His instructions were to intercept thieves, Indians or others, who might be fleeing eastward with

stolen animals. As it happened, winter was the off-season for rustling, so Carson had very little to do. Still, here is another episode in his career that is linked to the Old Spanish Trail.

The year 1848 brings us to Kit Carson's grandest adventure of all on the Old Spanish Trail -- another courier mission cross-country to Washington, D.C. On this occasion, the 27-man escort included Lt. George Douglas Brewerton, a young man in his early twenties, a keen observer, and a budding writer and artist. And bless him! He left us one of the most detailed accounts of any traveler on the OST. It is filled with descriptions of marvelous experiences, and through his narration Kit and that old trail live again in the reader's mind.

Brewerton's story was first published serially in Harper's New Monthly Magazine between 1853 and 1862, and within a few years was forgotten. Not until 1930 were the chapters pulled from Harper's backfile and published as a book under the new title *Overland with Kit Carson*. [9] That volume soon went out-of-print and remained so until 1993 when the University of Nebraska Press released a handsome paperback edition. We can be ever so grateful that young Lt. Brewerton survived his trip over the Old Spanish Trail, because his book made a fine contribution to its history.

Incidentally, Kit's version of that 1848 courier mission with Brewerton runs to all of three measly paragraphs in his memoirs. Upon arriving in Missouri, eastbound, he gave an interview to a reporter for the St. Louis Republican. In its issue of August 4, 1848, the newspaper said this: "Mr. Kit Carson

bearer of dispatches from California arrived in the city this morning. He met with no adventure of any interest as far as Santa Fe!" We can be sure that is what Kit told the reporter in his usual modest way -- that nothing worthy of note had occurred during his crossing of the Old Spanish Trail. Incredible! From the same experience, Brewerton had seen enough of interest to produce an entire book.

So far as we know, after 1848 Carson never again traveled the OST all the way between California and New Mexico. Later however, he did use sections of both the North Branch and the South Branch from New Mexico into Colorado, and possibly even into Utah. That was during the 1850s and early 1860s when he served as Indian agent for the Utes, with the agency headquarters at his home in Taos. When the tribe was at peace, he would visit their camps, and when they were hostile, he would, accompany military expeditions that operated on parts of the Old Spanish Trail.

After service in the Civil War and the Indian Wars in New Mexico, Kit Carson died May 23, 1868 at Fort Lyon, Colorado on the mountain route of the Santa Fe Trail.

It is sometimes said that Kit Carson has been greatly overrated because there were other mountain men who had amazing careers, but never received proper recognition. The difference with Kit is that his main achievements came in the second half of his life, after his trapping period. He also had a good publicist in John C. Frémont, who admired him and gave

him large credit in his books. Another part of Carson's luck was that, being often in the right place at the right time, he took part in many major events in the history of the Far West. That circumstance kept him in the public eye.

But specifically, just why Kit emerged as a stellar player in western history can be attributed, I believe, to three of his personal qualities. They are his courage, his competence, and his character. The first two really define the third. To conclude, I wish to relate briefly a couple of incidents that happened to Kit when he was out on trails, because they illustrate his possession of these three virtues.

The first occurred in the spring of 1843, shortly after Carson had married Josefa Jaramillo and established their home in Taos. He was asked at that time to carry important letters to the fur trading post of Bent's Fort in southeastern Colorado. Mounted on a well-bred horse, Carson set out on that dangerous ride with a single companion, a native Taoseño, whom he fails to name in his memoirs. [10] The pair crossed the mountains east of Taos, dropped onto an open plain, and headed for the mouth of Raton Pass on the Santa Fe Trail. At one point they stopped to rest their horses. Suddenly the men caught sight of a Ute war party racing toward them. The Taoseño urged Carson to leave him and escape on his fast horse.

In his memoirs, Kit said: "I considered the advice very good and was about to mount my horse I when I thought how cowardly it would be for me to desert this man who had so willingly offered to sacrifice his life to save mine. Upon this

I changed my mind and told him that I would [stay and] die with him.” [11]

What loyalty, on the part of both men! As the warriors rode up and surrounded them, they stood back-to-back with their single-shot muzzleloaders each leveled at one of the leaders. Reported Carson: “They remained around us for about half an hour; then, seeing but little hope of being able to kill us without losing two of themselves, they left.” Strong character, buttressed by courage and competence, had saved the twosome.

The second incident I want to mention happened toward the end of Carson’s 1848 courier mission eastward over the OST with Lt. Brewerton. In the San Luis Valley, descending the North Branch above Taos, the exhausted mail party was pursued by 150 hostile Indians. Kit guided his companions into a copse of stunted trees where they tied their mules, then he arranged them in a skirmishers’ line. He next stepped forward, fully exposed, and began to harangue the enemy in their own language. According to Brewerton, “Carson’s whole demeanor was now so entirely changed that he looked like a different man. His eyes fairly flashed, and his rifle was grasped with all the energy of an iron will.” And the lieutenant added that Kit knew “boldness alone could save us.” [12]

Just when it appeared that the Indians were making ready to ride the whitemen down, one of their scouts dashed up from the south on a lathered horse and imparted some important news. The warriors began to fall back and retreat, so Carson ordered his men to mount and ride as fast as possible down the trail toward Taos. At the first

small settlement encountered, they learned that a large body of volunteers had taken the field against this very band of Indians and it was word of its approach that had been brought by the scout. “In that lay the secret of our almost miraculous escape,” explained Brewerton. [13]

An added factor, of course, was Kit’s courage and boldness, as evidenced by his brazen haranguing of the Indians. Major Edward Wynkoop, who served with Carson in the Civil War, stated: “Kit Carson knew how to lead men into battle and to keep them there.” [14] It is plain that courage, competence, and character shaped the configuration of his life.

Psychologist Carl Jung once said: “Ultimately everything depends on the quality of the individual. [15] If that statement is true, as I believe it is, then Carson should be recognized as a man of quality. Those of us attending this conference ought, to be glad that the career of this romantic nineteenth century figure, Christopher Carson, intersected at various points with the ROMANCE OF THE OLD SPANISH TRAIL.

ENDNOTES

1. *Overland With Kit Carson* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993).
2. On this view, see, Marc Simmons, “Kit and the Indians,” in R.C. Gordon-McCutchan, ed., *Kit Carson, Indian Fighter or Indian Killer?* (Niwot: University Press of Colorado, 1996), pp. 73-75.
3. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993), p. 21.
4. Milo Milton Quaife, ed., *Kit Carson’s Autobiography* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, n.d.), p. 35.
5. See, *Spanish Traces* (Fall, 1999), p. 12.

6. Janet Lecompte, “Jean-Baptiste Chalifoux,” in Leroy R. Hafen, ed., *French Fur Traders and Voyageurs in the American West* (Spokane: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1995), p. 66.

7. John C. Frémont, *Report of the Exploring Expedition to the Rocky Mountains* (Washington: Gales and Seaton, 1845), p. 263.

8. Frémont, *Report*, p. 263.

9. The publisher was Coward-McCann, Inc. of New York. Stallo Vinton contributed an Introduction.

10. Following this presentation, an OSTA member, Pat Richmond, suggested to the speaker that Kit’s unidentified companion may well have been the Taos-born mountain man Mariano Medina (or Modina). That speculation seems highly plausible.

11. Quaife, *Kit Carson’s Autobiography*, p. 72.

12. Brewerton, *Overland With Kit Carson*, p. 140.

13. *Overland with Kit Carson*, p. 142.

14. *Santa Fe Daily New Mexican*, Feb. 24, 1886.

15. Quoted in Simmons, “Kit and the Indians,” p. 87.



John Carson, great-great grandson of Kit Carson attended the OSTA meeting in Taos on June 9, 2000

(Photo courtesy of John W. Coffman)

William Workman (1799-1876):

An Englishman's Place in the History of the American West

By John Sharpe
Clifton, Cumbria, England

(This article is an outline of the presentation made at the annual meeting at the OSTA Conference in Taos, New Mexico, in June 2000)

Preface

In June 1995, I was approached by two distinguished Americans for help in tracing their ancestry at my home village of Clifton in the north of England. They had already unearthed a lot about their English family history, but fundamental questions remained. When exactly did their great-grandfather and his younger brother leave Clifton for the New World? What capital did they have? What was its source? Can we know more about the family background, particularly their father?

My ready acceptance of the challenge was founded on some ten years' experience in the field of local history; and my interest in this case was fuelled by emerging references to legendary figures like 'Kit' Carson, 'Pathfinder' Fremont and Brigham Young, along with talk of the Santa Fe Trail, Alcatraz Island and the California Gold Rush.

Eventual resolution of the English background issues heightened my curiosity about the transatlantic continuation of the story; for these early 19th century pioneers had gone halfway round the world in an age when ordinary people lived and died within a few

miles of their birthplace. How was it that two sons of a country glazier could do all this? The five-year quest led from the archive collections of Cumbria to the Pacific coast of California and revealed an astonishing saga of pioneering enterprise in the American West, a drama of epic proportions with its origins at an English village.

William Workman

William Workman lived at Taos, New Mexico, from 1825 to 1841. He prospered as a distiller, fur trapper and frontier trader until political problems precipitated his departure over the Old Spanish Trail for California, where he was successful in all his business ventures except the last. William was a close associate of Charles Bent, first civil governor of New Mexico under US rule. Just a few days separated the two men's birth dates, but their backgrounds were very different.

The Background

William Workman was born near the village of Clifton, Westmorland county, in the north of England, on 15 November 1799, the second of three sons of Thomas Workman, glazier, and his wife Lucy.



William (Don Julián) Workman, 1851

Thomas Workman was no ordinary artisan. By the age of 30 in 1794, he had left the family farm at Clifton, travelled the length and breadth of the country, and married in London, only returning to the north on coming into a substantial inheritance from a wealthy uncle at Clifton. In 1814 Thomas Workman raised capital on his inherited properties to provide a trust fund of £800 (a very large sum of money at the time) for eventual distribution between his three young sons.

On reaching the age of 21 in 1818, the eldest son David, who had been apprenticed to a saddler, took an advance of £100 from the trust fund and left home, re-appearing the following year over 4,000 miles away at Franklin on the US frontier in the territory of Missouri, where he went into business as a saddler. In 1821 Missouri became a State of the Union and William Becknell inaugurated the Santa Fe Trail, with Mexico's independence from Spain. The opportunities were there for people with capital.

By early 1822 David was back home at Clifton in England where he drew the rest of his share of the original £800

trust fund. By now aged 22, his younger brother William was given his full share of just over £266 and both young men left for the US, landing at Philadelphia on 3 September 1822 and reaching Franklin by early the next year.

Business by this time was booming in the little town, and in 1824 the Workman brothers took on a young apprentice at their saddlery. His name was Kit Carson, and he was aged 14.

Notice is hereby given to all persons,

That Christopher Carson, a boy about 16 years old, small of his age but thick-set; light hair, ran away from the subscriber, living in Franklin, Howard County, Missouri, to whom he had been bound to learn the saddler's trade, on or about the first of September last. He is supposed to have made his way to the upper part of the state. All persons are notified not to harbor, support, or assist said boy under the penalty of the law. One cent reward will be given to any person who will bring back the said boy.

Franklin, Oct. 6, 1826
DAVID WORKMAN

**Notice in the 'Missouri
Intelligencer'**

New Mexico

In 1825 William Workman took the Santa Fe Trail to New Mexico, northern outpost of the Republic of Mexico, and settled at the small town of Taos in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. He was soon in business making Taos Lightnin', the aguardiente (fire-water) that was the favourite brew of the local

mountain men. By 1827 he had become a fur trapper, joining an expedition to the Gila river area with such notable mountain men as George Yount and James Ohio Pattie.

Meanwhile, back in Missouri, spirited young apprentice Kit had also deserted the shop and followed William west to Taos, thereby launching himself on his legendary career as a frontiersman and scout. David Workman publicized the runaway's departure and posted a reward for his return—of one cent!

Ever enterprising, William in 1828 was received into the Catholic faith by colourful Padre Antonio Martinez of Taos and became a naturalized Mexican. He took up with a local young lady called Nicolasa Urioste who bore him a daughter and a son by 1833. He went into business with John Rowland, running a mill and general store, while keeping an interest in the lucrative fur trade and distilling operation.

Partners Workman and Rowland had never shown a lot of respect for the niceties of Mexican law, and in 1837 they were charged with smuggling. Soon afterwards a major insurrection occurred that led to the violent deaths of the state governor and the judge in the Workman/Rowland case, and the proceedings against them were not pursued. But it was a foretaste of problems to come.

Early in 1840 William Workman and John Rowland were named by President Lamar of neighbouring Texas as his agents in New Mexico. Workman and Charles Bent were accused of complicity with the Texans in their supposed designs on New Mexico, and in 1841 a Mexican official claimed

that Workman was involved in a conspiracy to assassinate state governor Armijo. It was time to leave New Mexico.

The Old Spanish Trail

The place to be by now was sunny California, with its reputed cheap land and willing pool of native labour. Connecting the Mexican territories of New Mexico and California was the Old Spanish Trail —“the longest, crookedest, most arduous pack mule route in the history of America.” The circuitous track that skirted to the north around Apache territory and the mighty Colorado river was to be Workman and Rowland's 1200 mile escape route to the far West.

Under the leadership of the two partners, a large party of like-minded people assembled at Abiquiú in northern New Mexico early in September 1841 and set off to the north-west. Just a few days later Governor Armijo wrote to Mexico City about the “naturalized foreigners, Juan Rowland and Julián * Workman, traitors who have gone to the Californias to seduce and confuse its inhabitants, whose immediate exemplary punishment would be the only stop to the torrent of evils they have committed in this department under my command, and will be the ones which undoubtedly they will commit in the Californias.” (*William's name when on Mexican territory)

The two-month trek passed off without major incident, although one prominent member of the party was targeted by an Indian with a gun while fishing on the river Sevier in Utah, and another recalled that they “suffered great hardships and got into tight pinches for

food and water,” while doubtless his heartfelt comment that “I never want to cross those harsh deserts and big mountains again, except on the railroad” would have found universal favour among his fellow travellers.

But the party made it and on 5 November 1841 arrived at Mission San Gabriel, a few miles from the little Mexican Pueblo de los Angeles. The Workman/Rowland Party was the first settler group of any real size to enter southern California by an eastern land route. Despite the circumstances of their departure from New Mexico, they met no opposition in this other outpost of Mexico.

California

The arrival in southern California of the Workman/Rowland expedition coincided with that of the Bidwell/Bartleson party in the north of the state to herald the start of an era of turbulent change for Mexican California. Apart from its two leaders, the Old Spanish Trail party included influential people like Manuel Vaca, who gave his name to Vacaville near San Francisco, Lorenzo Trujillo, founder of the Agua Mansa religious community in southern California, and Benjamin D. Wilson, first mayor of Los Angeles, a state senator, eminent agriculturist and rancher.

A \$1,000 deposit with Governor Alvarado secured Workman and Rowland an 18,000 acre land grant at La Puente near Mission San Gabriel, and the pair soon established farming and ranching interests. But trouble was not far off. Alvarado was replaced by a new governor called Micheltorena, whose unpopularity led to the emergence of a rival named Pio Pico, and the result was an armed confrontation

outside Los Angeles in February 1845 in which Micheltorena ceded defeat.

Pio Pico’s non-Mexican contingent in the battle had been led by William Workman. The La Puente land grant was enlarged to nearly 50,000 acres, augmented soon after by a grant of land attached to the nearby Mission San Gabriel and other pieces of real estate including a 12 acre rock 400 miles away in San Francisco harbour called Alcatraz.

Civil war again seemed imminent in California, and William Workman took command of all of Governor Pico’s forces in the Los Angeles area; but internal divisions were forgotten in the light of events in the north of the state.

On 14 June 1846 - just 6 days after William got his name on the land grant of Alcatraz Island - American settlers at Sonoma near San Francisco revolted and declared a Californian republic. US Lt. J.C. (‘Pathfinder’) Frémont appeared on the scene with Kit Carson and a party of American soldiers and adventurers and took charge of the action. The US/Mexican War had started. At Monterey in July 1846 Commodore Robert Stockton claimed



John C. Frémont

Frémont is the damndest scoundrel who ever lived, but in the infinite mercy of Providence, also the damndest fool.

Abraham Lincoln

California for the United States and named Frémont governor of the state, advancing him to the rank of lieutenant colonel. William Workman set out to sell Alcatraz to Frémont, but a problem arose. General Stephen Kearny arrived a few months later, ordering Frémont to stand down as governor and disband his company of soldiers. Frémont refused and was soon on his way to Washington charged with disobedience to orders and mutiny. Alcatraz was eventually taken over by the US military as their first fort on the west coast.

The battle for supremacy in the south of the state went on for another six months, and Workman was heavily

involved there. He took up arms to free a group of American settlers* who had been imprisoned by native Californians; he arranged an amnesty with Commodore Stockton in early January 1847 for Mexicans fighting the Americans; and a few days later he brought the flag of truce after the final battle near Los Angeles, brokering the surrender of the town against a guarantee of local property rights.

*(*Numbering around 20, they included prominent people like John Rowland and B. D. Wilson who were in fear of their lives. Wilson, incidentally, through a daughter, was to be grandfather of Gen. G. S. Patton, most colourful US commander of World War II.)*

The US/Mexican War ended on 2 February 1848. Just a few days earlier, gold had been discovered in California and by early 1849 the Gold Rush was under way. Rancher William Workman made a fortune selling meat to the hungry miners.

California became a State of the Union in September 1850. Soon afterwards William left Los Angeles on a phenomenal journey that was to take him via

Vera Cruz, New York and London to his old English home at Clifton that he had left nearly 30 years earlier. What a story he must have had to tell the brother and sister who were all that remained of his family in England! William visited London's Great Exhibition of 1851.

Back in California, he was joined at La Puente by his brother David and family from Missouri, but David was killed accidentally in 1855 in northern California while driving livestock to the goldfields.

Los Angeles in the 1850s was a tough cowtown with a reputation for lawlessness. Eighteen miles to the east William Workman prospered at Rancho La Puente, his interests including cattle, horses, wheat, grapes and cotton. The 1860s began with floods and a drought, but William fared better than most through diversification into general farming, being able to renovate his home and build a mill and wineries.

In 1868 William joined his son-in-law F.P.F. Temple and a man named Hellman in opening Los Angeles's second bank. Hellman eventually withdrew, but

problems, and the Bank collapsed early in 1876. Bankrupt and faced with the loss of his beloved Rancho La Puente, William Workman committed suicide on 17 May 1876.

The Workman Legacy

The 1845 wedding of William Workman's daughter Antonia Margarita and F.P.F. Temple at the old plaza church in Los Angeles was the first recorded in southern California where both parties had Anglo surnames. After years of adversity following the collapse of the Bank, William's grandson Walter Temple struck oil on his small property holding and used massive profits to buy back the old Workman homestead and embark on ambitious projects in the LA area including founding Temple City. But this was the 1920s and all was lost in the Wall Street Crash.

William's two nephews Elijah and William Henry Workman (sons of his brother David) were prominent in public affairs in Los Angeles, the latter founding Boyle Heights in 1876 and being Mayor of the city in 1887 and 1888. William Henry's daughter Mary Julia had a conspicuous public presence, and his grandson David is currently a Judge of the Superior Court of Los Angeles. These four descendants of the original US emigrant David have all followed William in visiting the old Workman family home at the village of Clifton in England.

William's old home on Rancho La Puente is preserved at the Workman & Temple Family Homestead Museum on Don Julian Road in LA county. The town of La Puente is nearby, and the Workman name is prominent on streets, schools and medical facilities in



1830 Map of Northern England.

the venture continued as the Temple and Workman Bank. While Temple was said to have adopted an over-liberal lending policy, national and local economic factors combined to cause serious

the area. William's mortal remains lie in the mausoleum at the Homestead Museum beside those of his brother David and old friend Pio Pico, last governor of Mexican California.

Conclusions

Blessed with a well-travelled father who came into the means to indulge his parental generosity - and a remarkably adventurous older brother - William Workman was an infinitely enterprising Englishman with extraordinary qualities of leadership who played a major part in the early development of Los Angeles. But if it was his adopted nation's Manifest Destiny to spread right across a vast continent from the Atlantic to the Pacific, then how many made a bigger contribution to that process than William Workman?

He was a hard man who was not always on the right side of the law (such as it was) in tough times, but his was the stuff that made America.

About the author...

John Sharpe has lived at Clifton since 1985. He has found that the village has produced some remarkable people - like William Workman - who have gone on from modest beginnings to great things elsewhere while the local connection has been forgotten.

He has spent five years researching the Workman story from the background in England to the climax in California, and his biography of William is now in final draft form. The above summary is an outline of the presentation made at the annual conference of the Old Spanish Trail Association in Taos, New Mexico, in June 2000.

(Presented at the OSTA Seventh National Conference in Taos, New Mexico, June 10, 2000)

Four Legs Over and Four Legs Back on the Trails to California

By Dr. Dorothy R. Parker

The Old Spanish Trail to California was not like the Mormon Trail that guided the followers of Brigham Young to Utah, nor was it like that other trail followed by sturdy pioneers who hoped to settle in the lush Willamette Valley in Oregon. The Mormon Trail and the Emigrant Trail were followed by families from the eastern United States who planned to settle in a new country and establish a new life. The Old Spanish Trail, which in fact was neither old nor Spanish, was not primarily an emigrant trail at all, although some of those who used it did eventually settle in California. It was essentially a trade route, a western extension of the Old Santa Fe Trail that, from 1821 to 1880, brought American manufactured goods to Santa Fé from the eastern United States.

The "why" and "wherefore" of the Old Spanish Trail makes sense primarily in the larger context of the history of New Spain and New Mexico, so let's begin by looking briefly at New Mexico's economy in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. As most European countries did almost from the beginning of their colonial periods, Spain had maintained what was known as a mercantilist trade policy, permitting its colonies to trade only within the Spanish empire itself. All items imported into New Mexico, whether from New Spain, Europe, or the Philippines, had to pass through Mexico first before being shipped north along the Camino Real. Items imported to that far north-

ern territory thus were very scarce, very expensive, and often of poor quality.

Further aggravating the trade issue was the fact that New Mexicans had few products to exchange for manufactured items and there was almost no processing of goods for export. While there was a demand for woven woolen goods in the mining areas of northern New Spain, in the eighteenth century the settlers were unable to produce a surplus of textiles for export, and there were times when they themselves went without adequate clothing.

The problem was not lack of enterprise; there were people up and down the Río Grande who were aware of the potential for trade. But continuing attacks by marauding Navajo and Apache Indians had decimated the flocks and herds of the settlers, and discouraged horse and mule breeding to the point where there was a critical shortage of draft animals, which were not infrequently imported from Chihuahua and Durango. There was little incentive to increase the numbers of animals, only to have them stolen.

By the end of the eighteenth century, thanks in part to the Comanche Peace established by Juan Bautista de Anza in the 1780s, New Mexico's settlers were feeling more secure. Some of the more enterprising ranchers of the Río Abajo area south of Albuquerque even began to apply for land grants to the east

along the Canadian River and to the west in the Río Puerco watershed. These people had begun to develop trade connections with mercantile interests to the south and had accumulated some capital for expansion of their sheep holdings. They scattered their flocks to make them less vulnerable to Indian raids, and hired local men on shares as herders. This formalized “partido system” theoretically provided the herders, who were known as partidarios, with an opportunity to build their own flocks, as it was agreed that they should keep a percentage of newborns each year as payment for their services. Rarely, however, did these shepherds participate in the long-term benefits of trade with New Spain.

Although few New Mexico merchants never experienced a favorable balance of trade with New Spain, by 1821 some sheep ranchers enjoyed a well-developed exporting business and they formed the nucleus of a small group of relatively well-to-do families. Among them were the Ortiz, Pino, Perea, Chaves, Sandoval, Armijo, Yrissari, and later the Salazar clans. Baxter quotes the following from a New Mexico assessor’s report: “The New Mexicans also carry on an active trade with neighboring states, so that they export annually their flocks of wethers, hides, piñon nuts, coarse woolen goods, tobacco and other articles which they sell at good prices. There are individuals who have contracts in Durango under which they deliver annually fifteen thousand or more wethers a small number of persons have monopolized the trade in wethers, and so it must not be considered as beneficial [to the overall economy] as that carried on in hides,

coarse woolen goods, etc., which is well distributed among all classes in New Mexico, especially the lowest and middle classes.”

Herding thousands of sheep over hundreds of miles, through difficult and challenging terrain, required careful planning, and ranchers most often used the practical experience of the partidarios on the trail. These men gathered their sheep together in late summer or early fall for the drive south, when water holes along the Camino Real were more apt to be filled. These were churro sheep, hardy little animals that could survive even on morning dew and succulent plants along the trail. An average carcass weighed only seventeen pounds, and an average fleece, coarse and long stapled, only a bit over a pound. (The churro had been replaced in Spain years before by the more exotic merino breed, which increased rapidly, but the merinos’ meat was not as good as the churros’ and they were less durable on long trail drives.)

There were numerous dangers along the way such as poisonous plants, bad water (or none), Indian attacks, epidemic animal diseases, a sometimes-glutted market in Chihuahua or Durango, and after 1836 raiders from Texas. There were also various taxes, licenses, and other regulations imposed by the Mexican government that had to be procured and obeyed. But despite the obstacles, the breeders drove their sheep south for consumption in the Zacatecas and Santa Barbara silver mines, and over the years they established important commercial ties with Mexican financial interests in Chihuahua and Durango. Mariano Chaves y Castillo seems to have driven

the largest flock, some 30,000 animals, to Mexico in 1832. For the most part, the sheep breeders controlled what little currency flowed north to New Mexico, and the settlers there, whose economy was based primarily on barter, had little money for imported goods.

Let me interject here a couple of other related notes. Wethers are neutered rams, and at various times they were the only sheep whose export was permitted. This was because in the late eighteenth century the Spanish government was trying to develop native industry in New Mexico and sought to protect the breeding stock. Because of the nature of the business, however, with contracts being made between growers and merchants in Durango and Chihuahua sometimes several years in advance, growers would on occasion attempt to pad their shipments with ewes. Traditionally, ewes had their tails docked to facilitate breeding, but it was not uncommon for growers to leave the tails of their ewes long so that, without a close inspection, it was impossible to tell them from legitimate wethers. And not only did the government attempt to encourage the sheep industry by forbidding the export of breeding stock, it also arranged in the late 1700s for skilled weavers to go to New Mexico as teachers. Prior to that time, most woven goods that were made for export were coarse and of inferior quality. At least two men, the Bazan brothers, are known to have arrived in Santa Fe as teachers in 1807, and they apparently stayed for several years, but it is impossible to assess the impact of their visit.

So far, as you have probably noticed, my story has to do only with the

four-legged sheep moving south, and you thought I was going to tell you about some four-legged critters going west to California. Well, I am, but I want you to get the whole picture, which means we have to consider still another series of events that was taking place in the northern territories of New Spain during this same time period. That was the settlement of Spanish California, Alta California that began with the founding of the mission at San Diego in 1769. The chain of missions along the California coast, first established by Father Serra and completed in 1824, needed supplies, personnel, and military protection, but contrary ocean currents and coastal winds made provision from the south by sea quite impracticable. So Spain began to explore the possibility of overland trade routes to California across the desert from Sonora (in northern Mexico) as well as from Santa Fé.

The desert country and hostile Indian tribes thwarted such attempts for fifty years, but two expeditions, both in 1776, explored parts of what would later become the Old Spanish Trail. Francisco Garcés, the intrepid Franciscan who had accompanied Juan Bautista de Anza to San Francisco in 1775 made his way east from southern California across the Mojave Desert to the Hopi villages in New Mexico before returning to Sonora. Garcés barely missed contact with another Franciscan party led by Francisco Atanasio Domínguez and Silvestre Vélez de Escalante that was preparing to travel west from Santa Fe to California at the same time. Like Garcés, they too visited the Hopi villages, and they too turned back. While it would be another fifty years before a practical route was established across the

deserts of the Southwest, it was the difficulty of the terrain, not its unknown geography, that became the great challenge, and from the 1770s on, segments of what finally became known as the Old Spanish Trail appear on some of the early maps.

The first officially authorized expedition from New Mexico that traveled the entire distance overland to California from New Mexico left Abiquiú with the blessing of Governor Jose Chavez in November 1829. It was headed for San Gabriel Mission in the Los Angeles basin. Led by Antonio Armijo, sixty or so men loaded their pack animals with serapes and other woolen textiles, which they hoped to trade for mules bred at the California Missions. They also anticipated returning with a few luxury items such as Chinese silk, which from time to time was brought to California from the orient on Spanish galleons.

The journey was exceedingly difficult. The men and animals moved north, up the Chama River, and crossed the Colorado River at a ford known at that time as the Crossing of the Fathers, because it had been discovered by the Domínguez and Escalante in 1776. (Now it is under water behind Glen Canyon Dam.) From this point on, their precise route is not known, but they had succeeded in bypassing the Grand Canyon. After leaving the Colorado River, they headed toward the southwest, eventually crossing the Mojave Desert and traversing what is now called Cajon Pass, to arrive at San Gabriel Mission on March 31, 1830. The trek had taken almost five months. Their return to New Mexico, with mules and merchandise, took somewhat less time.

Now that a practical land route had been established, albeit tenuously, the Mexican government encouraged further exploration and trade. But it was an American fur trapper, William Wolfskill, who apparently made the next round trip from New Mexico in 1830-31, and on a later expedition he decided to make his home in California, along with George Yount and five others. David Jackson, who went to California with Wolfskill as part of the 1830 expedition, was eager to find a less difficult trail, and he returned to New Mexico in 1832 via a more southerly route. He and some others of the Wolfskill party crossed the Colorado River at Yuma, traveled east along the Gila, crossed the Continental Divide, moved east to the Rio Grande, then headed north. They accomplished this while driving six hundred mules and one hundred horses!

Perhaps something should be said here about the growing importance of mules in this long-distance exchange of goods. Remember that by the 1830s, trade along the Santa Fe Trail from the eastern United States had become more or less routine, and some of the American merchants, returning to the east, had discovered a lucrative market for the mules they brought back with them. Burgeoning cotton agriculture in the south was creating a huge demand for the sturdy animals.

In addition, the United States army was entering into a long and exhausting campaign against the Seminoles in Florida (1835-1842). This was the first time the U.S. army had been faced with the problem of transporting men and supplies to a battle front. Roads and railroads did not exist, of course, and it was the mule that was called upon to

supply the necessary transport. Mules were invaluable for pulling wagons and as pack animals, as they would follow a lead animal without being harnessed. Large mules were also used for riding, and many officers preferred them to horses.

But the mules preferred by the U.S. army were relatively scarce. The mule, a crossbreed between a horse and a jackass, is an infertile animal, so natural increase, while certainly desirable, was not possible. Mexican mules, valued for their use in the silver mines, traditionally resulted from the mating of a jackass mare, or jenny, and a male horse, or stallion, and their offspring, called hinnies, were generally rather small animals that were ideal for loading and unloading as part of a pack train. In California, however, a larger animal had been developed by mating a male jackass, or jack, with a mare. This mating produced the well-known and much larger mule. The mule generally had the head, ears, bone structure, and sure-footedness of the ass, coupled with the height and body of the horse, and was stronger and more agile than either parent. The U.S. army put both large and small animal to good use, and New Mexicans were quite willing to get as many as possible, of both hinnies and mules, either by purchase or by theft, from California breeders.

Now we need to look at still another historical element of this developing trade. California mules were primarily bred in the Franciscan missions. By the 1830s, however, those missions were being secularized, or dissolved, and theoretically, at least, their properties divided among their Indian charges, who were also being released. Some of those mission Indians retreated to the

inland areas where the Spanish had never colonized, but many others were drifting, often with few skills, without work, and without homes. Traders from New Mexico were quick to take advantage of this homeless native population and incite them to steal horses and mules, often providing them with liquor in exchange for their efforts. As early as 1832, Mission San Miguel reported the theft of many horses and 108 mules, and officials began to complain to Mexico City and the governor in Santa Fé for redress. In response, a licensing system was put into effect that slowed, although it did not stop, the thievery.

It wasn't long before trade along the Old Spanish Trail became relatively routine. In 1834, Jose Arvieta set out a load of with 1,645 serapes and five hundred other textiles of various kinds, which he traded in California for horses and mules. Caravans left for California annually after that, and American merchants, who had established a presence in Santa Fé after the Santa Fe Trail was opened in 1821, participated as well as New Mexicans. For instance, in 1842 there were 200 men in one caravan, including sixty or more who were identified as North Americans, meaning from the United States. In addition to woolen textiles, the list of trade items had expanded to include beaver skins and buffalo robes from the mountains and plains, abalone shells from California that were prized by various native peoples for bead-making, and sometimes Indian children, who were acquired by trade with Ute and Navaho bands along the way. Children were often traded from indigent desert tribes; there seemed to be a market for them in both New Mexico and California. This unsavory

trade inevitably contributed to inter-tribal conflicts and led to retributions and attacks on wagon trains along the way.

These trade patterns were well-organized by 1846, when hostilities broke out between the United States and Mexico. Kit Carson, who earlier had covered some of the territory with John C. Frémont, was known for his ability to negotiate with the various native tribes, and he accompanied some of the caravans as guide. Carson was returning to New Mexico from California in 1848 with George Brewerton and twenty-eight other men when he met, and passed on the trail, what may have been the last of the traders' caravans on its return trip to Santa Fé. For by that time the war with Mexico had disrupted many of the old economic patterns. New Mexico sheep growers, who for many years had driven their animals down the Camino Real to market in Mexico, were also forced to abandon that trade. However, the sheep continued to multiply, and growers were faced with the need to develop new markets.

Once again, however, a convergence of events brought unexpected opportunity. In 1848 gold was discovered in California, and by the next spring the "Gold Rush" was gathering momentum. A small party of "49ers," led by a man known only as Roberts, stopped briefly in New Mexico on their way to the gold fields, and they bought five hundred sheep for \$250, or fifty cents a head. The men herded the sheep to California along the southern Gila River route, part of which had been explored by David Jackson in the 1830s and, more recently, by the Mormon Battalion in 1846-47. Roberts' purchase

proved to be gold of another color - he and his men sold the sheep for \$8,000! Those miners had really struck gold.

It wasn't long before word spread along the Río Grande of the potential new market for New Mexico's sheep, but at first local ranchers were uneasy about taking the risk. They were familiar with their old markets in Mexico and Los Angeles, but how were they to deal with the Americans who were now in charge in California? There were legal problems and a foreign language to cope with, along with new taxes and a strange currency. American merchants who had settled in New Mexico, however, were less hesitant than the local ranchers. Even if profits were somewhat less than rumored, they began to buy sheep from the growers and hire men who could drive them to California. They would take the sheep themselves, on the hoof, rather than woolen textiles, because sheep would feed hungry miners, and they would bring back not mules but gold!

At first, some of the sheep heading for California were driven north from Abiquiú over the Old Spanish Trail, but that route was not the only one used. Other flocks were driven south along the Río Grande to La Joya, which had long been the gathering place for sheep being driven into Mexico. They crossed the river in the Socorro area, then headed southwest, crossed the Continental Divide, went almost due south to Guadalupe Pass, then traveled west and northwest toward Tucson and the Pima villages on the Gila River, in what is now Arizona. Descending to the mouth of the Gila, they crossed the Colorado at Yuma, aided by an enterprising gentleman named Louis John

Frederick Jaeger, who operated a crude ferry and charged twenty-five cents a head. (Jaeger's ferry operated, with some improvements, until the railroad crossed the Colorado at Yuma in 1879.) From Yuma they still had to cross the southern Mojave Desert to get to Mission San Gabriel. This route, while somewhat shorter than the route from Abiquiú, was every bit as difficult.

Although a number of sheep were driven from New Mexico and Mexico to California along the southern Mormon Trail in late 1849, the first really large number, some six thousand head, was driven over the Old Spanish Trail in 1850 by William Angney, a business acquaintance of Manuel Alvarez. As Angney neared San Francisco with his sheep, he wrote to Alvarez, "You see we are near the market and beyond all danger, with the prospect of being well-remunerated for our time, risk, and sufferings ... Sheep are the first article of merchandise in California, and the market cannot be glutted. The mines... are still productive, business brisk and prices high." Although profits of the drive were less than expected, Angney remained involved in the sheep trade for several more years.

Another of Alvarez's associates was Francis Xavier Aubry, a Frenchman from Canada and a veteran trader and freighter on the Old Santa Fé Trail. Like Angney, Aubry was a well-known figure in Santa Fé. While Angney was busy gathering sheep for that first big drive to California in 1850, Aubry was making news by traveling from Independence, Missouri to Santa Fé, a distance of seven hundred and fifty miles, in five days and sixteen hours. For that feat he won \$10,000 and the soubriquet of "Skimmer of the Plains."

Angney and Aubry were at times fierce competitors for various aspects of Alvarez's business, and it wasn't long before Aubry, too, entered the sheep trade. In 1852 he took 5,000 sheep, ten big wagons (filled with trade goods?), and 100 mules along a modified southern route to the new Mormon settlement at San Bernardino. This route, established by the Mormon Battalion, was much preferred for wagons. Aubry culled his flocks in San Bernardino before taking the remaining animals north to San Francisco, and there he sold them for \$10 a head, along with the mules and wagons. It is interesting to note that by this time, mules were being sought by the miners in California and some were being purchased from New Mexicans. Aubry made a tremendous profit on this trip, and he immediately began putting together another drive for the following year.

Two other parties also traveled to California in 1852. One, organized by "Uncle Dick" Wooten and Jesse Turley (brother of Simeon Turley, of Taos Lightning fame, who was killed during the Taos revolt of 1847), involved twenty-two men who drove 9,000 sheep over part of the Old Spanish Trail. They went north out of Abiquiú, but instead of turning south toward Los Angeles they crossed the Sierra Nevada at Donner Pass, thus arriving at the heart of the gold country and earning \$8.75 per animal for their trouble. The third party in 1852, however, marked a change.

As you may have noticed, for the first few years, the movement of sheep from New Mexico to California seems to have been organized by American merchants. These men were familiar

with the new mercantile practices being introduced in California (which had become a state in 1850) and they had experience with banks, credit, and the legal system that had quickly replaced the Mexican trade patterns of earlier years. New Mexicans had remained cautious for a year or two about adopting American business practices

But the third party in 1852, with 25,000 sheep, was led by a group of New Mexican sheep-growers, namely from the Luna, Armijo, and Otero families. Although their sheep sold for only \$5.50 a head, they realized a substantial profit of \$70,000, because they already owned the sheep they did not have to buy their inventory! Here, finally, New Mexico growers had found a market for their sheep that more than compensated for the loss of their old Mexican markets. They were in the business to stay.

Perhaps the largest of the sheep drives took place the following year, in 1853. Kit Carson and Lucien Maxwell were returning from another drive to California, in which they had taken their sheep even farther north, from New Mexico to Fort Laramie, South Pass, then still further west, finally to follow Wooton's and Turley's route across Donner Pass to Sacramento. Carson and Maxwell decided to return via the southern, or Gila, route, and along the way they encountered several huge flocks of animals. One, coming from Chihuahua, Mexico, numbered 35,000, while another, apparently organized by Francis Aubry, consisted of almost 50,000 sheep!

Aubry had profited from his connection with Alvarez and had collected sheep from some of the largest of the New

Mexico ranchers. He was joined on the trail by Nicolas Pino, Francisco Perea, and Judge Jose Antonio Otero. Because the judge had anticipated the cost as well as the long delay in moving such vast numbers of animals across the Colorado River on Jaeger's ferry, he had actually brought along his own boat! He launched it upstream of the ferry crossing, drifted it downstream to Jaeger's crossing, and traded it to him for free passage of the 50,000 sheep!

It is not surprising that the largest of the drives to California apparently followed the more southern route. The largest growers were from the Rio Abajo area of New Mexico, south of Albuquerque, and, because they had been taking sheep to Mexico for years, they were more experienced in maintaining the animals across the southern deserts. The Old Spanish Trail seems to have appealed more to northern growers who knew the Ute and Paiute country, along with its inhabitants, better than did their southern counterparts. Other routes were also explored, such as the one Kit Carson and Lucien Maxwell took via Fort Laramie. J. Francisco Chaves also pioneered a new route west from Albuquerque to Zuni, then south over the Mogollon Rim to the Gila River. Although this trip was successful, Chaves was the only one at the time known to have taken that route, and apparently he never went that way again.

While for the most part these drives realized a comfortable profit, the California market for sheep was starting to weaken, and in 1855 Page, Bacon & Co., a San Francisco bank that had been an important link in the trade, failed. After that, American investors who had been buying sheep

and hiring men to drive them began to lose interest in the operation, and New Mexican sheep growers reclaimed the market. In 1856, the Armijo and Luna families drove 19,000 animals to Southern California and smaller drives followed. But the glory days were over. By the mid-fifties, sheep were being raised in California to serve the local demand, and gold fever had somewhat abated. The last big drive, led by the Pereas and Lunas, took place in 1860-1861, and they returned to New Mexico on the Butterfield Stage. With the advent of the Civil War, the long drives across deserts and mountains ceased, until today they have become part of the legendary west.

So, we might ask, what was the economic impact of the Old Spanish Trail on New Mexico? For native New Mexicans, it is obvious - the trail provided sheep growers with a market that replaced the old established markets in Mexico. It also brought into the territory more negotiable specie than the old markets had provided. Because sheep were a native product, New Mexicans were able to compete in the marketplace with more experienced and savvy American merchants, and they sharpened their skills as they engaged in commerce with American merchants. The sheep trade also provided a livelihood for perhaps hundreds of men who became drovers and partidarios, and at least some of them must have stayed in California and made new lives for themselves. But, except for employment, the economic benefits were probably not very deep or wide-spread. Hacienda life may have become more comfortable, but few sheepherders' wives could afford to buy the items that were gradually becoming more numerous in the

territory. The profits earned by the Americans made a few men well-off, but they do not seem to have reinvested in the area's economic growth and development. The Old Spanish Trail was used for just over thirty years, and it never did develop into a wagon road. Two-legged and four-legged animals marked its miles and endured its hunger and thirst, but the Civil War disrupted its trade and the railroad soon made it obsolete. Of all the variations of trails and routes, only the Gila Route fared well, until it, too, was replaced as transcontinental railroads crossed the southern deserts in the 1880s.

Bibliography

Baxter, John. *Las Carneradas: Sheep Trade in New Mexico, 1700-1860s*.

Brewerton, George D. *Overland with Kit Carson: A Narrative of the Old Spanish Trail in '48*.

Chavez, Thomas. *Manuel Alvarez, 1794-1856: A Southwestern Biography*.

Cline, Gloria Griffen. *Exploring the Great Basin*.

Crampton and Madsen. *In Search of the Spanish Trail: Santa Fe to Los Angeles, 1829-1848*.

Essin, Emmett M. *Shavetails and Bell Sharps: The History of the U.S. Army Mule*.

Hafen and Hafen. *Old Spanish Trail: Santa Fe to Los Angeles*.

Poling-Kempes, Leslie. *Valley of Shining Stone: The Story of Abiquiú*.

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

Sunseri, Alvin. *Seeds of Discord: New Mexico in the Aftermath of the American Conquest*.

Los Chaguanosos: "Adventurers of All nations"

By John W. Robinson

The Old Spanish Trail has been largely thought of as a pathway for commerce between New Mexico and California, with annual trade caravans bringing New Mexican woolen goods to exchange for California horses and mules. The trail was also used as a path of westward migration for parties such as Wolfskill-Yount in 1831, Rowland-Workman in 1841, and the New Mexican settlers of Agua Mansa in 1843. However, one can look at the trail in another light, and see it as a highway for horsethieves. Indians, American and French-Canadian trappers, and clandestine New Mexican traders were the main characters in this unsavory activity.

The opening of the Old Spanish Trail between Santa Fé and Los Angeles by Antonio Armijo in 1829, followed by the yearly trade caravans, brought California's abundance of fine horses and mules to the attention of many who were previously unaware of it. The temptation to steal from the vast mission and rancho herds of the coastal province became an irresistible lure. Runaway neophytes (mission Indians) had long absconded with mission livestock, but now New Mexican, American, and Indian marauders from as far away as Utah began pilfering animals on a much larger scale.

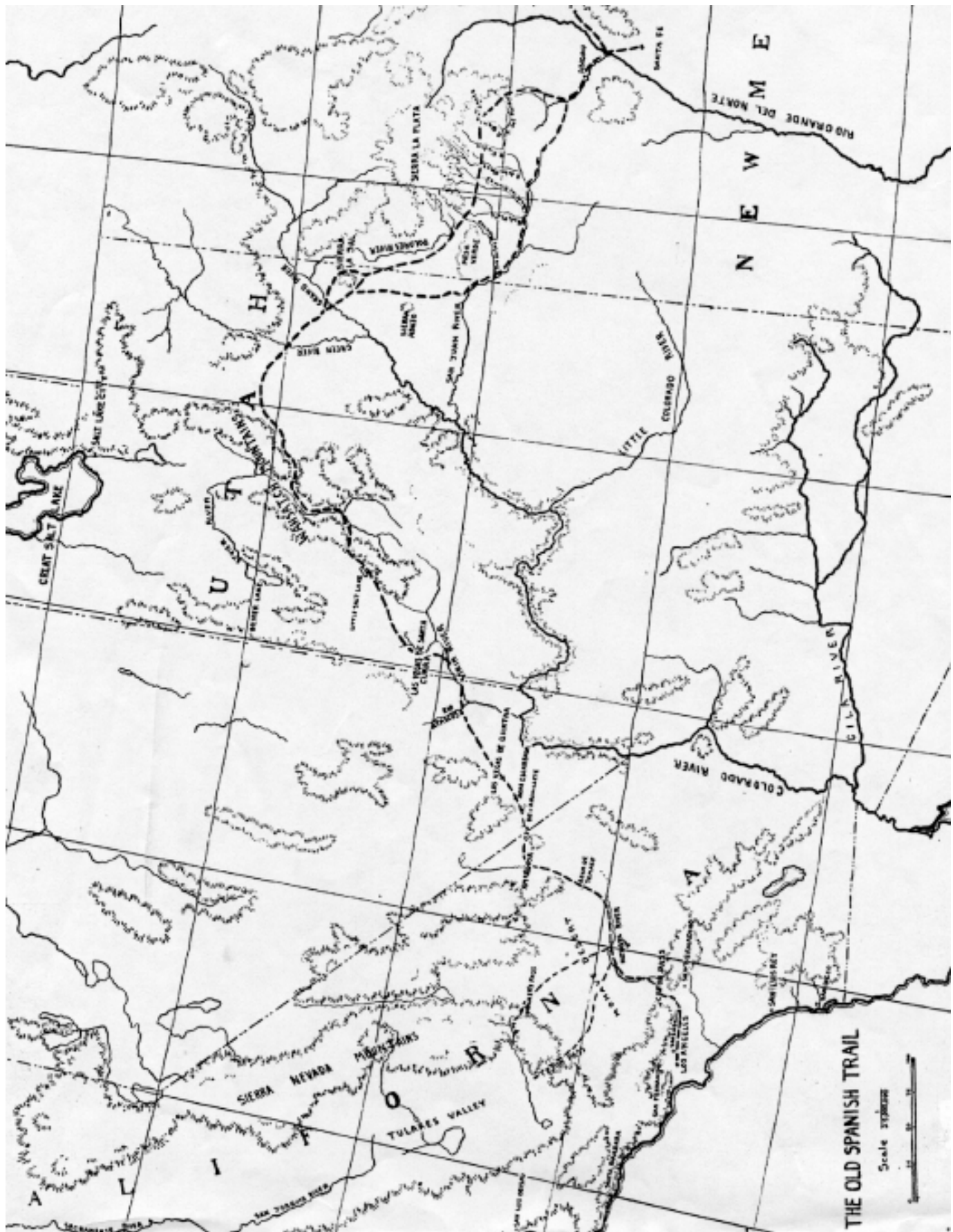
New Mexicans were the first to be blamed for the great increase in stock thievery. Fray Juan Vincente Cabot of Mission San Miguel complained to California Governor Jose de Figueroa

in February 1833 that:

"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. [I have] reason to suspect that the animals have been taken to New Mexico. At the close of 1832 several of them [New Mexicans] passed by the Rancho of Asunción and four colts and a mule were taken from the herd." [1]

The theft of horses and mules in southern California was so extensive that the Los Angeles Ayuntamiento (City Council), whose territory extended to Cajon Pass, enacted a regulation to insure the legality of all purchases by New Mexico traders. The alcalde (mayor) of Los Angeles and the Commander of the Guard at San Gabriel were ordered to inspect the animals supposedly purchased by the New Mexicans, recover stock they believed stolen, and detain any trader or mule packer suspected of thievery. Los Angeles Alcalde Jose Antonio Carillo wrote to Governor Figueroa on 18 February 1833 that New Mexicans, posing as traders, had stolen at least one thousand animals during the preceding three months, and "If the matter is not checked soon everything in the country will be taken away by the robbers." [2]

In March 1833, Sergeant Antonio Avila, leading a band of angry ranch-



The Old Spanish Trail

and soldiers from San Gabriel, followed a group of “traders” over Cajon Pass and surprised them in camp along the Mojave River. Avila and his men confiscated some two hundred horses and mules that had been stolen. Arrested was Juan Jesus Villapando, known also as “Chino Pando”, leader of the gang. Villapando was brought to Los Angeles and imprisoned but escaped ten days later and fled back to New Mexico.

Figueroa appealed to the governor of New Mexico for help in suppressing this thievery. He claimed that the “outrages” committed by New Mexicans had become so widespread that “every man coming from that territory is believed to be an adventurer and a thief.” [3]

Figueroa learned that the Valle de Tulares, the great Central Valley of California, was a gathering place for New Mexican stock thieves and runaway Indians who helped pilfer the mission and rancho herds. Don Damasco Rodriguez, dispatched with soldiers to break up this thieves’ rendezvous, surprised three New Mexicans with four hundred horses and mules about to cross Tejon Pass enroute to Santa Fe. He recovered the stolen livestock and brought the three men back to San Jose for trial. The three were found guilty and imprisoned, but two later escaped.

The California governor now took vigorous measures to curtail the thievery that was robbing the province of its most valuable resource. Figueroa ordered the military commanders at the presidios of Monterey, Santa Barbara, and San Diego to scour the country for suspected horsethieves and recover

stolen animals. Horses needed for the soldiers were provided by the missions and ranchos. All stock found in the Tulares Valley or along the Mojave River was to be considered stolen and the possessors arrested. Governor Figueroa’s effects, along with the cooperation of the governor of New Mexico (Villapando and other accused thieves were tried in Santa Fe), eased the problem for several years. But Figueroa died suddenly in September 1835, and the enforcement program he had instituted fell into disarray as a succession of mediocre governors squabbled over control of the province. [4]

With enforcement lax, the great herds of cattle and horses that grazed the California rancho and mission lands again became an irresistible lure to unscrupulous New Mexican traders, American mountain men, and desert Indians. The biggest threat, starting about 1837, were the Chaguanosos, “adventurers from all nations”, led by a French-Canadian trapper named Jean-Baptiste Chalifoux. Chalifoux, born in Quebec around 1791, trapped the Canadian wilds before drifting south to New Mexico about 1826. He apparently made Taos his base of operations for fur trapping trips into the Rockies. [5] Just when and under what circumstances Chalifoux turned from trapping to stealing horses in undetermined; he probably witnessed the return from California of New Mexican horsethieves and noted the fabulous profits they made. (Fine California horses were as good as gold in New Mexico and to Santa Fe Trail traders). Probably in 1836, Chalifoux organized a band of around sixty men, a motley crowd of American and Canadian trappers, adventurers, New

Mexicans, and an undetermined number of Indians. Chalifoux recruited this varied bunch of adventure-seekers and misfits ostensibly to trap the Southwest, but actually, as later events proved, to steal horses. [6]

The Chaguanosos first appear in California provincial records in January 1837, when a band led by “Monsier Shalifu” harassed Missions San Fernando and San Gabriel, robbing citizens and stealing horses. Chalifoux and his gang disappeared over the mountains to the vicinity of Tejon Pass; that is where Antonio Maria Osio found them a month later. Osio was sent to recruit Chalifoux and his well-armed cohorts to fight in one of those comic-opera little wars that enlivened the last years of Mexican California. A faction centered in Los Angeles and San Diego refused to recognize the authority of Governor Juan Bautista Alvarado in Monterey. Alvarado rode south with a small force to enforce compliance. The poorly-armed southern California faction, led by Juan Bandini hired the Chaguanosos as “mercenaries”. In return for military service, Chalifoux and his men were offered unlimited beaver trapping in the province. The Chaguanosos, accepting the offer, appeared at Mission San Fernando just in time to drive off an attacking force of Alvarado’s men in a bloodless confrontation. This failed to end the “war.” In May 1837 the Chaguanosos were again called upon to aid the southern faction. They traveled to San Diego, where they were joined by some twenty armed Californios loyal to Bandini. Riding north, the two factions met near the Santa Ana River where there was another bloodless confrontation. Intimidated by the fierce-looking,

well-armed Chaguanosos, the northern force turned tail and fled all the way back to Los Angeles, throwing away their guns and baggage and whatever else might hinder their flight. Bandini's "army" planned to attack the northern force at Santa Barbara, but Alvarado agreed to terms and the war was over. [7] Chalifoux and his men were paid off, but apparently not given as much as they expected. After threatening to start their own war, Governor Alvarado ordered them to leave California.

Chalifoux and his gang disappeared into the mountains, but did not leave the province. From a base in the southern Valle de Tulares (today's San Joaquin Valley) near Tejon Pass, the Chaguanosos raided Missions Santa Inez and San Luis Obispo and several ranchos near the central California coast in October 1837. Altogether the daring bandidos got away with some 1,500 horses that they wintered in their inland valley hideout before driving the animals to New Mexico the following spring. [8]

One of the Chaguanosos who participated in the raid and wintered in the Valle de Tulares near Tejon Pass may have been Peter Lebeck, or Lebec. Lebec's name has long been wrapped in mystery. All we know about him is what was carved into an oak tree on what later became the parade ground of Fort Tejon: "In memory of Peter Lebeck, killed by a X Bear, Oct. 17, 1837. [11] Seventeen years later, Dr. William Edgar, at Fort Tejon shortly after its founding in 1854, became curious about the oak tree epitaph: "I enquired of the Indians living at the mouth of the cañada, who were the only inhabitants there at the time, in regard to this matter, and got the

information that, many years previously, some trappers were passing through the cañada; when seeing so many bears one of the party went off by himself in pursuit of a large grizzly and shot it under that tree, and supposing that he had killed it, went up to it, when it caught and killed him, and his companions buried him under the tree, upon which they cut his epitaph." [9] Just who was Peter Lebec? For many years historians speculated that he was a French Canadian trapper, a member of a Hudson's Bay Company party that is known to have entered California in 1837. But more recent research has revealed that the 1837 Hudson's Bay Company party came no farther south than the Sacramento River, and that Lebeck or Lebec's name appears nowhere in Company archives. This leaves the strong possibility that the mysterious Peter Lebeck was a member of the Chaguanosos, who are proven to have been in the Tejon Pass area in October, 1837. [10] Today, the town of Lebec, on Interstate 5 four miles north of Tejon Pass, honors the mystery man.

After their successful 1837 venture, when they returned to New Mexico with some 1,500 California horses (minus a few taken as tribute by the Utes), the Chaguanosos either laid low or trapped in the Rocky Mountains. California provincial records do not mention them for two years. Then, in the fall of 1839, Chalifoux and at least some of his Chaguanosos returned to the Valle de Tulares where, in league with renegade ex-mission Indians, they embarked on horse-stealing forays against a number of ranchos in the central California coastal regions, from San Luis Obispo north almost to San Jose. They purloined some 800 to a

1000 animals that they drove east into the Tulare Lake region, where the horses were fattened up for the long journey over the Old Spanish Trail to New Mexico. On this occasion Chalifoux made the mistake of lingering too long in his valley lair. A party of Indians returning to San Juan Bautista told Mexican authorities where the bandidos and their renegade Indian allies were camped. In February 1840, General Mariano Vallejo, military comandante of California, sent a force of forty cavalymen into the central valley to capture the horsethieves, recover the stolen animals, and rescue women who had been kidnapped by the Indians. "The troops managed to free several of the captive females and take into custody fourteen of the Chaguanosos, among them "the notorious bandit chief Califa" [Chalifoux]. Chalifoux and his captured cohorts were tied up and brought to Monterey where they were imprisoned. Chalifoux later escaped and returned to New Mexico, where he evidently took up honest pursuits. As far as is known, he never returned to California. He lived his final years in southern Colorado, first along the Huerfano River, then near the community of Trinidad. At the time of the 1860 census, "Batis Chalifoux" was living in San Luis, Colorado with his wife Mariana Lucero and two children, Leon and John. He described himself as a farmer, with assets of \$500 in real estate and \$500 in personal property. He died on December 12, 1860 at the ripe age of 68, and was laid to rest in the little graveyard by the Huerfano. [12]

The Chaguanosos, minus their original leader but now augmented by a number of American trappers - Thomas "Peg-

leg” Smith, Jim Beckwourth, Levin Mitchell, Dick Owens, Phil Thompson, and according to some, Bill Williams, continued to raid California ranchos. Also making horsestealing forays, sometimes allied with the Chaguanosos, were Paiute, Ute, Shoshone, and Mojave warriors. Cajon Pass appeared to be the major point of entry and egress for the horsethieves, and the rancho closest to the pass suffered the most. Losing hundreds of fine-bred horses and an undetermined number of cattle to the crafty robbers were Rancho Cucamonga, granted to Tiburcio Tapia in 1839; Rancho Santa Ana del Chino, awarded to Antonio Maria Lugo in 1840 and soon given to his American-born son-in-law Isaac Williams; and Rancho San Bernardino, jointly granted to three of Lugo’s sons - Jose del Carmen, Jose Maria, and Vicente, and Diego Sepulveda in 1841.

The scourge of the rancheros, beginning in 1840, was a notorious Ute chieftain named Walkara, the “Hawk of the Mountains”, known as Walker to the Americans. Walkara, a born leader, superb horseman, and an expert with firearms, has been called “The Napoleon of the Desert” because of his talent as a strategist, daring exploits, his ability to inspire fierce loyalty from subordinates, and his uncanny talent for evading capture. [13] For several years he had levied tribute on the New Mexican trade caravans as they passed through southern Utah. Walkara and his band of Ute marauders, augmented by a number of Chaguanosos and American mountain men, numbered some 150 heavily armed men in all. In April 1840, they staged the greatest horsestealing raid in California history.

Walkara and his force rode the Old

Spanish Trail from the Ute homeland to the Mojave River, where they divided into several groups to stage a coordinated attack on the Californios. Walkara led most of his Ute warriors northwest across Tejon Pass into the San Joaquin Valley, from where they made a lightning foray on San Luis Obispo. During the night, the daring Ute leader stole into the corral where the best saddle horses were held and made off with the entire band of choice animals. In all, Walkara and his men absconded with some 1,200 horses, which they quickly drove east into the San Joaquin Valley, then southeast over Tejon Pass to the rendezvous point on the Mojave River. [14]

Meanwhile, the rest of the raiding force, which was reportedly led by Pegleg Smith, headed for Cajon Pass. Jim Beckwourth is said to have acted as an advance scout. Pegleg and his raiders thundered over the pass and divided into several bands to plunder rancho herds from the San Bernardino Valley west almost to San Gabriel and south to heretofore undisturbed San Juan Capistrano close to the Pacific coast. In three days and nights, Smith and his (mostly) Chaguanosos band stole upwards of 2,000 horses (one source says 5,000). Most of the stolen animals were driven over Cajon Pass, while Smith and his pilfered stock are said to have left via San Gorgonio Pass, then turned north through Yucca and Lucerne valleys to the big rendezvous on the Mojave River. [15]

So great was the livestock loss that the Californios launched a concerted effort to recover the stolen horses and capture the thieves. Tiburcio Tapia, prefect of Los Angeles and owner of Ranch Cucamonga, was heavily

victimized in the raid and organized pursuit efforts. Thirty men under Ygnacio Palomares, co-owner of Rancho San Jose in the Pomona Valley, set off first. A second party under Juan Leandry of Los Angeles soon followed. Deciding that more men were needed, Prefect Tapia released prisoners from the pueblo jail and sent them east under Jose Antonio Carillo a day later.

According to San Bernardino County historian George Beattie, Palomares and his advance party caught up with some of the raiders near The Monument, a natural rock landmark twelve miles northeast of Rabbit Springs in the Mojave Desert. Here Palomares was ambushed and defeated, and his party was scattered in its haste to escape. At least one Californio and one Indian were killed and several more wounded. Palomares suffered the additional humiliation of losing all his horses. He and his men were obliged to walk back over Cajon Pass and down to Rancho San Bernardino, where they were met by Leandry’s small force. Leandry, augmented by Palomares’ survivors and now numbered twenty-six armed horsemen, proceeded to Cajon Pass. Since the horsethieves were believed to number around one hundred, Leandry decided to await Carillo’s arrival. Next day Carillo and his force reached Campo de la Puente -- probably the camp in or near Cajon Pass where Leandry was waiting. Carillo took command of the combined force, which numbered 75 armed men and 225 horses loaded with provisions for what the alcalde thought might be a long chase.

Walkara’s Utes and his Chaguanoso allies were slowed in their retreat by the huge drove of horses they were driving,

many of which were suffering from exhaustion, thirst, and the scarcity of forage. Carillo and his force sped along the Mojave River, easily following the multitude of horse tracks. At “Fork in the Road”, where the Old Spanish Trail turned northeast away from the river, about ten miles east of present-day Barstow, the tracks became so fresh as to indicate that the raiders were not far ahead. When the Californios reached Ojo de Agua de la Mesa (probably Bitter Springs), Carillo left his baggage train and raced ahead at a gallop, accompanied by about fifty of his men. Several hours later, The Californios spotted a cloud of dust ahead. Next morning they surprised a party of about twenty bandits, many of them American, according to Leandry, at Agua de Ramon (probably either Salt Spring or Resting Spring southeast of Death Valley). The thieves fled in haste, leaving saddles, clothing, and cooking utensils. Continuing the pursuit, Carillo and his Californios what appeared to be the main party of horsethieves. According to California provincial records for May 1840, which cover the campaign in detail, the pursuers “thought it imprudent to risk a conflict, especially when they saw that among the Chaguanosos there were more Americans than Indians.” [16]

The Californios, fearful of facing American sharpshooters and with their own mounts exhausted from the furious pursuit, gave up the chase and returned to Los Angeles. Carillo reported that he passed, along the trail, the carcasses of some 1,500 horses that had perished from exhaustion, thirst, and hunger. Just how many horses reached Utah with Walkara or New Mexico with the Chaguanosos is unknown; estimates run from a few hundred to 2,500. [17]

The great chase was an ordeal for the robbers. Ten years later, Thomas “Pegleg” Smith told Los Angeles newspaperman Horace Bell:

“They [the stolen horses] cost me very dearly. Three of my squaws lost brothers, and one of them a father, on that trip, and I came near going under myself. I lost several other braves, and you can depend on it that I paid for all the horses I drove away. Them Spaniards [Californios] followed us and fought us in a way that Spaniards were never before known to do. [18]

When the regular New Mexican trade caravan crossed Cajon Pass and reached Los Angeles in November 1840, Lieutenant Colonel Juan Flores, military comandante at Santa Barbara, was ordered to “go with an armed force to aid in the suppression of the New Mexican party which has just arrived . . . be on the watch for the party of robbers, who are called the Chaguanosos and are adventurers of all nations.” [19] The trade caravan proved legitimate, but the threat of horsestealing raids kept the Californios jittery and on guard.

Walkara and some of the Chaguanosos continued to make lightning forays on livestock herds from New Mexico to California, although never again on the grand scale of the 1840 raid. “His movements were so rapid, and his plans so secretly laid, that lie never once failed in any enterprise, and scarcely disappeared from one district before he was heard of in another.” [20] The Old Spanish Trail from Cajon Pass as far as southern Utah was sometimes called “Walker’s Trail.” Today’s Horsethief Canyon east of

Cajon Pass received its name because thieves often drove their stolen animals down the canyon to the rich pasturelands in Summit Valley and along the West fork of the Mojave River before driving the herds across the desert.

Californios made serious efforts to curtail the livestock thievery. The military commandant at the Santa Barbara Presidio and the prefect of Los Angeles sent armed parties out to patrol Cajon Pass and other entry points used by the robbers. Rancho owners took their own defensive measures. The Lugos of Ranchos San Bernardino and Santa Ana del Chino maintained their own armed force. Antonio Maria Lugo and his son Vicente Lugo each led a pursuit of Indian horsethieves, although their results were often less than satisfactory. To head off Ute, Paiute, and Mojave raiders coming over Cajon Pass, Michael White was given a grant of Rancho Muscupiabe, at the mouth of Cajon Canyon, in 1843. White, known to the Californios as Miguel Blanco, was an Englishman by birth who had become a Mexican citizen. He built a fortress home of logs and earth on a bench near the canyon mouth, overlooking both the Old Spanish Trail from Cajon Pass and the Mojave Indian Trail to the east over the San Bernardino Mountains. White was confident at first that he could stop the horsethieves, but his optimism was ill founded. Not only did he fail to halt the raids into the valley, but also he lost all of his own livestock to the crafty raiders. After nine frustrating months, White abandoned the place. [21]

Throughout the early 1840s, Ute and Paiute raiders, sometimes aided by

ex-mission Indians, continued to swoop over Cajon Pass and steal horses, many of which were driven eastward over the Old Spanish Trail. Although none of these attacks approached the magnitude of the great Walkara and Pegleg Smith raid of 1840, they were annoying to ranch owners. In 1845 Governor Pio Pico, last Mexican governor of California, commissioned Benjamin Wilson, a transplanted Tennessean, then alcalde of the Jurupa District near today's Riverside, to lead punitive expeditions against Indian stock thieves. Wilson led three campaigns against the desert renegades, managing to kill some of the thieves, mostly ex-mission neophytes, and capture some women and children who he returned to Mission San Gabriel. [22]

Wilson's three expeditions failed to solve the problem. In October 1845, Walkara crossed Cajon Pass into the San Bernardino Valley in the guise of a peaceful trader. He and his Ute warriors suddenly surrounded and drove off a large band of horses. Vincente Lugo pursued the horsethieves over Cajon Pass and caught up with them along the Mojave River. Walkara and his thirty armed men, possibly including several Chaguanosos, repulsed Lugo and his Californios, who returned to Rancho San Bernardino empty handed. Walkara drove the purloined animals via the Old Spanish Trail to Utah. [23]

In February 1846, John Rowland wrote from his Rancho La Puente:

"A party of Utes from the Big Lake [Great Salt Lake] amounting to forty under the command of a chief named Walker paid a visit to this country some time ago and as soon as they could steal a few horses

they put away to their own country, without any molestation from this people, because nobody followed them." [24]

Mexican authorities in Los Angeles had long thought of building a fort at Cajon Pass, the major point of entry and egress for horsethieves. Nothing came of this proposal. However, all this changed with the Mexican War and the American occupation of California in 1846. In 1847, soldiers of the Mormon Battalion under Lieutenant Colonel Philip St. George Cooke, on garrison duty in San Diego and Los Angeles, were sent to Cajon Pass "to prevent a passage of hostile Indians with or without horses. " The troops were to "guard the pass effectively and, if necessary, to send out armed parties, either on foot or mounted, to defend the ranchos in the vicinity or to attack wandering parties of wild Indians." [25]

The American conquest of the Southwest effectively ended the horse stealing raids on southern California ranchos. Most of the Chaguanosos, particularly the American trappers, settled down to law-abiding lives in New Mexico, Colorado, Oregon, and California. Dick Owens served as a guide on Frémont's 2nd Expedition, is honored by having his name, placed on Owens Valley and Owens Lake in California, and finally settled near Pueblo, Colorado. Levis Mitchell served as deputy sheriff of Taos, New Mexico. Phil Thompson became an Oregon farmer. Bill Williams explored northern Arizona and is remembered through the Bill Williams Fork of the Colorado and the city of Williams, Arizona; he settled in Taos, and perished while guiding Frémont's ill-fated winter 4th Expedition in Colorado. The most notorious of the

American Chaguanosos, Thomas "Pegleg" Smith, spent many of his later years in Los Angeles, bragging about his exploits and telling gullible prospectors how to locate his fabled "Lost Pegleg" gold mine.

Much speculation has been made in recent years as to the derivation of the name Chaguanosos. California historian Hubert Howe Bancroft wrote, "Apparently the Shawnees. Called Chaguanos in the Sonorenses, ... they are sometimes spoken of as natives of Chihuahua. Mofras called them Schaouanos. " [26] Bancroft's speculations are faulty. Many, perhaps most, of the Chaguanosos were American or French Canadian trappers. They were a mixed outfit. True, there were Indian members, some of whom might have been Shawnees, and there were Mexicans, a few who could have come from Chihuahua. But this is only guesswork. The Chaguanosos, a name so often mentioned in California provincial records of the 1837-1843 period, will always be wrapped in mystery.

Walkara, the great Ute chieftain and nemesis of California rancheros, died on January 28, 1855 at Meadow Creek in the mountains east of present-day Fillmore, Utah. At his funeral, held high in the mountains, fifteen horses were slaughtered and their carcasses covered with rocks; two faithful wives were slain and placed next to him in the grave; food, rifles, bows and arrows were deposited for his use in the afterlife, and finally two terrified children, a boy and a girl, were buried alive to serve him. [27]

So ended an unsavory, but very important part of the saga of the Old Spanish Trail.

ENDNOTES

- [1] Eleanor Lawrence, "Mexican Trade Between Santa Fe and Los Angeles, 1830-1848", *California Historical Quarterly*, March 1931, p. 27.
- [2] Leroy R. Hafen and Ann W. Hafen, *Old Spanish Trail: Santa Fe to Los Angeles* (Glendale, California: The Arthur H. Clark Co., 1954), p. 231.
- [3] Hafen and Hafen.
- [4] Hafen and Hafen, p. 233; Hubert Howe Bancroft, *History of California* (San Francisco: The History Company, 1886), Vol. III, p. 396.
- [5] Janet Lecompte, "Jean-Baptiste Chalifoux", in Leroy R. Hafen (ed.), *French Fur Traders and Voyageurs in the American West* (Spokane: The Arthur H. Clark Co., 1995), pp. 58-75.
- [6] The best description of the chaguanos and their activities in California is Eleanor Lawrence, "Horse Thieves on the Spanish Trail", *Touring Topics*, January 1931, pp. 22-25. See also Hafen and Hafen, *Old Spanish Trail*, pp. 184, 236-237, 242; and Bancroft, Vol. IV, p. 77.
- [7] Lawrence, "Horse Thieves...", pp. 23-24; Lecompte, pp. 65-69.
- [8] Lecompte, pp. 69-70; Lawrence, "Horse Thieves...", pp. 23-24.
- [9] William F. Edgar, "Historical Notes of Old Land Marks in California: Fort Tejon", *Historical Society of Southern California*, Annual Publication, vol. 3, 1893, pp. 22-28; Raymund F. Wood, *The Life and Death of Peter Lebec* (Fresno, California: Academy Library Guild, 1954), pp. 26, 39.
- [10] Walt Wheelock, "New Light on Peter Lebec", *Brand Book 16* (Los Angeles: Westerners, Los Angeles Corral, 1982), 207-212.
- [11] Lawrence, "Horse Thieves...", p. 23; Lecompte, p. 69; George Tays, "Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo and Sonoma: A Biography and a History", *California Historical Quarterly*, June 1938, p. 149.
- [12] Lecompte, pp. 74-75.
- [13] Paul Bailey, *Hawk of the*

Mountains (Los Angeles: Westerlore Press, 1954). pp. 34-37; Hafen and Hafen, *Old Spanish Trail*, p. 248.

[14] Hafen and Hafen, p. 237; Bailey, pp. 36-37; Lawrence, "Horse Thieves...", p. 24.

[15] Sardis W. Templeton, *The Lame Captain: The Life and Adventures of Pegleg Smith* (Los Angeles: Westerlore Press, 1965), pp. 139-143; Hafen and Hafen, pp. 236-238.

[16] Bancroft, Vol. LV, p. 77.

[17] George William Beattie and Helen Pruitt Beattie, *Heritage of the Valley: San Bernardino's First Century* (Oakland: Biobooks, 1951), pp. 140-143; Hafen and Hafen, pp. 237-238.

[18] Major Horace Bell, *Reminiscences of a Ranger, or Early Times in Southern California* (Los Angeles: Primavera Press, 1933), p. 290.

[19] Hafen and Hafen, p. 242.

[20] Lawrence, "Horse Thieves..." p. 24.

[21] Beattie and Beattie, p. 58.

[22] "The Narrative of Benjamin D. Wilson", Appendix in Robert Glass Cleland, *Pathfinders* (Los Angeles: Powell Publishing Co., 1929), p. 383.

[23] Beattie and Beattie, p. 66.

[24] Hafen and Hafen, *Old Spanish Trail*, p. 251.

[25] Hafen and Hafen, pp. 251-252; Norma Baldwin Ricketts, *The Mormon Battalion: U.S. Army of the West, 1846-1848* (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1996), pp. 149, 152.

[26] Bancroft, IV, p. 77, footnote 72.

[27] Virginia McConnell Simmons, *The Ute Indians of Utah, Colorado, and New Mexico* (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2000), p. 95; Bailey, *Hawk of the*

OSTA MEMBERS...

with recent changes in address, phone number, email address are requested to update their information for the next membership roster. Information can be sent email to: knlcarp@earthlink.net or snail to: OSTA, P.O.Box 7, Marysville, WA 98270

Spanish Traces Needs a New Editor, NOW!

Work Environment: Outstanding.

You will receive many compliments upon your part of preparing *Spanish Traces*. You visit with great trail folks, and a variety of book publishers who furnish the books for review, and printers who work with you until it's just right. You also do research with very helpful librarians and museum folks.

Education: This is on-the-job training at its best. Because of all the terrific scholarly material contributed by folks who write the *Old Spanish Trail*, its travelers and the multicultural region it traversed, the Editor gets an education with each issue.

Computer Skills: Someone with a working knowledge of a word processing program such as Word or Word Perfect. Layout experience with Adobe Pagemaker (or InDesign) and Photoshop or Quark Express would be desirable. (As with any software package, you can learn it!) This requirement may be negotiable.

Background Knowledge: The Editor needs extensive knowledge of the history of the *Old Spanish Trail* and a good reference library nearby.

Salary: None. All members look forward to receiving *Spanish Traces*. Now we need a member to volunteer to accept the Editorship.

Please contact: Col. Harold Steiner, P.O.Box 12354, Las Vegas, NV 89112, 702-458-1723, hsteiner@anv.net immediately.

Across a Hostile Desert to Las Vegas

By Lou McCombs

This material is the property of and was copyrighted by the author and may not be reproduced without his written permission.

This is the second in a series of articles written by McCombs on his adventures traveling the Old Spanish Trail from Los Angeles to Santa Fé.

The Spanish Trail crossed more than 350 miles of the Mojave Desert, a wilderness of salt flats, sand plains, dry lake beds and the barest, rockiest mountains found anywhere on earth. It's exceedingly dry, blazing hot in summer, and generally windy. Heading for Las Vegas today, that translates into hunkering down in an air-conditioned car while you push the speed limit to

behind by early Spanish and American explorers tell an eloquent story. Jornada del Meurto (Journey of the Dead), Lago del Milagro (Lake of the Miracle) where Antonio Armijo's men found pools of water left behind by a sudden rainstorm in an otherwise dry lake bed and Death Valley.

Water was the key to travel. Without it, both people and livestock perished. It was especially important for oxen, mules and horses to have water and grass at places not more than 15 to 20 miles apart in order to maintain and replenish their strength.

man in Blue Diamond who had been in the desert since the early 1950's. I was on my loaded touring bike; he was curious. We struck up a conversation. After he found out I was interested in and riding a bike on the Spanish Trail, he told me of finding almost complete wagons, bunches of goods, guns, tools and other artifacts on the desert during many expeditions over the intervening years. Today, of course, nearly all such artifacts have been removed by one party or another. If you should find something while out exploring, be a good citizen, leave it in place and notify the nearest land management office.



Powerline Road and typical desert country. *(Photo courtesy of Lou McCombs)*

the nearest air-conditioned casino.

In the BC era (that's before cars) the desert presented a formidable barrier to travel. Commonplace names left

However, water sources were few and far between, and death was a constant companion. Not too long ago I met a

And speaking of exploring, spring is when the men of the Santa Fe caravans chose to make the return trip home from Los Angeles. While the Mojave is not now and never has been a place for the unprepared or faint of heart, spring is a time when the desert comes alive in glorious Technicolor. There's a carpet of wildflowers. Cacti, creosote bush, and the mysterious Joshua Tree are all in bloom. Furry critters scurry about and desert tortoises leave their burrows to munch the succulent plants. Days are warm, nights are cool. As in the past, it's the best time for the modern explorer.

So what was I doing standing in the newly refurbished parking area for the Salt Spring Hills Natural Area on a sweltering September morning with the

temperature already soaring past the one hundred degree mark? Sometimes questions like that are not easy to answer, but this day I had a plan. First I would wander around Salt Spring, then walk eastward up the hill to an overlook of the Amargosa Gold Mine.

This is a fascinating area with a real oasis, a desert river, sand dunes and rocks, lots of rocks! It's a microcosm of the desert ecosystem. The oasis supports an abundance of wildlife wonderfully described on a newly-placed Bureau of Land Management sign about the riparian area surrounding the spring. But while the BLM sign adequately explains the spring and its life giving water, it totally ignores the place as a camping spot on the Spanish Trail and fails to acknowledge the nearby gold mine, historically one of the most productive in the east Mojave.

The Amargosa is still a working mine and has been since its discovery in 1849 by members of the Jefferson Hunt wagon train, a group enroute from Salt Lake City to the California coast. As described in the journal of Addison Pratt (a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints and Mormon missionary headed for the Hawaiian Islands) he, Hunt and a couple of other men found the gold in a ledge about four inches thick bedded in granite.

After that discovery, Mormons worked the mine until 1857, then sold it when they pulled back to Utah during a dispute with the federal government over polygamy. By 1860, the new owners were soon mining ore valued at \$2,500. per ton. Eventually, the profit margin diminished and large operations were halted. But today a couple of

guys still work the old diggings hoping that tomorrow may expose that next rich vein of gold lying hidden in the ground. Remember, the mine is private property, so stay out.

To follow the Trail out of Victorville, take D Street north toward Oro Grande and Barstow. This is the National Trails/Route 66 Highway that closely follows the Spanish Trail as far as fork in the roads just east of modern Minneola Road past Daggett. There it linked up with the Mojave Indian Trail to the Colorado River historically first followed by Padre Francisco Garcés in 1776. It was later trod by Jedediah Smith and other American mountain men after 1826. Its successors, I-15 and I-40 follow a similar path. Now

Continuing to Barstow, visit, if you have time, the Mojave River Valley Museum at the corner of Barstow Road and I-15. It's open 11:00am - 4:00pm daily (phone: 619-256-5452.) In Barstow, we'll deviate a bit and head out to Calico Ghost Town because it's a fun place to visit and not far off the Trail.

To get there, take First Street to SR 58. Follow SR 58 to I-15, then north-bound 2 miles to Ft. Irwin Road. Exit and follow Frontage Road to Calico Road. It's then 4 miles to the town.

Calico was founded in 1881 after silver was found in the nearby mountains. At one time there were 3,500 people, 30 miles of tunnels, several saloons and one church. In its day, \$86,000,000.



Route 66 bridge above Lane's ford.

(Photo courtesy of Lou McCombs)

comes the rest of the story about the Trail to Las Vegas. In a little over 3 miles, a highway bridge offers an overlook of the ancient Mojave River ford, about a half a mile downstream, that by the late 1850's became Lane's Crossing. It was named for A.N. Lane who operated a small trading post nearby.

worth of silver was extracted. The "town" is now part of the California State Park system. Entrance fee is \$6.00 and there's a small campground near the entrance.

From Calico, follow Frontage Road on the south side of the freeway for 15 miles to Harvard Road. About half

way, intersect Minneola Road. In the foothills, 2.5 miles northeast is an interesting early man archeological dig. It's open Wed-Sun, phone: 619-256-3591.

At Harvard Road, stop in at Jeremy's Trading Post to stock up on food and water before heading out into the outback. After Jeremy's, you'll be on 45 miles of remote dirt road which closely parallels the Old Spanish Trail. It's a waterless stretch where other folks are few and far between and cell phone connection is iffy at best. Be prepared and be aware that roads are not well marked. You'll need either a four-wheel drive vehicle or other transport suitable for off-highway travel. You may camp anywhere along the entire 45 mile route, but don't set up in any washes since flash floods are a common feature of desert travel.

To take the Trail, go north from Jeremy's to the T intersection with Powerline Road, turn right. In 6.7 miles, Spanish Canyon intersects from the left. This is where mule caravans, wagons and Model A's turned to go over Alvord (Impossible) Pass. The flats beyond this pass are now on the Ft. Irwin Desert Warfare Training Center and are off limits to the public.

About 20 miles from Jeremy's, cross Bitter Springs Wash and begin climbing over the Soda Mountains. For cyclists this is a short, but steep hill. About half

way up the road is a good view back to the west of what's left of Bitter Spring. At the top of the pass is an overlook of Red Pass Lake, also on Ft. Irwin.

Continue east to the junction with SR 127. Cyclists will have to take the 9 mile side trip south to Baker to stock up on water and groceries. There are



Truck at mouth of the Amargosa River. (Photo courtesy of Lou McCombs)

no other stores available until Blue Diamond. Water is available at Tecopa. For vehicles, the side trip is optional, but Baker is an interesting crossroad that's now the home to the East Mojave National Preserve Visitor Center and the worlds "tallest" Thermometer.

Salt Spring and the surrounding Dumont Dunes, the Amargosa Mine, river and Harry Wade monument exit are all 29 miles north of Baker on SR 127. Wade was with a group of dissidents who broke off from the Jefferson Hunt wagon train near Mountain Meadows, Utah, to scout a new and supposedly faster route. Most of the dissidents returned to the Span-

ish Trail before Las Vegas. But a few, against all odds and good sense, continued to push westward across uncharted desert. Most of them ended up in what they (and we) call Death Valley. Wade eventually walked out to seek help and found the Spanish Trail near the present monument.

The Amargosa River is the lowest point on the Trail at 400 feet above sea level, so it's a climb on the highway to Ibis Pass at 2090 feet. On the downhill, take Spanish Trail Highway into Tecopa. A couple of miles north is Tecopa Hot Springs and campground. The springs are open to the public, free, and have separate pools for men and women. It's a "cool" place.

East of Tecopa cross Emigrant Pass. There's a monument, sections of both the mule and wagon trails, and now the highway. About 31 miles east of Tecopa is Hidden Hills Ranch Road. Right across the street is the turn to Stump Spring, another Trail monument and a rideable section of the Trail, now a seldom-used Jeep track.

Stump Spring wash is .7 mile from the highway. The spring is now usually dry. Bear left through the wash toward SR 160 which you can see in the distance. At 3.1 miles take the left fork. This will take you into a Joshua Tree forest where there are several camping places. If you decide to camp be sure to bring your own water.

At the junction with SR 160, head up the mountain to the pass at 5490 feet. At the top is a fire station with a monument in front. Continue down through Cottonwood Canyon. For cyclists, watch for mile marker 13. Here you may turn left and go through the fence, up onto the low bench between two small buttes and down the Trail into Blue Diamond. Those in cars will have to continue down the highway and make a left onto SR 159. There's a

the intersection of Washington and Las Vegas Blvd. The grounds have monuments and displays about the Spanish Trail, the Mormon influence, the prehistory, current history and potential future of Las Vegas.

On the Trail miles from L.A Plaza: 368

Maps

* AAA San Bernardino County. If you can, find an older edition with the old



Las Vegas Fort under reconstruction. (Photo courtesy of Lou McCombs)

small store in the middle of town with several Spanish Trail and other monuments in front.

Blue Diamond was the site of Cottonwood Spring in Trail days. From the spring, caravans went almost straight northeast past the present Gypsum plant and out onto the broad alluvial fan to Las Vegas Springs. Today, we'll give that route a break and do an alternate. Take SR 160 to Rainbow, turn left. The first 3.8 miles are very narrow, but after that, it opens up. At Twain, turn right for .5 mile to Torrey Pines and turn left. Take Torrey Pines to West Washington. Turn right and this will take you right down to the old Mormon Fort at

style blue cover, since it incorporates a good map of the area between Tecopa and Mesquite.

Book

* I recently read "The Old Spanish Trail Across the Mojave Desert" by Harold Steiner. For anyone planning a tour of the Spanish Trail across the Mojave, it's a must.

This is the second in a series of seven articles written by McCombs on his adventures traveling the Old Spanish Trail from Los Angeles to Santa Fe.

Next: Into Mormon Country

Book Reviews

The Old Spanish Trail. By Ralph Compton, (New York: Published by St. Martin's Press, 1998, 278 pp., map, paperback novel \$5.99)

This novel is an old-style western written to certain well-established standards that hark back to Owen Wister, Eugene Manlove Rhodes, and Louis Lamour, to name a few. While it is written this way, it is not to be compared with such august company. It maintains such a degree of hyperbole and bizarre imitation that the reader senses the voice of a farceur reading off-stage.

As the story begins, it is February 1, 1862, and times are hard in San Antonio, Texas. The War Between the States has spread to Texas. Five friends have assembled at the request of one, Don Webb, who has received a letter from another of their friends, Warren Blocker. Blocker has struck it rich and now owns a land grant south of Santa Fé, and has a new wife. He wants five thousand head of Texas cattle, for which he is willing to pay his old friends \$150,000, if only they will drive a herd from Texas to Santa Fé for him. The Texans are elated, for they have run out of coffee and even flour for biscuits.

After a month of frantic activity, the Texans have assembled five more friends, two mules, maybe thirty horses, and 5,525 longhorns for the drive. They are short of cash, food, and clothes, but each owns a pistol, one of the new Henry repeating rifles, and plenty of good old Texas bravado, which is sometimes mistaken for valor. Two months and one stampede later,

they arrive at Blocker's land grant, only to find the buildings burned, Blocker and his new wife killed and all his money stolen. They can find a buyer for only 200 of their cattle.

Being Texans, they won't accept ruination. Webb, now the trail boss, comes across a map of the Old Spanish Trail in an old newspaper. They check with some of the sheep ranchers nearby, find the OST hasn't been used in years, but might be passable for cattle. They decide to drive the herd on to Los Angeles. In the meantime, one of their party has a violent encounter in a Santa Fé bar with a crooked gambler. Lead flies, the gambler dies, and later a judge finds the cowboy innocent of anything but self defense and bad judgment. (Don't gamble with anyone who has soft hands). But the gambler's buddies turn out to be the gang that killed Blocker and they swear vengeance. Also, the gambler's brother shows up with a friend and they, too, swear vengeance.

The Texans have the good luck to hire two young brothers, Hispanics (called Mexicans in the book) named Dominique and Roberto, as wranglers. These twins, who dress like mariachis, have recently traveled the OST and remember it well. This good fortune saves the Texans several times, for their map is fatally flawed.

And so the stage is set for a tale of reckless courage and boundless luck, of cowboys and Indians, of stampede after stampede, of Indian attack after attack, of fair maidens in distress time after time, and of ambushes by the bad guys right in the Mojave Desert — all in the midst of the worst country for a cattle drive in the North American

continent.

The statistics are awesome even for a horse opera. I counted six stampedes, one serious enough to kill one of the Texans. The Texans rescue seven severely abused young white women from the Indians -- three of them twice. They or their longhorns kill countless Indians, both Paiutes and Utes. (Of course the Indians possess only bows and arrows and knives versus the cowboys pistols and Henry rifles). There are two ambushes by the bad guys in the Mojave Desert — both disasters for the bad guys. By the time the herd reaches Los Angeles, only 125 longhorns have been lost and the cowboys split \$338,000 for the herd, plus another \$30,000 they found along the way. The drive from Santa Fé to LA took about two months, from May 7 to July 3, 1862. I count 57 days, or better than 21 miles a day. All in all, these Texans had an excellent adventure, except for the one killed in a stampede.

The fun of this tale is in the reading. The men are either heroes or desperadoes, the Indians are from Tom Mix movies, and the seven abused ladies are, well, mostly naked, but by circumstance, not by choice. This is the 12th of Compton's Trail Drive Series, relating, I suppose, similar tales of courage and harrowing escape on the Goodnight Trail, The Chisholm Trail, The Oregon Trail, and so forth. This is a book written primarily for Texans, for as one of the characters says, "Despite what a Texan says and how he acts, he can be scared just like anybody else. The difference is courage. Courage allows him to go on when common sense tells him it may be his last trail." And for sure, only Texans such as these would try to take a herd of 5,000 longhorns across the OST.

Compton seems a tad geographically challenged. He locates the Chama River's confluence with the Rio Grande at Santa Fé, not Española. Apparently, the Texans drove their herd right up the Chama all the way through its canyon and into the San Juan mountains. Then they headed west. I know there are other howlers, but I lost interest in nit-picking. After all, a story like this isn't about geography, is it?

I tried to look up Compton in a listing of more than 100,000 contemporary authors. He wasn't listed. I tried several other reference works without luck. Finally, I requested a short biography from the St. Martin's Press. They haven't responded. Perhaps Compton is a pseudonym. He does seem to know a lot about herding cattle. I wouldn't know because on the farm in Kansas where I was raised the only herding we did was to shoo the chickens back into the hen house at night. According to the book jacket, they have more than a million copies of his Trail Drive Series in print. That's one book for every 21 Texans.

Reviewed by John Coffman
Albuquerque, New Mexico

Lost Treasures On The Old Spanish Trail. By George A. Thompson. (Published by Western Epics, ISBN:00-91-4740-31-8, Paperback, Fourth Printing \$11.95)

This book could have been better titled "Legends of Lost Spanish Gold In The West." As used by the author, the Old Spanish Trail is just about any route used by Spanish expeditions and/or travelers in their search for gold, beginning in Mexico and extending as far north as Idaho. The map of these trails

bears little resemblance to the trail that the Old Spanish Trail Association is seeking to have recognized for its historical importance.

Throughout the book, the author makes the point that the Spanish were not interested in finding trade routes or bringing Christianity to the natives, but were really looking for gold. When gold was found, the harsh treatment of the native slaves followed. According to the author, when the Indians rebelled, some of the gold was hidden by the fleeing Spanish and the Indians closed and covered the mine sites to prevent their detection in the future, hence the lost treasures.

As I was reading the book, a thought came to mind: where are the footnotes citing references to the material presented? At the end of the book, the author states that he felt the use of footnotes in the text would be distracting to the reader. Is this good research?

Those of us that have studied the North Branch of the Old Spanish Trail are aware that John C. Frémont's 1853 (fifth) expedition basically followed the route of Captain John W. Gunnison's earlier expedition. Frémont crossed the Grand (Colorado) River near Grand Junction. This book has the trail crossing the Colorado at Spanish Bottom in Canyonlands National Park, approximately five miles downstream from its confluence with the Green River. This error puts other descriptions at question. Frémont missed the Old Spanish Trail north of Moab and crossed the Green River some 20 miles south of the well-used Green River crossing. The author places the confluence of the Chama and Río Grande Rivers "near the present day Four Corners", when it

is actually near Espanola, New Mexico. He should check his geography.

The lost Pish-La-Ki silver mine reported to be in the vicinity of Navajo Mountain, northeast of Page, Arizona has always been of interest to this reviewer. As a professional geologist who worked on the Navajo Indian Reservation during the uranium boom of the 1950s, I don't believe it is possible that ore deposits of silver minerals occur in the sedimentary rocks of the Navajo Mountain area. However, the legend of this "lost mine" continues today. The lost Josephine de Martinique gold mine of the Henry Mountains, in south central Utah, has also been of interest to the reviewer. In his classic report in the Henry Mountains (USGS Professional Paper 228), Charles Hunt describes the settlement, geology and mining history of the area. It is true that a small amount of gold has been produced from veins on Mt. Ellen and Mt. Pennell. The description of the geology of these deposits certainly does not indicate that a deposit of the magnitude of the "Lost" Josephine de Martinique mine might exist. Having seen Spanish arrastras in southern New Mexico, the photo on page 99 certainly does not resemble the real item. The rocks in the photo appear to have been placed for the photographer.

Overall the book describes the various Spanish expeditions in the western United States and the legends of lost mines associated with them. If one believes in "lost mine" stories, the book makes for interesting reading.

Reviewed by Bill Chenoweth
Grand Junction, Colorado

Editor's Note: As a Geologist, Chenoweth is always pleased to provide a geologist's perspective.

The Ute Indians of Utah, Colorado, and New Mexico. By Virginia McConnell Simmons. (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2000, 323 pp. Illustrations, maps, bibliography, index. Cloth, \$29.95.)

Distinguished Colorado historian Virginia M. Simmons (no relation to this reviewer) has provided a comprehensive and readable summary of the history of the Ute tribe, from arrival of the white-man through the twentieth century. Much of the narrative, of course, deals with hostilities between the Utes and their neighbors, both Indian and white, since that is the sort of thing that got into the written record.

The first solid information about the Utes becomes available at the time of the great Pueblo Revolt of 1680 in New Mexico. For the next century and a half, the tribe remained engaged in warfare, their foes shifting from one people to another in short order, based on provocations that may seem trivial to us today.

In 1840 the allied Cheyenne/Arapaho made peace at Bent's Fort, Colorado with their old enemies the Comanche/Kiowa and thereafter these Plains tribes turned their raiding toward the Utes attacking their villages all the way into Utah. That date marks the beginning of the end of Ute power and glory. During the next forty years, their troubles with New Mexicans, Americans, and other tribes would leave the Utes virtually destitute and at last confined on reservations to a tiny fragment of their original homeland.

In 1850 twenty-eight Ute chiefs signed the first of a number of peace treaties with the U. S. government, but it broke

down almost before the ink was dry. Author Simmons speaks of what happened to the tribe over the next three decades as “the unraveling,” meaning the disintegration of the old Ute way of life. The Meeker massacre at the White River Agency in 1879 was a major event in the last stages of that process.

Since the original Ute homeland stretched across northern New Mexico, western Colorado, and far into Utah, readers interested in the Old Spanish Trail will find much of value in this book. Many familiar names associated with the trail, such as Escalante, Frémont, Walkara, Kit Carson, and Gwinn Harris Heap, for example, are to be found here.

Simmons correctly notes that in spite of their importance and large population, the Utes and their history remain largely unknown to the majority of Americans. This volume, therefore, can serve as an introduction to the tribe’s story and as a handy reference for researchers. It is entitled to a firm recommendation.

Reviewed by Marc Simmons
Cerrillos, New Mexico

***One Eye Closed, the Other Red:
The California Bootlegging Years.***

By Clifford James Walker. (Barstow: Back Door Publishing, 1999. 667 pages, photos, maps, bibliography, index. \$25 hardcover; \$18 softcover)

The Prohibition Era officially began in 1919 with the ratification of the 18th Amendment, known as the Volstead Act. So commenced a colorful and storied time of bootleg liquor, home-made “moonshine”, speakeasies, rum-

runners and federal agents chasing them. All through the roaring twenties and early thirties prohibition was the maligned and frequently ineffective law-of-the-land. Not until the election of Franklin D. Roosevelt and a Democratic congress was the 18th Amendment repealed in 1933.

A fair amount has been written about prohibition in the eastern cities, particularly New York and Chicago, but very little has appeared regarding moonshiners, bootleggers, and speakeasies in California. Clifford Walker has remedied this in his latest book, an exhaustive and thoroughly researched account of the efforts to circumvent the Volstead Act in the Golden State.

Walker, whose grandfather was a moonshiner in the 1920s, spent the better part of twenty years in researching the topic. He traveled the length and breadth of California, interviewing more than a hundred former moonshiners, bootleggers, and their descendants. He has scoured local, state, and national archives, museums, historical society collections, and newspaper files. He has covered the prohibition era in California so well that no other scholar or writer needs to repeat the research. If ever a work is definitive, this is.

A major attribute of Walker’s book is that he lets the bootleggers tell their own stories. He includes the accounts of dozens of men who produced and sold illicit liquor, scores of wives, sons and daughters, and many lawmen who tried, often futilely, to halt the manufacture and distribution of moonshine. These hundreds of first-hand accounts give the reader a real feel for the bygone era. The author claims that he did not intend to write a history book

per se, but there is a great amount of history within these pages. He has captured in rich detail one of California’s most exciting sagas, covering the “Roaring Twenties” and the beginning of the Great Depression.

One Eye Closed, the Other Red will fascinate the reader. It belongs on the bookshelf of all collectors of Californiana.

Reviewed by John Robinson
Fullerton, California

Visions of the West: Art And Artifacts from the Private Collections of J.B.Bryan, Torch Energy Advisors Incorporated and Others. Edited by Melissa Baldrige, (Published by Gibbs-Smith, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1999, Photographs, illustrations, introduction by Patricia Limerick, index. Hardcover \$60)

This book represents art collected over thirty five years by J.P.Bryan, CEO of Torch Energy Advisors in Texas. He bought whatever he liked, all of it art relating to the North American West. The act that impelled him to collect in a serious way was his discovery in 1966 that his father had sold his own outstanding collection of materials relating to Texas to the University of Texas. Not being able to inherit these special items spurred him into serious collecting on this own. His motto was to “acquire the rarest first; (as) the most common will always be available”.

Melissa Baldrige, who was hired as curator of the eclectic collection assembled by J.P. Bryan, served as editor-in-chief of the project of presenting and interpreting the art of the

North American West in this book. It could have been an illustrated catalogue of the collections which would in itself have been interesting. But it is far more than that; we are provided with an in-depth discussion of the various lives and cultures of the communities represented by the art and artifacts in the collection as well as the most lavish and outstandingly beautiful color photography which illustrates them. Topics explored include essays on the Mission led Indian communities described by Gilberto M. Hinojosa who assessed the influence, both good and bad, of the Spanish missionaries, to the Black West in which William Katz comments on the misperceptions engendered by previous descriptions of the American West which “omitted people of African descent” even though they were present in large numbers. He says: “Scholarly diligence has cleared a path for these long-neglected pioneers to begin to enter the public consciousness” and illustrates his thesis by describing the experiences of many African Americans as they contributed to the settlement of the various territories of the west.

“The Search for Texas” deals with themes of exploration, immigration and settlement as depicted in some beautiful paintings done by Texas artists in the hundred years from 1850 to 1950. Other major topics include, Christian Art and Imagery, Cowgirls, the Wild, Wild Women of the West, Firearms, “Tools of Triumph and Tragedy” and others.

But the photographs in this book are what gives it its character and defines the American West. They are absolutely extraordinary and add immensely to the reader’s enjoyment of and appreciation of the art. Yet, except for a section, (not listed in the Table of Contents), described as a “Photographer’s Statement” by George O. Jackson Jr. who says he “set forth to document the important festivals of each of Mexico’s indigenous folk cultures” which he illustrates with photographs capturing the activity, color and essence of the folk lore and traditions of the various communities, the photographers who made this book so vivid and so beautiful, are not given adequate credit.

in a couple of other sections telling the reader that the photography in a particular chapter is by either Bako/Becq World Wide and Frank White, or Frank White, alone. Otherwise there does not appear to be any indication of who was responsible for the photographs, although each is carefully identified as to subject, size and location. At the end of the book the editor has included biographical material about the authors of the various chapters, giving them full credit for their work. The biography also lists the photographers, but they are not, except as noted above, given specific credit in the text.

While J.P.Bryan can be credited for assembling such a wide-ranging and unusual collection of art and artifacts, and, probably, for encouraging the publication of this book with its glorious and prolific illustrations, the real strength of the book lies in its in-depth treatment of the various categories of history that make up the North American West.

Reviewed by Jean Bruce Poole
Pasadena, California

Becky Duval Reese’s chapter entitled

There is a note at the foot of the page

Old Spanish Trail Association
P. O. Box 7
Marysville, WA 98270



Nonprofit Org.
U.S.Postage
PAID
Angel Fire, NM
Permit No. 7



See you in Redlands, CA for the
2001 OSTA Conference, June 9-10