

SPANISH TRACES



Volume 8

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No. 1

Halburian Receives Crampton Award at Local Reception



Photo by Sally Hall

Yvonne Halburian of our Saguache chapter was named a Crampton Award recipient this past June at the OSTA national conference in Redlands, California, but unfortunately was not able to attend the conference. Finally, on September 4, her well-wishers caught up with her. A festive reception, arranged by Pat Richmond, was held in her hometown of Saguache, Colorado, and she now does have the award in-hand. Saguache proudly claims a population of 650 on a peak day.

The announcement of the award was first made in the Fall 2001 issue of Spanish Traces. Readers should refer back to that issue for a review of her illustrious contributions to OSTA, the logo in the masthead above right being only one of them. Her latest is the mule logo adopted for OST signage, and which we hope will be used for the NHT. We thank you again, Yvonne, for your continuing dedication to the Old Spanish Trail. *continued on page 28*



Hafens Reprinted !

The University of Nebraska Press advises us they **are** doing a reprint of Hafens' classic, *Old Spanish Trail*, again as a paperback. We plan to have copies available at the OSTA June conference in Cedar City, and perhaps available sooner through the *Spanish Traces* editors. Let us know your wishes by e-mail (or s-mail) and we will get back to you with the specifics as soon as we have them. As you know, the original hardback is long out of print and now considered rare, and the 1993 paperback reprint is also now out of print and extremely scarce. ■

Inside this Issue

Crampton Award	1 & 28
Hafens Reprinted	1
Tragedy of September 11	2
President's Corner	3
NHTrail Legislation Update	4
PNTS Conference Report	5
Butt's Boulder and Marker	5
Chapter Reports	6-9
Black Pioneers on the OST, Harley	10
OST Bibliohistory, Robinson	12
North Branch Research, Kessler	15
Outlaw Country, McCombs	16
OST Marked by Early Explorers, Heath	20
Carracas Canyon with Bicycles	22
Know Your Historians: Colville	24
Book Reviews	24-27

The Tragedy of September 11

Your editors have received several letters from friends overseas relating to the September 11 event, most of whom we have met on our bicycling treks. One in particular that we wish to share with you is from OSTA members in England, John and Lorna Sharpe. Many of you will remember John from his presentation at the national conference in Taos in June 2000. Their letter follows:

As far-flung OSTA members, we want to say that our American friends are very much in our thoughts in the aftermath of the appalling events of September 11. The diabolical planning behind the atrocity is as incomprehensible as the cold-blooded hatred motivating the inhuman "martyrs" who put it into effect.

Writing as we are in late September, when action against those responsible seems imminent, we are moved to say that we in Britain are expecting much of our national figures in the way of support for your great nation's leaders at a time of crisis for us all.

In reflecting on history's momentous

parallels of transatlantic cooperation in dire adversity, it may not be too fanciful to recall that 160 years have passed since an Anglo-American partnership underpinned one of the defining events of the Old Spanish Trail. Led by an American citizen and an Englishman from my home village, the Workman/Rowland Expedition of 1841 followed meticulous planning in perilous circumstances to overcome all that the long trail could throw at them and secure a better future for its far-sighted adherents.

We look forward to renewing OSTA acquaintances in more normal times and wish you well.

Lorna and John Sharpe ■



Photo by KnL Carpenter

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

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

Membership Dues:

Regular	\$15/year
Student (under 18)	\$12/year
Institutional	\$25/year
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President's Corner

by Liz Warren

Last month marked the end of the first year of the new century, and what a year 2001 has been. All of you will be embarked on whatever 2002 will bring by the time you read this message, but the events of last year will surely be felt for the rest of our lives. Wherever you are and whatever your hope for the future, I wish for each of you a year filled with good fortune.

I wish as well that you all include the Old Spanish Trail Association among the activities you choose for special commitment this year, when our long-sought nomination of the trail to National Historic Trail status will face its first hurdle in Congress. We will need all the energy of all our members to succeed in turning the attention of our Congressional representatives to our project, and to persuade them it should have high priority. Each of you is important to the campaign. When it comes, please answer the call to serve, whether it be to chair a committee, lobby by letter or in person, or assist by providing the strong, well functioning organization OSTA must be to function as a credible support group.

Thanks to the hard work of many members of OSTA, we made great progress toward our goal in 2001. I personally want to express my profound appreciation for the "above and beyond" dedication of our current secretary and treasurer, Lorraine and Kenn Carpenter. They work indefatigably to keep the Board on the straight and narrow and accomplish our work within the appointed time parameters. In their "spare time," they took up the most important work of editing our

journal, *Spanish Traces*, a line of work new to them but incomparably important to OSTA if we are to continue to function. Great distance separates us from one another, but the internet and email unite us and make frequent, timely conversation possible. Let us all make New Year's Resolution #1 that we will answer electronic mail quickly and with care, having thought through the substance of the message, and make easier the heavy burden of work that Kenn and Lorraine have assumed.

On a personal note, my search for the Holy Grail of the Ph.D. ended successfully after many years of struggle. No time for a celebration yet; I am hoping to have a positive response from a publishing house soon, and **that** will be reason for a great celebration. I am now

able to re-focus on OSTA, and many of you will be hearing from me as we make up for lost time. OSTA needs enthusiastic candidates for many slots, including state directors, chapter presidents, and several of the officers of the Board. Please be positive when you are asked to serve; OSTA NEEDS YOU ALL!

Our annual meeting will be held in Utah this year, new territory for OSTA but familiar to any OST caravan leader. Our program will take advantage of the convergence of trails in southern Utah for papers and for field trips. Set aside the dates of June 8 and 9, 2002 to join fellow OST devotees in exploring the beautiful country of southern Utah and its place in the history of the Old Spanish Trail. ■

2002 Annual OSTA Conference



June 8 & 9

The OSTA National Conference and Symposium will be held in Utah this year, at Southern Utah University, on Saturday and Sunday June 8 and 9. OSTA member Steve Heath has been appointed conference coordinator, and is now deeply into the planning. As usual, the symposium papers will be presented on Saturday, with a reception in the evening at the Iron Mission Museum. Field trips will be on Sunday to several backroad areas requiring car pooling, one of which is to visit several

remote glyphs in the area, and you can read about those now in Steve's article on pages 20–21. Other trips may be to Mountain Meadows, Holt Canyon, Little Creek and the Bear Valleys, Iron Springs, Parowan Gap, the Jefferson Hunt marker, the towns of Paragonah and Parowan, etc. This area is rich with history from trail days.

Conference registration packets will be mailed to members in early April. Plan your trip now, before gas prices go up.

Summary of Nov 3 Board Meeting

The OSTA board of directors met Nov 3 in Las Vegas with an agenda that took a full day to cover. The following were some of the key issues covered.

It was finalized that the next national conference would be June 8 and 9 in Cedar City, Utah, and that Steve Heath would be the conference coordinator. Much discussion took place about facilities at SUU, a theme for the conference, speakers, and other essential items that must be budgeted.

Plans for expanding and improving our website were discussed, and will be committed to a written plan for the next board meeting. A financial report for the Redlands conference this past June was submitted by the treasurer, accepted, and then a \$200 donation was approved to the San Bernardino County Museum (who hosted the conference) for providing the use of their wonderful facilities at the Museum and at the Asistencia.

OSTA archives are now being deposited at the Denver Public Library, Western History Department. To smooth out the archiving procedures, our archives manager, Carol Corbett, Director for Nevada, is preparing guidelines for in-house retention time of documents, disposition of records at the end of the specific retention time, and procedures for transmitting to the Denver Library. In due time all of these procedures should work smoothly.

Often there is a several-month interval between board meetings, and during that time it is necessary that the board discuss and vote on specific items. In

Status of National Historic Trail Legislation for the Old Spanish Trail

*prepared by Willard Lewis
on behalf of the OSTA Ad Hoc NPS Liaison Committee*

As you are aware, the National Park Service (NPS) Long Distance Trails Office completed, in May, a feasibility report indicating that the Old Spanish Trail met the criteria for National Historic Trail (NHT) designation. In early summer, this position was endorsed by the National Historic Landmarks Committee and the National Park System Advisory Board.

Legislation to provide NHT designation was introduced in the Senate by Senators Domenici and Bingaman prior to NPS transmittal. Subsequently the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee delayed action on legislation until the Congress receives the NPS report from the Administration.

order to establish a workable, effective, and fair procedure, a policy was developed and approved on how to handle the e-mail discussion and voting, giving a specific period of time for communicating points of view, and then a specific time period for voting, and a defined method for counting votes.

Elections of six board members will take place this spring, and a nominating committee for those positions will be appointed very soon. There are six positions to be filled: Pres, 1 year; Vice Pres, 1 year; Sec, 2 years; Treas, 2 years; CA Director, 3 years; UT Director, 3 years. Election information and ballots will be mailed to OSTA members the first week in April.

The next board meeting will be March 23, again in Las Vegas, NV. ■

The favorable report cleared the regional and national offices of NPS. During the week of November 16, the Secretary of the Interior forwarded the report to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for Administration clearance for submission of the report to Congress. Based on OMB actions on other similar recent projects, an OMB response to the Department of the Interior could come within the next three to four weeks. This schedule makes it unlikely that Congress will receive the report until it reconvenes in January, after the winter holiday recess.

It is anticipated that the OMB will allow the Department to submit the report to Congress, since Congress originally requested the report. In recent months the Administration has taken the position that it does not support the establishment of new NPS facilities and projects until current facilities receive funding to overcome deferred maintenance and operations problems. It is possible that OMB guidance in this case will require the Department of the Interior to transmit the report to Congress without a recommendation for action. Of course, Congress can pass legislation making the NHT designation, leaving the approval or veto decision to the President.

Your Ad Hoc Committee will continue to monitor the situation, and will undertake grassroots Congressional activity in January or whenever the report reaches Congress. ■

PNTS Conference a Success

by Jack and Katherine Nelson

OSTA representatives at the Conference

We had an outstanding experience being participants this past August at the 7th PNTS conference in Casper, Wyoming, hosted by the Oregon-California Trails Association. Conference sponsors were The Partnership for the National Trails System, National Park Service, USDA–Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, Federal Highway Administration, and the American Hiking Society. Casper was an ideal site for the conference, being the crossroads of numerous significant trails: Continental Divide National Scenic, Oregon, California, Mormon Pioneer, Pony Express, Bridger, and Bozeman.

This was OSTA's first participation at a PNTS conference, and to put it honestly, we felt like orphans; one lonely trail, unknown to most. But, your most vocal representatives soon became accepted and recognized as potential and viable members of a most exclusive group. There were representatives of 14 historic and 8 scenic national trails in

attendance; approximately 140 bodies consisting of an interesting cross section of about half professional and half volunteer.

It was a fascinating conference. We had an opportunity to interface with some real heavyweights. We received promise of help and support. Being just a phone call away, this sounds great for promoting the OST through the legislative process and for public education support. We were listened to in several one-on-one conversations from people who can possibly help us over the rough spots down the trail. We heard good news and bad news. We received an in-depth scrutiny from names usually only seen on letterheads, and our trail seemed to pass muster.

It was not a "talk to" conference, but a hands-on, pick-your-brain, three day session. Most were caucus type small group sessions, able to discuss concerns, successes, failures, hopes, and how did

you do it. It was time very well spent. We met in sessions with people from the Iditarod Trail to the Hawaiian trail. We heard of concerns on the Florida footpaths, and who should get the funds from "logo" sales. We found out we do not, and can not, stand alone, or know-all, or do-all by ourselves. We must continue to communicate and develop cooperative partnerships with public as well as private agencies.

Probably the big success of the day was our display. Our pack mule logo raised questions, as did the frig magnets. Probably every trail nut from the El Camino

Real to Selma has a refrigerator door held together by a tiny burro carrying the load.

The conference was a huge success. We saw very few prima donnas. It was a large concentration of dedicated hard working trail people, and it was our pleasure to represent OSTA. ■



Boulder and Marker at Butt's Ranch

Photos by KnL Carpenter



Located at Piute Springs in south-east Utah. At 9 miles northwest from Dove Creek (CO) on US-666, go north on Ucolo Road 4.7 miles.

The Spanish Trail

Piute Springs, San Juan County, was a major water stop along the Spanish Trail. The trail was active from 1829 to 1848 during the Mexican period of the American West. The 1,120-mile route from Santa Fe, New Mexico, to Los Angeles, California, followed a northward looping course that passed through the rugged southern and central landscapes of Utah. This trail avoided the deep canyons of the Colorado River and the hostile Indians of Arizona. The trail took riders over two months to complete.

Large caravans traveled east and west along the trail, moving woolen goods to California in exchange for horses and mules brought back to New Mexico. The need to ford major streams dictated the route. Piute Springs provided abundant water and was an historic campsite. In 1848, as a result of the end of the Mexican War, the territory became part of the United States.

The first recorded burial in San Juan County is at Piute Springs in 1879 for D. Carpenter.

PLACED BY THE SAN JUAN COUNTY CENTENNIAL COMMISSION - 1996



The 1879 Headstone at Piute Springs.

Chapter Reports

Workman Chapter – UK

(They came back again! Chapter President Bill Ramsay, and Secretary David Fallowfield, have visited the USA several times before, including doing a “highway” version of the complete Old Spanish Trail (Main Branch) from Santa Fe to Los Angeles in 1997. They came for another expedition this past August, and here David relates details of their ambitious 5,000-mile tour of Western Historic Trails, visiting with OSTA members along the way who helped make their trip such a success. – Editors)

As we landed at Denver Airport in a thunderstorm on 13 August 2001, I was somewhat concerned that perhaps our itinerary was a little too ambitious. We collected our rental car and, following the S. Platte River, headed east for the city of Sterling where we spent the night. Next morning, after breakfast in Ogallala, we picked up the Oregon Trail in the N. Platte River valley and followed it west, visiting the historic landmarks Courthouse and Jail Rocks, Chimney Rock, and finally Scotts Bluff National Monument. Along the way I thought of my relative, David Workman, who came this way in 1854 with his family on their way from Missouri to join his younger brother, William, in California. It must have been somewhere on these vast plains of Nebraska that one morning they were forced to surrender their provisions to a band of 500 “fierce” looking Sioux and Cheyenne warriors in order to proceed safely to Fort Laramie.

From Scotts Bluff we traveled north to

Hot Springs, South Dakota where we stayed with my cousin for two nights and were able to visit Badlands National Park and Mount Rushmore National Monument. On 16 August, before leaving SD, we paid a visit to Deadwood where Calamity Jane and Wild Bill Hickok lived and died. Moving west into Wyoming we visited Devil’s Tower National Monument before crossing the Bighorn Mountains via Granite Pass. As we came out of the mountains alongside Shell Creek we called at a dude ranch for a rendezvous with fellow-friend, Nick Swinscoe, who, by coincidence, was vacationing there. He could well be the next new member of our Chapter! Then we reached Cody, our overnight destination.

Next day we marveled at the natural wonders of Yellowstone National Park and Grand Teton National Park, and eventually followed the Snake River to Idaho Falls. Day Six and we dropped south into Utah, and because Bill and I are railroad buffs, we went out to the Golden Spike National Monument at Promontory Summit, a route my aunts would have taken on the way to California by train in 1884. From this remote spot we traveled into central Salt Lake City to see the Mormon Temple and State Capitol Building. Again I thought of David Workman and his family who arrived here on 4th July 1854, remaining for 30 days and acquiring new oxen and mules. Apparently Brigham Young attempted to induce them to settle in Utah, but to no avail as they were “California bound.” We, on the other hand, traveled south to Spanish Fork and southeast over the Wasatch to Price and on to Castle Dale where we picked up the OLD SPANISH TRAIL.

Kenn Carpenter had kindly sent me detailed instructions and maps relating to this “back-country” route known today as the Green River Cutoff. Traveling on these dirt roads we also did the side-trip to The Wedge Overlook (of the San Rafael River). Kenn’s instructions were accurate to one tenth of a mile! Also, the weather was kind, fine and sunny, nor had there been rain for sometime; otherwise, these roads can be difficult or even impossible. This section was definitely one of the highlights of our trip. Continuing east on the Cutoff, the geology continued to be awesome, and the road became very primitive until we reached paved Highway 6 (see photos). We arrived Green River at sundown and, again following Kenn’s instructions, drove north 2.4 miles on Rte. 1712 / Hastings Road to find the OST sign at the historic Green River Ford, which we had not seen on our 1997 visit to Green River.

Early next morning we went south via Goblin Valley State Park and crossed the Dirty Devil and Colorado Rivers to Natural Bridges National Monument. From here we went to Muley Point to view Monument Valley and the “Goosenecks” of the San Juan River, and later that afternoon visited the Four Corners Monument, which cannot be far removed from the Armijo Trace of 1829. Finally, we went out to the spectacular volcanic neck of Ship Rock before finding accommodation in Farmington, New Mexico.

Day Eight and we set off due east and reached Chama just in time to witness (and videotape) the 10 A.M. departure of the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad steam train. En route to Taos we stopped to inspect the Rio Grande Gorge Bridge. In Taos itself we shopped around and



Photo by KnL Carpenter, 1996

**Near its east end the Green River Cutoff
is a stratified wonderland !**



Photo by KnL Carpenter, 1996

**The East End of the Cutoff is Primitive,
and Impassable after a Rain.**

thought not only of Kit Carson but also of our hero William Workman, who made his home here for 16 years (1825–1841). We then drove out into the mountains to Angel Fire (NM) to stay as guests of Richard and Marie Greene. I think the stars in the night sky there are the best I have ever seen. The following

day Richard acted as our guide and we went east to join the Mountain Route of the Santa Fe Trail at Cimarron, where we visited the historic St James Hotel, then proceeded as far as the Colorado side of Raton Pass before visiting Capulin Volcano National Monument and returning to Angel Fire. Another

early start next morning and, after saying goodbye and thank you to the Greenes, we traveled north via Bob Cat Pass to Questa, where we joined the East Fork (North Branch) of the OST, which we followed, passing Costilla and San Luis. We were heading for Fort Garland, Colorado, where we had arranged a rendezvous with OSTA Past President Ron Kessler. This was the first time Bill and I had been in the San Luis Valley, and with the view of Mount Blanca being particularly good that morning, it made for a great first impression of the area.

We met up with Ron Kessler in the bookshop at the Fort, and there I purchased the book, *Tom Tobin*, by James E Perkins—a great book, full of the exciting and bloody history of this corner of the West. With Ron we viewed the excellent displays at the Fort (Colorado Historical Society). During the rest of the day until it got dark and for most of the following morning, Ron very kindly showed us some of the main sites of interest in the beautiful San Luis Valley. Who better to guide us? Thus it was that the author of several books on the history of the area showed us examples of rock art at Trinchera Creek, Carnero Creek, Penitente Canyon, etc., and traces and wagon ruts of the East and West Forks of the North Branch of the OST, Great Sand Dunes National Monument, the Hathaway Quarry, limekilns, hill-top hut circles, etc. It was unavoidable to mention de Anza, who also came this way in late August, as we were following much of his 1779 trail. Also, we were, in places, following in the footsteps of our countryman, the diarist adventurer, George Frederick Ruxton, *cont'd >>>*

who passed this way in 1846. Eventually, we said our farewells and thank yous to Ron and left him at the north end of "his" valley, and we traversed the Poncha Pass and headed for Colorado Springs. Here we visited Garden of the Gods and looked up at Pikes Peak and thought of the explorer Zebulon Pike; by nightfall we were in La Junta on the Santa Fe Trail.

Early next morning we looked over Bent's Old Fort, which played such a major part in the history of the Santa Fe Trail. Having followed the Arkansas River out of the Rocky Mountains, we stayed with it across Kansas, making a short stop at Dodge City. Still with the Arkansas, the next day we reached Tulsa, Oklahoma, and spent the day with a professor friend at two wonderful museums, the Gilcrease and the Philbrook, both of which have excellent Western Americana collections.

On our 14th day we headed north, back to the Santa Fe Trail at Lawrence, KS, where we spent the night. Next morning, we went to Kansas City, Missouri and in rural countryside not far from the Kansas City Airport I saw signs indicating we were on the Lewis & Clark Trail, which reminded me that I had called our itinerary the most ambitious since the Lewis & Clark Expedition of 1804. Soon we were airborne and flew, via Chicago, to Manchester in the North of England. Thanks to Bill doing most of the driving, my four and a half hour videotape is a wonderful diary of our trip. Our thanks again to the OSTA members who helped make it so memorable and worthwhile.

David Fallowfield, Secretary
Penrith, Cumbria, England ■

Salida del Sol Chapter

Since the chapter's last report, the Salida del Sol (SDS) Chapter has carried out a busy schedule of activities. Chapter President Peter Mackaness, and OSTA Vice President Richard Greene, led a successful tour of portions of the High Road to Taos, which was also the East Fork of the North Branch of OST.

Three program meetings were conducted. On October 27, Hal Jackson, National President of the Santa Fe Trail Association, and an SDS/OSTA member, presented a program, "A Multitude of Trails," discussing the convergence of three historic trails in the Santa Fe and New Mexico area. The Camino Real and the Santa Fe Trail are already Congressionally designated national historic trails, and OST should be designated soon.

Robert Shlaer, noted daguerreotype photographer and historian (also an SDS/OSTA member and presenter to the OSTA national conference in Taos), gave a November slide presentation of his new project documenting the Kern images made on the Gunnison Expedition in 1853. A portion of the Gunnison route followed the North Branch of OST, and intercepted the main route of the OST.

On December 1, Alan Osborne, an independent historian and Director of Southwest Seminars in Santa Fe, discussed "New Mexico, Mexico, Texas and Manifest Destiny." This was an overview of the fascinating period from the late 1700s to the 1846 occupation of New Mexico by the United States. The period is important to the context of OST,

since it spanned the commercial trade and emigration phase of OST.

The chapter board of directors met and continued planning interpretive markers at locations in Santa Fe and Abiquiu, and a trail guide for New Mexico portions of the Old Spanish Trail.

Looking ahead to late winter and spring, the chapter plans program meetings on February 23, March 16, April 27, and May 18. A reception following the February meeting will honor Dr. Tom Chavez, Director of the Palace of the Governors, who will retire in the spring. The March meeting will be the annual joint meeting of the Salida del Sol Chapter, the End of the Trail Chapter of the Santa Fe Trail Association, and the Palace of the Governors History Museum docents. Two summer field trips are planned for June and July.

Prepared by Willard Lewis
OSTA Director for New Mexico
Santa Fe, New Mexico ■

Bulk Mail Notice to Members

Spanish Traces is bulk mailed, and will not be forwarded by the Post Office. Please notify the OSTA Secretary if you have an address change (or phone or e-mail change). We don't want you to miss a copy.

North Branch Chapter

First we must say that Katherine and I had a great experience in August representing the OSTA at the PNTS conference in Casper, Wyoming. (See page 5 for the conference report.) Part of the cost for our trek to the conference was underwritten by donations into a special fund established for such events. Our most hearty thanks to our Chapter, to friends of our Chapter, and to the strong supporters of the Old Spanish Trail throughout our area.

Our Chapter has been extremely busy staying on top of the legislative process or any movement concerning the trail. We meet with Congressional staff on a regular basis and were quite encouraged until the 9/11 disaster. It appears now that any action will have to wait until after the first of the year when a new bill be introduced. We have a good idea who will carry the bill and hopefully receive bipartisan support. We are fortunate to have members in our group who have had extensive legislative experience at all levels of government.

All we can say to each of you is "hang in there," and to continue the contacts through letters and phone calls, and personal relationships. Many of us have been working on this dream for years, and this will happen sooner than later.

Jack Nelson, President
Grand Junction, Colorado ■



Hispanic Banquet Udall to Speak OSTA Invited

The New Mexican Hispanic Cultural Preservation League invites the Old Spanish Trail Association members to its Fourth Annual Thanksgiving banquet, April 27, 2002, at the Albuquerque Country Club, 601 Laguna Blvd SW, Albuquerque, NM.

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Citing the letter sent by Conchita Lucero, Special Events Chair & Banquet co-chair, "The Thanksgiving celebration commemorates the First Thanksgiving by Spanish Europeans in 1598. Our ancestors came with their families to settle in a new land seeking a future and leaving a legacy. Awards are presented to those who work to preserve our Spanish Culture and history. The award recipients will be Dona Eufemia, Mrs. Tibo (Betty) Chavez, City of Belen, Citizen of the year 1998 and El Adelantado Former Ambassador to Spain, don Edwardo Romero.

"The featured speaker is Stuart L. Udall, Arizona Congressman 1955-61, Secretary of the Interior 1961-69. Mr. Udall was awarded the 1999 Nuclear Free Future Lifetime Achievement Award, to name one of the many awards he has received. Stuart Udall has an appreciation for the Southwest, especially its history, reflected in books he has written such as *Majestic Journey*, with a forward by Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, and *Coronado's Inland Empire*. The Spanish government bestowed the title of Knight of the Order of Isabel the Catholic on Mr. Udall.

"Tickets are \$40.00 per person. Ask about our 'Sponsor a Student' program. Tables will be assigned on a first come basis upon receipt of payment and are available in groups of eight. For more information call evenings and weekends."

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Black Pioneers on the OST: Salt Lake City to San Bernardino, 1851

by R. Bruce Harley

The early westerly migration of various groups ranging from Hispanics trekking out of northern New Mexico to California in the early 1840s, to *Americanos* mostly of origin from the East and Midwest (Mormons), has become an increasingly historical subject in line with modern historiography. This interest appears to date from the nation's bicentennial in 1976, followed by later endeavors.¹

Increased emphasis on the history of the Old Spanish Trail logically leads to acquiring information about any other ethnic group(s). The question then obviously arises about any migration role by African-Americans using that trail.² Although information is somewhat scanty, it is possible to extract some Black history from early white accounts and more recently developed narratives as an outgrowth of that ethnic group's continuing research for roots both historical and genealogical.

As a starting point, it can be noted that Jedediah Smith, after traversing part of what became the Old Spanish Trail, finally arrived in San Bernardino Valley on November 26, 1826. With this expedition of 15 men was Peter Ranney, the first known Black man to enter the valley. Whether any other Blacks entered that valley during the next 15 years (1826–1851) is not known. But with heavy use of the OST from 1830 to 1848 by annual trading caravans, there may have been some Black traders, fur company men, and just plain seekers in the valley during that span whose presence was not recorded.³

Apparently, when the Mormons decided to avoid further persecution at Nauvoo, Illinois, they had no Negro members of the colonizing expedition undertaken first to Council Bluffs, Iowa and then on to Utah. On July 24, 1847, the first small group of Mormon pioneers arrived in Salt Lake Valley. Other contingents of this main group continued to arrive before winter. Some groups kept arriving for several years. It is not apparent that any Blacks made the trip until converts from the U.S. South began arriving in 1848 with their slaves.

When leader Brigham Young arranged for another colony to be organized in California's San Bernardino Valley, the response was well-nigh overwhelming. Over 400 people volunteered instead of the expected 100 or so. The final count was 411 whites and 26 Negro slaves (Utah Territory was not yet in the "free" category). Bishop Crosby, the spiritual leader of the colony, took a dozen slaves with him while Charles Rich had a half-dozen. Other emigrants had one or two slaves. Technically, all of the slaves automatically were freed when the group entered the new state of California, which was in the "free" category.

More is known about the Flake family and its one slave than other families simply because the family committed more of their experiences to paper than many other families. The white and black Flake families also tended to stay in touch more with each other than some others.

Briefly, the Flake family originated in North Carolina. Their slave, Elizabeth (known as Lizzy), was born there in the late 1830s. The entire family moved to Mississippi about 1840 and was converted there to Mormonism in 1844. Answering the call to go west to Zion, they traveled to Nauvoo, Illinois, and spent the winter of 1846–1847 there. Next came the trip to Council Bluffs and then on to Utah, 1847–1848, arriving in October. The father, James M. Flake, later died in 1850 while gold prospecting in California.

Consequently, the widow, Agnes Flake, was eager to move again when Brigham Young's call was announced. Some 220 southerners responded, about half of the final total. During the three-month journey from March 14, 1851 to June 11, 1851 (Cajon Pass), Agnes drove a team of mules hitched to a covered wagon. Her small daughter rode with her. The two sons drove the loose stock. Lizzy drove two yoke of oxen behind the wagon, one of the many contributions this newly freed black girl gave to continue the well-being of a family which was fatherless. This little group of three females and two young males covered the 100 miles to the junction with the Old Spanish Trail and then the 600 additional miles to San Bernardino apparently without a recorded major mishap.

Unfortunately, fate struck again when Alice died on January 5, 1855. Since the family had no relatives in San Bernardino, teenager Lizzy was left in charge of the three offspring. This situation continued until Flake relatives were notified and traveled from North Carolina to assume parental duties. Lizzy became a nursemaid to support herself. In 1857, when the Mormons

were called back to Salt Lake City, the Blacks were evidently given the option of returning to Utah as slaves or remaining in California as freed people. Apparently, Brigham Young's final decision was to summarily free them and not take any back to Utah.⁴ The eventual result was a small group of Black families whose descendants still live in the San Bernardino area, similarly to their Hispanic neighbors who never left the Colton area.⁵

By this time, Elizabeth Flake would soon marry Charles Rowan, a free Negro who had driven a team from Utah. They built a home on some land along "D" Street near San Bernardino's downtown area. Their daughter, Alice, was born about 1868. The parents encouraged her in educational endeavors, and she eventually graduated from the forerunner of today's University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). After her graduation in education in 1888, she became a teacher at Trujillo School, one of the grade schools in the Agua Mansa District. She was the first Black teacher in San Bernardino Valley and the first Black to be awarded a lifetime teaching certificate. After two years, she then became a teacher in the Los Angeles district. On February 9, 1909, after many years of distinguished service, that city's leading newspaper, *The Times*, honored Alice Rowan Johnson as one of that year's ten foremost "Black women of worth."⁶

Other black pioneers from the 1851 trek down the Old Spanish Trail perhaps were not as successful as the Rowan family but did have some small achievements. "Uncle" Grief Embers and his brother Toby were part of the group belonging to Bishop Crosby,

Embers being the name of a former owner. Grief became the earliest recorded African-American owner of real estate in the San Bernardino-Redlands area. Hannah Smith, the wife of Toby, had belonged to Robert Smith. She became another midwife for the area; being an excellent horsewoman, she responded to calls day or night. Harriet Embers, wife of Uncle Grief, probably once belonged to Bishop Crosby. Hart was the name of a slave belonging to William Lay. Robert M. Smith brought six or more slaves with him; he ran afoul of the law in 1856 when he attempted to take his ex-slaves with him to a new location. Mrs. Martha Beal, daughter of Toby and Hannah Embers and wife of Isreal Beal and an esteemed resident of Redlands for half a century, said that "she often heard her people laugh in later years over the terror they felt on reaching California and learning that they were no longer slaves. They did not know how they could live, and at first begged their former owners to take them back to a slave state. They found living in California quite different from what they feared, however, and all became independent members of the community," an accomplishment in itself.⁷

Endnotes

1. Two recent examples would include: Edward L. Lyman, *San Bernardino: The Rise and Fall of a (Mormon) California Community* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books), 1996, and R. Bruce Harley, "From New Mexico to California: San Bernardino Valley's First Settlers at Agua Mansa," *San Bernardino County Museum Association Quarterly*, Vol. 47, Nos. 3 and 4, 2000. Cited hereafter as *SBCMA Quarterly*.

2. Again, two fairly recent examples would be: Jeannine Guttman, "County's First Black Family . . .," *The Sun Telegram* (San Bernardino, CA), Sept. 7, 1980, and Byron R. Skinner "Black Origins in the [California] Inland Empire," *City of San Bernardino Historical Society Heritage Tales*, 1983, entire issue.

3. Tom Atchley, "Early Black Origins of San Bernardino County", *San Bernardino County Museum Commemorative Edition*, 1974, p. 39.

4. This segment based on Guttman, *op. cit.* and Osmar D. Flake, *Life of William Jordan Flake, Pioneer Colonizer* (Phoenix: privately printed), 1948.

5. Major Bell reported that a free Negro voted at the Agua Mansa precinct (Lorenzo Trujillo's home) on the election day for County seats in 1853 Horace Bell, *Reminiscence of a Ranger or Early Times in Southern California*, p. 62.

6. Nicolas Cataldo, "Elizabeth Flake Rowan, African-American Pioneer" in "Pioneers of San Bernardino, 1851-1857," *SBCMA Quarterly*, Vol. 48, No. 2 (2001), pp. 45-47; Shfrah Ann Rozenstein, "Alice Rowan, Teacher," *Fedco Reporter*, March 1994, p. 46.

7. George W. Beattie and Helen P. Beattie, *Heritage of the Valley: San Bernardino's First Century* (Oakland, CA: Biobooks, 1951), p. 186, fn. 13. ■



The Old Spanish Trail: a Bibliohistory

by John Robinson

Despite the significance of the Old Spanish Trail as a trade route between New Mexico and Los Angeles during the years 1829 and 1848, contemporary accounts of travel on the trail are scarce. When compared to the voluminous diaries, reminiscences, and histories of the Santa Fe, Oregon, and California trails, or even the Salt Lake-Los Angeles route, this paucity of written material becomes starkly evident. The traders and emigrants who plied the Old Spanish Trail had no Josiah Gregg, chronicler of the Santa Fe Trail, to graphically describe their daily travels and travails.

What little contemporary information we have concerning the annual trade caravans comes primarily from Mexican archives. Fortunately, Antonio Armijo, who brought the first caravan from Abiquiú to Los Angeles in 1829, composed a diary of his travels. For more than a century it gathered dust in the *Registro Oficial del Gobierno de los Estados-Unidos Mexicanos* (Official Government Register of the United States of Mexico) in Mexico City. It was discovered and first published in English by Leroy Hafen in the *Huntington Library Quarterly*, XI, 1947. Ralph Twitchell (ed.), *The Spanish Archives of New Mexico* (Cedar Rapids, Iowa, 1914) contains some mention of trade on the Old Spanish Trail, mostly from the New Mexico end. California Provincial Archives record caravan arrivals in Los Angeles and list inventories of trade items, along with thefts of livestock blamed on the New Mexicans. Some of this archival

material is found in Hubert Howe Bancroft's *History of California*, Volume III, 1825–1840 (San Francisco, 1886).

Contemporary Anglo-American travelers on the Old Spanish Trail have left us a handful of brief, spotty accounts of their adventures. Perhaps the best is the journal of Orville C. Pratt, who traveled the trail from Santa Fe to Los Angeles in 1848, preserved in the famous Coe Collection of Western Americana, Yale University. Thomas Jefferson Farnham's *Life, Adventure and Travels in California* (New York, 1849) contains a sketchy account of Dr. J. H. Lyman's 1841 trek over the trail. Farnham's geography is somewhat confused; he has Dr. Lyman following the north bank of the Colorado River to California, which would have taken the doctor and his party through the Grand Canyon! Another brief reference to the trail is in "The Narrative of Benjamin D. Wilson," dictated to California historian Hubert H. Bancroft in 1877 and published as an appendix to Robert Glass Cleland's *Pathfinders* (Los Angeles, 1929). William Wolfskill traveled the trail in 1831 and left us a terse account and his financial ledger of trip expenses, found in Iris Higbie Wilson's *William Wolfskill, 1798–1866, Frontier Trapper to California Ranchero* (Glendale, California, 1965).

John C. Frémont followed the western half of the Old Spanish Trail, from the Mojave Desert into central Utah, on his second expedition in 1844. The great pathfinder's log entry for April 20, 1844 contains the earliest known use of the term "Spanish Trail." (Mexican traders from Santa Fe apparently knew it only as "*El Camino a Los Angeles*.") Frémont's account of his expedition

along the western section of the trail is found in Donald Jackson and Mary Lee Spense (ed.), *The Expeditions of John Charles Frémont, Vol. I, Travels from 1838 to 1844* (Urbana, Illinois, 1970).

Following the American conquest of the Southwest, the Old Spanish Trail was eclipsed in favor of other, more direct wagon roads from New Mexico to California. The historic trade route was largely forgotten. It was not until 1921, more than seventy years after the trail's demise, that the first scholarly study devoted exclusively to the Old Spanish Trail appeared in print. At the bequest of Herbert E. Bolton, professor of history at the University of California and pioneer of the "Spanish Borderlands" field of research, doctoral student Joseph J. Hill wrote "The Old Spanish Trail: A Study of Spanish and Mexican Trade and Exploration Northwest from New Mexico to the Great Basin and California," which appeared in *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, August 1921. Hill followed this up with "Spanish and Mexican Exploration and Trade Northwest from New Mexico into the Great Basin," *Utah Historical Quarterly*, January 1930, which covered the eastern half of the trail. Hill was the first scholar to utilize the *Archivo General* and the *Biblioteca Nacional* in Mexico City in his study of the Old Spanish Trail.

Another protégé of Bolton at the University of California, Eleanor Lawrence, followed Joseph Hill in researching the Old Spanish Trail. Lawrence's graduate thesis, "The Old Spanish Trail from Santa Fe to California" (1928), was used as a basis for three subsequent articles on the trail. Her "On the Old Spanish Trail," *Touring Topics* (monthly magazine of

the Automobile Club of Southern California), November 1930, was a general article geared for the layman. Lawrence's "Horsethieves on the Spanish Trail," *Touring Topics*, January 1931, was the first serious study of *Los Chaguanosos*, the gang of horse thieves that plied the trail. Her most scholarly work was "Mexican Trade Between Santa Fe and Los Angeles, 1830–1848," *California Historical Quarterly*, March 1931.

One of the most notable Spanish Expeditions in Southwestern history explored a huge swath of what was then *tierra incognita* (unknown lands) northwest from Santa Fe in 1776, country that encompassed the eastern half of the Old Spanish Trail. Fathers Francisco Atanocio Dominguez and Silvestre Velez de Escalante made the trek in search of an overland route to Monterey, capital of Alta California. Father Escalante kept a detailed diary of the *entrada*, which fortunately has been preserved. Herbert Eugene Bolton followed Escalante's path and wrote *Pageant in the Wilderness: The Story of the Escalante Expedition in the Interior Basin, 1776* (Salt Lake City: Utah State Historical Society, 1950). Walter Briggs' *Without Noise of Arms: The 1776 Dominguez-Escalante Search for a Route from Santa Fe to Monterey* (Flagstaff: Northland Press, 1976) is the handsomest of the three books on the expedition, with many watercolor drawings. The best annotated of the three, encompassing the latest research, is Ted J. Warner (ed.), *The Dominguez-Escalante Journal: Their Expedition Through Colorado, Utah, Arizona, and New Mexico in 1776* (Provo:

Brigham Young University Press, 1976).

The first book-length study of the historic trail is Leroy R. Hafen and Ann W. Hafen, *Old Spanish Trail, Santa Fe to Los Angeles* (Glendale: The Arthur H. Clark Co., 1954), and what a book it is! This is history at its finest, covering Spanish explorer-padres like Fathers Dominguez and Escalante, fur hunters such as Jedediah Smith, Anglo pathfinders like John C. Frémont, the Mexican traders in their annual caravans over the trail, Anglo and New Mexican emigrants, horse thieves, and the saddest episode in the trail's saga, the slavers who trafficked in Indian women and children. Included in this landmark volume are Armijo's 1829 diary, Orville Pratt's 1848 diary, and Choteau's 1848 log of trail distances. Leroy Hafen (1893–1985) was one of the leading historians of the American West. He had a long association with the Arthur H. Clark Company, editing their fifteen-volume *Far West and the Rockies* series (of which *Old Spanish Trail* was Volume I) and the ten-volume *Mountain Men and the Fur Trade* series. In much of his research and writing he was aided by his wife Ann. The Hafens' scholarship was meticulous, thorough, and impeccable. Although slightly outdated by more recent scholarship, the Hafens' *Old Spanish Trail* remains a brilliant *tour de force*, the cornerstone for any study of the historic pathway. If your library contains but one book on the Old Spanish Trail, it should be the Hafens' volume. Unfortunately, the hard cover book is long out of print and quite scarce, as is the soft cover

1993 reprint by the University of Nebraska Press. At present a 2001 decision to reprint is under way.

Joseph P. Sanchez, Director of the Spanish Colonial Research Center in Albuquerque, New Mexico, is the author of *Explorers, Traders, and Slavers: Forging the Old Spanish Trail* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1997). Sanchez's noteworthy book covers in detail the early Spanish explorations northwest from Santa Fe, including the two 1765 expeditions of Juan Maria Antonio de Rivera. (Diaries and correspondence relating to Rivera's two *entradas* were accidentally discovered in the *Servicio Historico Militar* in Madrid in 1974, too late for Hafen to use.) Sanchez describes the Spanish search of the mythical *Tequayo* and the all too real *Rio Tizon*, the Colorado River in Utah. He tells the sad story of the infamous New Mexican slave trade, more extensive and longer lasting than earlier scholars thought. The strength of Sanchez's work is his thorough coverage of the origins of the Old Spanish Trail. Sanchez is more thorough than the Hafens in his description of Antonio Armijo's pioneering trade caravan from Santa Fe to Los Angeles in 1829. However, his suggestion that Armijo's westward route that generally followed the present Utah-Arizona border "served as the basic line of march" for subsequent trade caravans, and that the northwestward arching trail across central Utah was merely a "variant" is disputed by most Old Spanish Trail historians. Sanchez's coverage of the later travel on the trail, after Armijo, is minimal. Nevertheless, >>>

the Sanchez volume is a worthy supplement to the Hafens' pioneering work.

In the past decade, a plethora of books on the Old Spanish Trail have appeared. No longer is the trail a mystery to Western history buffs. Already mentioned is Sanchez's 1997 volume. C. Gregory Crampton and Steven K. Madsen's *In Search of the Spanish Trail: Santa Fe to Los Angeles, 1829–1848* (Salt Lake City: Gibbs Smith Publisher, 1994) is a detailed travel guide of the main route of the historic pathway. Crampton, a prolific author of books on the Colorado Plateau country, and Madsen, a Salt Lake City educator, traveled the entire trail from Santa Fe to Los Angeles, utilizing passenger cars, pickups, four-wheel drive vehicles, and on occasion light aircraft to get an overview of trail sections; in their words, "we walked, and walked, and walked." They did painstaking historical research, took many photographs, and mapped every foot of the main route. The strength of the book is in the meticulous mile-by-mile log, the two hundred pictures, most of them contemporary, and the twelve detailed maps. If there is a weakness, it is that Crampton and Madsen's work does not cover alternate routes.

One alternate route was the North Branch of the Old Spanish Trail, which traveled north from Santa Fe into Colorado, crossed Cochetopa Pass, and turned westward down the Gunnison and upper Colorado rivers to junction with the main trail in central Utah. Ron Kessler, native of Colorado's San Luis Valley, remedies this with two books. His *Re-Tracing the Old Spanish Trail, North Branch* (Monte Vista: Adobe Village Press, 1995) is a travel guide to

the route. More extensive is Kessler's *Old Spanish Trail North Branch and Its Travelers* (Santa Fe: Sunstone Press, 1998). Kessler details the trail and its variants, tells the history, and includes many photographs. A weakness is the lack of clear, detailed maps.

Harold Steiner's *The Old Spanish Trail Across the Mojave Desert: A History and Guide* (Las Vegas: The Haldor Company, 1999) is a detailed guide to the trail and its variants, such as the Kingston Cutoff, from southwestern Utah to Cajon Pass, California. Steiner, a retired Air Force colonel living in Las Vegas, well covers the history of this desert section of the Old Spanish Trail in Part One of the book. Part Two is the mile-by-mile guide of the trail, complete with photographs and maps. The sixty-five maps, both historical and current, make Steiner's book essential for anyone traveling this portion of the trail.

Donald E. Rowland's *John Rowland and William Workman: Southern California Pioneers of 1841* (Spokane: The Arthur H. Clark Co.; and the Historical Society of Southern California, 1999) includes a narrative of the Rowland-Workman Party of 1841, the largest party of emigrants to travel the Old Spanish Trail from Santa Fe to Los Angeles.

Lesley Poling-Kempes' *Valley of Shining Stone: The Story of Abiquiu* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1997) tells the story of Abiquiu, the eastern terminus of the Old Spanish Trail. The book includes a chapter on the Old Spanish Trail and details the frontier community's shadier side as an outpost of the Indian slave trade.

R. Bruce Harley of Riverside has

written extensively about the New Mexican emigrants who journeyed over the Old Spanish Trail to found the colony of Agua Mansa in the San Bernardino Valley, California. Besides numerous journal articles, Harley has authored *The Story of Agua Mansa: Its Settlement, Churches and People: First Community in the San Bernardino Valley, 1842–1893* (San Bernardino: Diocese of San Bernardino, 1998), an excellent study of the only California community to be peopled almost entirely by travelers of the Old Spanish Trail.

And there is promise of more to come. Former OSTA president Charles Querfeld is working on a large format book of color photographs of the Old Spanish Trail. Current president Elizabeth von Till Warren's University of Nevada, Las Vegas thesis, "Armijo's Trace Revisited: A New Interpretation of the Antonio Armijo Route of 1829–1830 on the Development of the Old Spanish Trail" may soon be published in a revised and expanded form. Jack Nelson's study of the North Branch of the trail, "From Touse to the Winty: The North Branch of the Old Spanish Trail and Beyond," may see the light of publication. Kenn and Lorraine Carpenter, OSTA treasurer and secretary, have bicycled the Old Spanish Trail four times and have guidebooks in process. John Sharpe of the UK has finished a book on Workman, but not yet published.

We should continue to see increasing interest in the Old Spanish Trail, particularly when the National Park Service's approved "Old Spanish Trail National Historic Trail Feasibility Study" is acted on by Congress. ■

North Branch Research

by Ronald Kessler

In March of 1999 I visited the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. hoping to find the *National Intelligencer* newspaper for November 7, 1853. I was successful in finding the paper; my information source was correct in that it did contain the letter from Charles W. McClanahan. My hope was that it would contain more information than found in just the letter. No such luck!

McClanahan left Virginia the first of April 1853. He traveled to Missouri and Illinois to purchase sheep to sell in California. In Saint Louis, Missouri he met John W. Gunnison. Gunnison convinced him that the North Branch of the Old Spanish Trail was a better route than his planned Oregon/California route.

McClanahan left Westport, Missouri the 18th of June following a few days behind Gunnison. Gunnison traveled the Santa Fe Trail as far as the Arkansas River. At the Arkansas he left the Santa Fe Trail and continued west up the Arkansas River, Huerfano River, and South Oak Creek to Sangre de Cristo Pass. They crossed Sangre de Cristo Pass to Sangre de Cristo Creek and followed it down to an arroyo east of Fort Massachusetts, then they crossed the elevated plain west to Ute Creek and the fort. Gunnison left the fort on August 23 and McClanahan mailed this letter on August 28.

West of Mount Blanca they reached the North Branch of the Old Spanish Trail. McClanahan then followed the North Branch to Green River, Utah. The route used by Heap and Beale, Gunnison,

McClanahan, and Frémont became the OST's most used wagon route! Although these parties did not use Mosca Pass, it became the main pass entering the San Luis Valley from the east until after 1900. A flash flood destroyed the road and it was never rebuilt.

After leaving Gunnison at the Green River, I believe that Antoine Leroux returned east along the trail and met the McClanahan Party.

We need to find descendants of the McClanahan Party: Charles W. McClanahan, Crockett, Ross, and or Burwell. Hopefully one of these descendants has more information on the following:

1. How large was the party?
2. Where did they settle?
3. How many wagons were there?
4. How many cattle and sheep were brought?
5. Did McClanahan write the second letter?

Following is a transcription of the letter from Charles W. McClanahan:

Fort Massachusetts [NM], Aug. 28, 1853

Hon. T. H. Benton: —

Dear Sir: Knowing that you feel interested in the middle route for the great Pacific Railroad, and believing that any information in regards to it would be acceptable, no matter how humble the source from which it comes, I have determined to state what I know about it. This information is from travelling the route just behind Captain Gunnison. I left Virginia the first of April, went to Missouri and Illinois to

purchase sheep for the California market. After purchasing, I started to take them by Salt Lake, the Humboldt River, &c., feeling assured that I would have to winter at Salt Lake. I had gotten the sheep as far as St. Joseph's, [Missouri]. Having some business in St. Louis, I met with Captain Gunnison, and learned from him that there was a better route by way of Utah Lake, and that he was going to open it, and that, from what he knew about it, it would be much better for me to take it. After thinking a good deal over it I determined to take it, as there was a very large number of stock on the old route, and a good prospect of getting to California this season. I read your address with a great deal of interest; and, feeling assured these statements about the route could be relied on, I left Missouri and Westport, on the 18th of June, with a large number of sheep and some cows — Mr. Crockett, of Virginia, a partner with me. At Westport, I met with the two Mr. Ross's, of Iowa, with their families, going the old route; they also determined to accompany me the new route. After travelling a few days, I fell in with the two Mr. Burwell's, of Franklin City, Virginia, with a large number of cattle, who also were persuaded to join me. We traveled the Santa Fe [Trail] road twenty-five miles above Fort Atkinson, keeping on the well-beaten track to thirty miles above Bent's Old Fort, and crossed the Arkansas River at the mouth of Apispah [Apishapa River] Creek, crossing over the Huerfano, up that stream about twenty miles, and crossing the Sierra Blanca [Sangre de Cristo] Mountains through Captain Gunnison's [Sangre de Cristo] Pass, about twelve miles south of Leroux's Pass to this fort. >>>

The distance given by Captain Gunnison is 593 miles from Westport, Missouri.

I travelled over the mountains of Virginia, Pennsylvania, and Tennessee, over several of the passes of the Sierra Nevada in California, and I have never seen a better or more easy Pass for carriages and wagons than the one found by Captain Gunnison, through the Sierra Blanca [Sangre de Cristo Mtns.] just opposite to Fort Massachusetts, and distant from it fifteen miles. I travelled the old route to California in 1849, and can speak of the two routes from actual experience, having gone over both with wagons. I look upon this route as far superior, and feel confident that as soon as it is known it will and must be the great thoroughfare from the Atlantic to the Pacific. On this route, there is an abundance of grass and water, so much that stock will travel and keep fat; the large majority of our sheep are as fat as any mutton in the Philadelphia or Baltimore market, and a very large number of Mr. Burwell's cattle are fine beef; and I have never seen any stock, after having travelled so far, look half as well. Both of the Mr. Ross's have carriages, and as yet nothing has in the least given way. I can say without fear of contradiction that this is one of the finest natural roads in the world, combining everything necessary to sustain stock; and I am confident that, if its advantages are fully made known to Congress, it will be adopted for the great Pacific Railroad. On this line, almost the entire route can be settled; as all the land from Missouri to Bent's Fort is rich and very fertile, equal to the best lands of Missouri and Illinois, and no land can beat the Sierra Blanca [Sangre de Cristo] for grass; even to the very summit it stands as thick as the best meadows; many acres would mow at

least four tons per acre. Then comes the large and beautiful valley of San Luis, said to be one of the most fertile in New Mexico; indeed, fine land is upon the whole route, and the climate such that stock can live all winter upon the grass. I will here state the route I think best for emigrants to travel: Leave Westport, Missouri, take the road to Uniontown, then to Fort Centre, then take Captain Gunnison's trail, which leads from the Kansas to the Arkansas, near the mouth of Walnut Creek, up the Arkansas above Bent's Old Fort, thirty-two miles; then up the Huerfano, through Captain Gunnison's Pass to Fort Massachusetts; then to Little Salt Lake Walker's Pass, Sierra Nevada; then down the valley of the San Joaquin to Stockton or San Francisco. There are settlements at different points all along this route, where emigrants can get supplies, none farther apart than two hundred miles. After leaving Missouri, you pass first Council Grove, next the Fort on Walnut Creek, next Green Horn, next Fort Massachusetts, Little Salt Lake, Santa Clara, Vegas de Santa Clara; at each of these supplies can be had. I feel confident, when Captain Gunnison makes out his report, that this route will be adopted. The pass through the Sierra Blanca [Sangre de Cristo] is so low and gradual that a railroad can be made over it, and the grade will not exceed fifty feet to the mile. Captain Gunnison is doing his whole duty, and well deserves the thanks of the whole country, for the very well laid out road through this almost unexplored country. I will write you again after getting through to California, and describe the rest of the way.

Yours respectfully,
Charles W. McClanahan ■

OUTLAW COUNTRY

by Lou McCombs, No. 5 in a series

I think I've mentioned before that I grew up on Saturday afternoon movies, a lot of them stories about lawmen and outlaws. I still check out cable channels AMC and TCM for old westerns.

There are many outlaw and lawman tales associated with the Spanish Trail, and one about the infamous outlaw Butch Cassidy is worth repeating. As the story goes, Butch and two of his partners, Elza Lay and Bob Meeks pushed their horses hard along the Outlaw Trail through the San Rafael Desert. They were making their escape following the April 1897 mine payroll robbery at Castle Gate, Utah, 12 miles northwest of Price. The bandits had made off with at least 8,000 bucks in gold and cash. A posse was hard on their heels, but had to give up after losing the trail in the wild and remote San Rafael canyons.

Now, the robbery and escape are true. The rest falls into that great unknown which has been a breeding ground for some of the best lost mines and hidden treasures stories in the southwest.

According to storytellers, the trio decided not to ride all the way to their hideout about 50 miles farther south. Instead, to lighten the load of their horses, the outlaws stashed the loot in an often-used cache atop a mesa near Buckhorn Draw. One of the bandits later told a relative that no one had ever gone back for the money.

Just another tall tale? Well, if there is any place on earth more likely to harbor hidden treasure than this

isolated desert, it would be hard to find. The Outlaw Trail ran south from Price through Buckhorn Draw to a wild and forbidding area south of I-70 still marked on maps as Robbers Roost — a place where, at the turn of the century, few lawmen and no honest citizen dared enter. Before the late 1800s, it was simply a place on maps marked “terra incognito.”

Although it had been the home of various Indian groups for thousands of years, Spanish explorers, prospectors and traders were the first Europeans to cross the San Rafael. They found the land laced by well-used trails leading to isolated springs, water holes and passes through the rugged cliffs. Spaniards from Santa Fe then used some of these trails in an expanding search for gold, silver and other minerals, and as trader’s routes into central and northern Utah.

The first written account of the area by an Anglo-American is found in the 1826 journal of mountain man Jedediah Smith. He briefly noted that he and his men traveled south along the foot of the Wasatch Range but didn’t go further east because of the forbidding appearance of the desert. Twenty-two years later, Lt. Orville Pratt, on a survey for the army, summed up his impression of the desert and Spanish Trail. Finding travel tedious, he wrote that the area “is...sandy, hilly & utterly barren. Water is also scarce, & if there is no mineral wealth in these mountains I can hardly conceive of what earthly use a large portion of this country was designed for!”

Mormon pioneers didn’t agree. As do many modern hikers, mountain bikers, four-wheelers and other visitors, they found much to their liking. Following the Spanish Trail,

these hardy explorers first crossed the San Rafael country in 1855 on their way to setting up the Elk Mountain Mission at what is now Moab.

Forced out of the area for more than a decade by conflict with local Indians, settlers returned in the early 1870s as part of a major migration concurrent to the ongoing construction of the intercontinental railroad system. Following the lead of those they displaced, and who did not inhabit the interior desert, Mormons established settlements not only at Moab, but also at Price, Huntington, Castle Dale, Ferron, Emery and other locations along perennial streams on the fringe of the desert.

And what of Butch’s missing stash? Desert old timers and treasure hunters from near and far insist it’s still out there. But if you decide to go looking, remember that the region remains nearly as remote and untamed as it was in April 1897.



Photo by Author

**Spanish Trail sign at Red Seep
on the Green River Cutoff Road**

The mule trail passed east of Castle Dale then crossed Huntington Creek on its way over the Black Hills. It then pretty much followed Green River Cutoff/401 Road through Furniture Draw before taking a southeasterly course past the Big Holes, Cement Crossing and into Lost Springs Wash. The lay of the land took it to the traditional crossing of the Green River just northeast of the current town.

Following the river south for several miles, it turned east up Little Grand Wash (now on the Green River extension of the White Sands Missile Range and not accessible to travelers) before turning southeast across barren desert to Courthouse Spring 12 miles north of Moab. Continuing south, caravans forded the Colorado River near Moab, followed up Spanish Valley and across Blue Cut Pass before dropping into Kane Springs Draw. It then wound its way past Wilson Arch and Looking Glass Rock into Dry Valley and on to Casa Colorado Rock and La Teneja. From there, it continued south through East Canyon (Spanish, *Canon Pintado*) and up a 1000-foot climb onto the Sage Plain near today’s Ucolo just east of Monticello, Utah.

To resume our tour from where we left off last time, go about a mile and a half north of Castle Dale to Green River Cutoff/401 Road. This is a well-maintained gravel road suitable for all vehicles except in the worst weather. On a bike, it’s a 2-day trip to Green River so you’ll have to carry at least a couple of extra gallons of water.

Climb to the top of Oilwell Dome, from which there is an inspirational view of the countryside to the east. A dugway drops you down to >>>

Huntington Creek a few miles north of where the mule trail crossed.

Another climb through the Black Hills tops out at Red Seep. From here, along this part of the route, the BLM has placed signs describing various geologic features. At about mile 17 is the turnoff to the Buckhorn Draw petroglyph site. To get there it's a 12-mile round trip — downhill in, uphill out — that's well worth the effort. There are several camping spots near the site, a mind-boggling display of more than 2000-year-old Barrier Canyon-style pictographs and 1000-year-old Frémont-style petroglyphs. There are restrooms, benches and informational displays, shade trees but no water. I forgot to mention that you need to keep your eye out for wildlife. There's plenty in this seemingly empty land. On a recent trip, besides lots of little critters, I saw a couple of eagles and was serenaded in camp by a pack of coyotes as they headed out on their nightly hunt.

Back at 401 Road, turn right and continue east for about 24 miles. On the way, drop into and climb out of Furniture Draw where traces of the old trail are still in evidence. Three quarters of a mile past the BLM's D&RGW info sign turn right onto an unmarked ranch road. This sandy and often hilly Jeep track takes you into Cottonwood Canyon by way of an exquisite Juniper/Pinon forest, deep copper colored sandstone canyons, rainbow hued clay hills, a spring fed stream and a tremendous panorama view of the San Rafael Swell to the south. At the junction with Tidwell Draw Road, usually signed, turn left toward Green River City. Just to the right of this location is the site of the Smith Ranch, a

BLM historic site and worth a visit. Farther along is the turn to Trail Spring. Take SR-6 and then I-70 into Green River.

There's plenty to see and do in Green River. It's a full service town with motels, restaurants, mini-marts, groceries and the John Wesley Powell Museum and Visitor Center. The museum is a must-see so plan on spending some time. A good place to camp is the United Campground across the highway from the museum.

Heading toward Moab, take Frontage Road to Ruby Ranch Road exit, and then follow the gravel road south into the desert. In four miles are the power lines and unsigned Ten Mile Road. You'll be taking this road all the way out to US-191. Along the way are springs, creeks, a petrified forest, and great views of Arches National Park and the La Sal Mountains. To the right, near the junction with US-191, is Courthouse Spring.



Photo by Author

Plaque at Dalton Wells

Just south of the US-191 junction is Dalton Wells CCC camp. Among other things, Dalton Wells was part of the Japanese relocation center program during WWII, and is now the site of a dinosaur dig where 120 million-year-old bones have been found. Down the road

near Arches National Park visitor center are a trace of the old trail and plenty of glyphs.

Spend a few days in Moab. The Dan O'Laurie Museum and downtown visitor center are must-sees. Also, besides some great bike rides, there are some great drives, too. I recommend renting a 4-wheel drive and doing some sightseeing.

Continuing south from Moab, Kane Springs rest area just south of Blue Cut Pass on US-191 was also a popular stop for caravans. As you top the pass, a section of the Mule Trail/wagon road winds down to the east. The track is now badly eroded but you can walk down it a short way if you so desire. There's water and restrooms. Take time to walk around and climb over the surrounding red sandstone rocks and look for some of the old cowboy and pioneer glyphs here and just around the corner at Hole N' The Rock, including that of Tom McCarty, a notorious outlaw and sometime member of Butch Cassidy's gang. It's dated 1885. Also fill up all water bottles and jugs. It's dry from here all the way to Monticello.

Hole N' The Rock is a five thousand square foot home and gift shop carved into the cliff. It's maintained as a memorial to Albert and Gladys Christensen who, during a twelve-year period prior to 1957, excavated over fifty thousand cubic feet of sandstone to build the house. It's open for tours 9–5 daily. Entrance to the gift shop is free. A guided tour costs \$2.00.

Near today's La Sal Junction the Trail veered to the right of the current highway to pass by Looking Glass Rock before intersecting Hatch Wash near

Hook and Ladder Draw. From that point travelers could either continue straight south to Ojo Verde Spring or, as most did, turn to the southeast and follow Hatch Wash to Casa Colorado Rock and La Teneja. For us, continue on US-191 to Wilson Arch. Here the old highway branches off to the right. Take the old road.

Along the way is the site of Dry Valley CCC Camp, DG-157, laid out and constructed in 1940. Back again at US-191, you can see the west face of Casa Colorado Rock directly ahead. Cross the highway onto CR-114 to Casa Colorado Rock. There are several nice wilderness camping places near the rock.

La Teneja is located about one-quarter mile south near a pour off that drains into Big Indian Wash. To get there hike southwest around the base of the Rock to a wide and exposed sandstone drainage. Follow it directly south for about 400 yards. At the waterhole, there's a sign-in log placed at the site by the folks from Westwater Tours in Moab.

From Casa Colorado, follow the roads back to US-191. Near CR-108, off to the left, is White Rock, another important Trail landmark. A dirt road takes you into East Canyon Wash, generally paralleling both the power lines and the route of the Mule Trail. This was the *Cañon Pintado* identified by the 1859 Captain Macomb military survey of the Spanish Trail. A member of that expedition discovered the bones of a large Sauropod (dinosaur) in the canyon. Until recently the specific location of this find was lost. However, in 1989 regional historian F.A. Barnes relocated the site, and it's now being reevaluated by the BLM.



Photo by Author

Newspaper Rock

Take US-191 south to the junction with SR-211 and the turn to Newspaper Rock State Park and Canyonlands National Park. To the left is Church Rock, a landmark for Mormon settlers. Take the turn to Newspaper Rock and Canyonlands National Park. Newspaper Rock contains petroglyphs believed to be over fifteen hundred years old, along with more recent pioneer glyphs.

There's a small camping area shaded by ancient cottonwood trees with most of the sites right next to bubbling Indian Creek. There are pit toilets but no water. Along the way are the remaining buildings of the Home Of Truth, a messianic cult established by Marie Ogden in the early 1930s. Marie was an important figure in the area, and at one time, the editor of the local paper.

After a visit to Canyonlands National Park, return to the intersection with SR-191. While you didn't get to make the thousand foot climb up from South Canyon, as did the mule trains, you do get to make a steep, thousand foot, two mile torture climb up Peters Canyon on the way to Monticello. Since you'll have plenty of time on the way up, take notice of the old wagon road/highway winding along the west side of the creek

below the highway. Near the summit, the view back to the north is breathtakingly beautiful. Near the top are a couple of historic buildings. The largest was used as the local stagecoach station for many years. They're now on private property.

Monticello is a great place to stay. There are

campgrounds, motels, restaurants and groceries. The area was first settled by cattleman Patrick O'Donnell who began an operation near here in 1879. The town, established in 1887, was first called North Montezuma Creek, then Paiute Creek. Today, farming, ranching and tourism provide the primary employment. Be sure to visit the library, museum, park and visitor center.

I've been a little vague on mileages in this section because there are so many twists and turns, but careful use of the suggested maps makes the route pretty easy to follow.

On-the-Trail miles from L.A: 1028 MAPS

- AAA Guide to Indian Country
- Utah Travel Council: Northeastern and Southeastern Utah at <http://www.utah.com/>

Next: Anasazi Land



Old Spanish Trail Marked by Early Explorers

by Steven H. Heath

(This article was originally published in *The Daily News* of Cedar City, UT. Reprinted with permission. – Editors)

In November 1847, Jefferson Hunt, a member of the Mormon Battalion, and his 12 companions became the first Mormons to enter the future Iron County. They were on their way to southern California along the Spanish Trail. Even though the trip was in unfamiliar territory, the members of the group were experienced western travelers and they had an important mission to perform. Their purpose was to go to California where they could obtain cattle, fruit tree starts, seeds, etc. which would be needed by the next wave of Mormon immigrants who would be in the Great Salt Lake Valley the following spring.

Even with the mission in mind they would probably have not attempted this dangerous trip had they not been familiar with the extraordinary report of John C. Frémont, “the Great Pathfinder.” Frémont had traveled up the Spanish Trail in the spring of 1844 as he concluded his two-year reconnaissance of the Great Basin and California.

The Mormons had literally consumed about every page of his famous report as they prepared to journey from Illinois and Iowa to Utah in 1846 and 1847.

Frémont’s description of the Spanish Trail did not go unnoticed and the Hunt party had a good idea of what they faced on the trip. Frémont was one of thousands who had traveled through

Iron County before the arrival of the Mormons in Utah.

Thanks to the work of scholars like LeRoy & Ann Hafen, Dale Morgan, etc. we now have volumes of descriptions of the traffic on this important early trade trail from Santa Fe, New Mexico, to Los Angeles, California.

The trail was especially active from 1829 to 1848.

Mexican and American traders brought dry goods (pots, pans, blankets, etc.) from Santa Fe to California in exchange for horses. Unfortunately for Utah’s Indians, the traders often captured Indian children to be sold as domestic servants on both ends of the trail. A young Indian girl would bring as much as \$400, 1830’s value, as a slave. Young Indian boys, who would run away when older, were worth as much as \$200. The Mexican commerce essentially ended with the annexation of Mexico’s northern territories by the United States in 1848.

Travelers along this infamous trail besides Frémont included such notables as Jedediah Smith, Thomas (Peg Leg) Smith, Antonio Armijo, William Wolfskill, Peter Skene Ogden, Bill Williams, Walkara, William Workman, and Kit Carson to name a few.

Jedediah Smith pioneered the western half of the trail with his two trips following the annual fur trappers rendezvous at Bear Lake in 1826 and 1827. In 1826, he left Bear

Lake and came to what would become the Spanish Trail just south of Price. After traveling down Salina Canyon and going up the Sevier River, he crossed the Wasatch Range of mountains on Clear Creek.

He then traveled south along a route closely paralleling Interstate 15. He entered Iron County in mid-October, struggled over the Black Ridge and made his way down through the treacherous Virgin River Gorge, and on to California via the Colorado River and southern California desert.

In 1827, Smith avoided the Gorge by going up the Santa Clara and over Utah Hill and back to the Virgin River.

Thomas “Peg Leg” Smith came up the Colorado River in December 1827. After he hit the Virgin River he traveled on through Iron County on his way to Colorado.

He had two good legs for the trip, but became involved in a fight with Indians in northern Colorado in 1829. An Indian shot him in his left ankle and shattered the bone. With a little help, Smith amputated his leg, attached a wooden peg and went back to his mountain man exploits. In 1839, he traveled with James Beckwith, a trapper, and Walkara on a daring horse-rustling raid. The mixed party stole about 5,000 horses from the unsuspecting California Mexicans and headed north towards Utah with their booty.

A posse of men followed and recovered about 2,000 head, but Smith, Beckwith and Walker succeeded in retaining the other

3,000 horses. It was perhaps the largest horse-rustling event in the history of the west. There are still places, like the one at Three Peaks just west of Cedar City, where the trail shows the effects of the tens of thousands of horses that traveled along the Spanish Trail.



Photo by Steven H. Heath

Cross Glyph at Three Peaks

Antonio Armijo brought the first trade caravan from New Mexico to California. He followed a route which crossed the Colorado River at Crossing of the Fathers and then went west along the Arizona Strip to the Virgin River, so he didn't enter Iron County. But the financial success of the expedition brought many more caravans in the years that followed.

In the fall of 1830, William Wolfskill and George Yount left Santa Fe on Sept. 29 and arrived in Los Angeles on Feb. 5. They traveled a route which became the standard path on the Spanish Trail. From Santa Fe, they traveled north to

southeastern Colorado, then northwest to present-day Moab where they crossed the Colorado River.

After crossing a short stretch of desert they reached present-day Green River where they crossed the Green River. After traveling north around the San Rafael Swell they went west down Salina Canyon, then up the Sevier River to a spot just north of Circleville. They crossed the mountains by ascending Bear Creek and descending Little Creek to the Little Salt Lake.

From there they traveled southwest to Mountain Meadows, then along the Virgin River, for a ways, then south to the Las Vegas Springs and across the Mojave Desert to Los Angeles. The Wolfskill party left a Spanish Trail glyph on a volcanic rock near the mouth of Braffits Canyon a little south of Summit. It is the oldest known glyph along the trail (below).



Photo by Steven H. Heath

Braffits Canyon Glyph, South of Summit

The route across the Mormon Mesa south of Mesquite, Nevada, became the favored route around 1835, when the horse trade business demanded a

livestock trail. In the fall of 1841, William Workman and John Rowland led a party of mostly Americans to California along the trail. The description of the journey mentions passing through the Little Salt Lake valley. On the return trip in the spring of 1842, William Knight, a member of the party, carved his name and the year in the sandstone cliffs along Little Creek. The Spanish Trail glyph is one of the historic treasures in Iron County (below).



Photo by Steven H. Heath

Glyph in Little Creek

After the settlement of Iron County in 1851, the Spanish Trail became a wagon road known by travelers as the "Mormon Road" to southern California. Eventually it became the Arrowhead Trail, U.S. Highway 91, and in more recent times, Interstate 15. Hopefully, Congress will approve the National Park Service recommendation that the Old Spanish Trail be designated as a National Historic Trail.

(Note – Original photographs have been enhanced for high contrast to make the glyphs more legible – Editors.) ■



Carracas Canyon with Bicycles

By Kenn and Lorraine Carpenter



Photos by KnL Carpenter

In the Lower Canyon

Carracas Canyon is on the OST route described by Crampton and Madsen in their book, *In Search of the Spanish Trail*, and the consensus among other trail historians of whom we have inquired is that the OST did go down this canyon. That being the case we had yet to find any trail enthusiast who had traveled down the canyon, and so no one could tell us what to expect. The conventional wisdom, of course, was that we could never get through with the bicycles. Well, our determination said we could do it; this year the weather was perfect, and so we had no reason to avoid trying it.

Carracas Canyon is in New Mexico, in the northwest corner of the Jicarilla Apache Indian Reservation, and drains northerly to the San Juan River in Colorado. The upper ten miles can be described as a series of gentle interconnecting valleys where travel is easy, although any roads there are dirt and subject to mudding. Along the way we encountered small groups of

seemingly wild horses, each with its stallion that guardedly stayed between us and the mares, and we saw flocks of up to 20 wild turkeys. The lower seven miles to the San Juan has a track here-and-there, but can be considered still roadless. At five miles before the San Juan it crosses the fenced west boundary of the Reservation, the faint track continues a short ways on a flat, and then descends deep dry washes to what becomes a real canyon with occasional pockets of trickling spring water.

So what is the canyon like? Reservation road J-59 dead-ends at the west boundary fence, where the road is also cut by a bulldozed ditch. (On the other side of the fence there is an overgrown track continuing into the Carson National Forest.) At 0.3 miles before the fence line, leave J-59 and take a track north along the east side of a major dry wash, which is the Carracas Canyon drainage. About 1 mile north, do not follow the track down into the wash, but look for a steel post on the right and

The Trail Descending into the Lower Canyon

take the nearly invisible track steeply up and to the right where at 100 feet there are steel fence posts hidden in the brush representing a gate, but no fence wire. Continue between the posts, the track gradually gets better, and at another 1.3 miles is the Reservation fence and a simple wire gate in the fencing, beyond which the track is easily visible through the grass and sagebrush. At 0.6 miles beyond the fence gate, the only route through the canyon ahead is to drop left into the bottom of the main wash. It is tempting to stay right to avoid the wash, but one soon gets side-hilled with nothing but steep gravelly slopes below that make the canyon inaccessible.

After dropping into the wash, the route becomes an obstacle course for a mile or so, and there is no indication of it ever having been a trail, a trail of any kind. There are steep gravelly side walls, quite a few big boulders, thousands of soccer ball size rocks, lots of brush and trees, a little bit of water at that time, and indications of debris caught in brush



Photos by KnL Carpenter

Approaching northerly to the lower canyon is very pleasant. There is no hint of the difficulties ahead, so one just keeps puttering along, and always looking for wildlife.

and along the banks that the runoff water got to over three feet deep. Nevertheless we walked and pushed and struggled through with our loaded bicycles.

Beyond this narrow part of the canyon the trail is again found (but not easily) a hundred feet or more west of the wash, and stays on the west side all the way to the San Juan. At a quarter mile from the San Juan it becomes a meager road, and there is a private residence with steel gates each side of the property. At the river there is an excellent bridge, but interestingly over the previous five years

we had local folks from Arbolles to Dulce tell us variously that there never was a bridge, that the bridge was washed out, that they never heard of a bridge there, and that the bridge was so old it was rotten and impassable. We did not know the truth until we got there, but the 150 foot wide river did appear to have been fordable that day.

So now we know the canyon part must have been a real bottleneck, and a very miserable stretch for the drovers of the OST. We continue to be impressed at

Bridge over the San Juan River. The canyon route comes in from the left. The bridge is on CR-557, and it is only 0.3 miles north to the main gravel road CR-500. At that junction it is 10.8 miles west to paved SR-151 that goes to Arbolles, or going east it is 5.4 miles to Pagosa Junction plus another 19.0 to Dulce, all gravel and dirt.

how tough the trail travelers of those early days must have been!

Later that day we made new friends with the Chris Ribera family. Chris is locally a several generation descendant of the Rivera family line, and it will be interesting to see if a direct historical connection can be made to the Juan Maria de Rivera of 1775 and the Rafael Rivera of the Armijo expedition of 1829-30 (Hafens, Vol 1). Great opportunity for someone's research! ■

Books for Sale – Limited Supply

Fur Trappers and Traders of the Far Southwest

Edited by LeRoy R. Hafen, 305 pp. Paper.

(This is NOT the Hafens reprint headlined on page 1.)

Originally published 1968.

Utah State University Press, 1997 reprint. \$12.00 postpaid.

The Story of Agua Mansa: Its Settlement, Churches and People, First Community in San Bernardino Valley 1842 – 1893.

Compiled by R. Bruce Harley, Ph.D., Archivist, Diocese of San Bernardino, 2001, 111 pp.

Paper. \$12.00 postpaid.

Check payable to OSTA
PO Box 7 Marysville, WA
98270

Know Your Historians

In this new column we hope to bring you biographies of the many historians who research and write the articles and books that are so important to the Old Spanish Trail. In this issue we take the opportunity to examine the life of someone very special to the Old Spanish Trail, and we use a book review to do it. Please read on.

A Passion for Life: Ruth Marie Colville. Jo Ann Virden. (Fort Collins: Colorado Institute for Historical Study: The Publishing House, 2001, 208 pp., photos, appendices, notes, chronology, \$17.50)

First-time biographer Jo Ann Virden gives us a warm and intimate profile of Ruth Marie Colville. Old Spanish Trail Association members know Colville as one of the foremost historians on the Colorado San Luis Valley and a founding member of the Old Spanish Trail Association. Virden begins with histories of Ruth Marie's parents and their influence upon the adventurous 'Little Ruthie' growing up in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. Colville began teaching in Smyrna, Delaware after earning degrees in English and History from the prestigious Wellesley College. Colville's ever present longing for adventure led her to Colorado as a teacher in 1929; and her great adventure in the West began. She bought a car, learned to drive it, bought a Graflex Series D camera from a local priest for \$65, and spent her summer exploring. The book contains some of the photographs of Colorado scenes taken by that \$65 view camera over the years, and the book is filled with photos



Photo by John W. Coffman

Ruth Marie Colville *Historian*

of very engaging Ruth Marie Colvilles at all ages!

Ruth Marie Samuels married Twin Mountain rancher Alex Colville in 1931; and they had three children, Alex, Jr., David, and Susie. Easterner Colville began her apprenticeship as a rancher's wife under the tutelage of her mother-in-law. There are very few records that describe the day-in and day-out hard work and drudgery that filled the lives of the women who settled Colorado. Virden's biography, drawn from Colville's actual journals and from interviews with Colville, gives us an intensely personal look at that life. Colville's daily routine began in the early morning with the emptying of the "thunder mug," bringing in a stack of wood for the stove, hauling water for the day, taking out the ashes, and filling the oil lamps. These chores were followed by feeding the chickens, gathering eggs, and, depending upon the day, washing, ironing or mending. Helping with the milking chores and cleaning the cream separator followed

later in the day. Somewhere in the midst of all this, Colville found time to cook meals, rear the children, and find time for adventure. Ruth Marie Colville was a woman who did it all, and who never recognized bounds of gender or class from the Victorian East to the more open West. She played the organ for the Presbyterian Church, and taught piano lessons three days a week in Del Norte. She was a photographer. She was an explorer of her Colorado surroundings.

Colville's Indian name was Many Trails. Colville joined with a group of local citizens and the Forest Service who located and marked the Frémont Christmas camp of the tragic 1848 Fourth Expedition. She researched and photographed the Barlow and Sanderson Stage Line road from Del Norte to Lake City via Slumgullion Road. In 1960 Colville began research on the 1694 Entrada of Governor General Don Diego de Vargas into the San Luis Valley. Helen Blumenschein of Taos became interested in locating de Vargas' route from Santa Fe to Taos via the route north from Ojo Caliente into the San Luis Valley. At times, Blumenschein and Colville explored the trail locations together. This research from fieldwork and de Vargas' journal culminated in the publishing of nonagenarian Colville's book, *La Vereda: A Trail through Time*, in 1996.

Virden's biography gives us a most delightful insight into one of Colorado's living treasures, Ruth Marie Colville.

Reviewed by Judy Querfeld
Longmont, Colorado ■

Book Reviews

So Far from God: The U.S. War with Mexico, 1846 – 1848. By John S. D. Eisenhower. (Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 2000, 436 pp., photos, maps, appendices, notes, chronology, bibliography, index, \$19.95)

This history of the United States 1846–1848 war with Mexico derives its title from a statement, quoted by the author, that is attributed to General Porfirio Diaz, president of Mexico from 1877 to 1911, viz. “*Poor Mexico! So far from God and so close to the United States.*” This statement is perhaps better known to students of the Old Spanish Trail as applying to the relationship between Texas and New Mexico. Both statements are alive and well today. Because the relationship of the United States and Mexico is still profoundly affected by the events that are well-chronicled in this book, it is important for present day Americans to understand the origin of this long-past conflict whose outcome continues to impact both Mexican and American lives. In particular it is essential to understand the events that conspired to lead these two close neighbors into a decidedly unneighborly war, the course of the war itself and its consequences.

John Eisenhower, the author of this book, is a Brigadier General in the U.S. Army Reserve, which leads to the expectation that his history will provide an excellent description of the causes of the war, the political machinations and military efforts during the course of the war and some of its consequences. The work is well researched and is filled with immense detail about personalities, battles and terrain. To the reviewer’s

knowledge this is probably the best available source for understanding the military aspects of the war. But on first reading, the reviewer was left bewildered about why the war happened. To a degree this is a consequence of the great mass of detail that is included. This detail is important and necessary, but absent an overview of the underlying events that led to the war, there is a problem with seeing the forest for the trees.

Militarily this war is very interesting, especially when seen as a precursor to the Civil War in the U.S. Many of the personalities that were so important in the latter conflict were active here as well. The problems of conducting military operations in tropical climates, rife with disease, are especially evident in those parts of the war that happened in tropical lowlands in the Rio Grande Valley and in the environs of Vera Cruz. This was a bloody war both because of disease and the close quarters combat. Like the Civil War, casualty lists included a significant fraction of the participants. This was also a war with operations that literally spanned North America. Battles were fought from near Brownsville, Texas to Vera Cruz and Mexico City. One column from the U.S. passed through San Antonio, Texas before joining the main military thrust that captured Monterrey and Saltillo. Yet another column went from Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas to Santa Fe and there split into two groups, one of which pressed on to take California while the second marched to Saltillo via Chihuahua. These were major undertakings at the time.

To understand the origins of the war requires recourse to other sources. The reviewer consulted Frederick Merk’s

History of the Westward Movement, a work that includes the background history that helps to explain the very complex forces that converged to cause this war. (Merk, incidentally, is the one historian who explicitly cited—before 1978—the Old Spanish Trail as having national significance). One very important item that is nowhere evident in Eisenhower’s book is that, prior to the war, the southern boundary of newly independent Texas was widely believed in the U.S., Texas and Mexico to be at the Nueces River, not the Rio Grande. President Polk chose to ignore this fact when he ordered Zachary Taylor to move his troops to the south bank of the Nueces and then on to the Rio Grande. This was an undeniable act of war that should not have happened, but Polk and others were intent on a large-scale land grab that would, they hoped, add a potentially large number of slave-owning territories to the Union. The land grab succeeded, but except for Texas, none of the territory came into the U.S. as professed slave-owning areas.

There are, of course, some features in this book that merit improvement. Although there are numerous maps, they do not include locations for a number of places that are mentioned in the text and that are too small to appear on maps readily available today. It would have been kind to have a legend that explains the military unit symbols that are used in battle maps. There are some inconsequential typographical errors and spelling inconsistencies. The altitude for Mt. Orizaba is over 18000 feet rather than 15000 and the Jornada del Muerto lies nearer 4700 than 7000 feet.

In summary, this account of an extremely important period in >>>

American history is well done and deserves to be read. If a detailed military history of the Mexican War is of interest, then this book is very highly recommended. Be sure to supplement your reading with an overview of the convoluted events that preceded and contributed to the onset of this unseemly and unnecessary war.

Reviewed by C. W. Querfeld
Longmont, Colorado ■

Anasazi America: Seventeen Centuries on the Road from Center Place. By David E. Stuart with the research assistance of Susan Moozygemba-McKinsey. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2000, xvi + 249 pp, maps, figures, photos, glossary, references cited, index. \$29.95 cloth; \$15.95 paper.)

The number of publications dealing with the Chaco Phenomenon has grown in recent years, it being a subject remarkably amenable to diverse interpretations. David E. Stuart's *Anasazi America* is another effort along this line, but it is much more than that. It is also well written and accessible to the nonprofessional as well as to the author's colleagues.

Stuart applies his theoretical model of two kinds of societies, those that rely on efficiency for survival and those that opt for power as a solution to their needs, for his understanding of the prehistoric to historic sequence of Anasazi to modern Pueblo and then compares his results with modern America generally. The model is one that he has worked with for more than two decades. This book is his most developed application

of the model and has important implications for our own times.

He begins his account with the initial peopling of the New World and traces cultural changes from Paleo-Indian times through the Archaic Period to the Anasazi cultural periods. These latter he revises in a perceptive manner that will doubtless stimulate research and debate for some time to come.

The heart of the book deals with the San Juan Basin and the surrounding mountain regions in New Mexico and Colorado, telling of hunter-gatherer peoples who learned to plant crops and with the passage of time became more and more dependent on the harvests of their fields, producing an increasingly diverse array of ceramics, textiles and jewelry, trading over long distances for materials needed for their manufacturing activities and exchanging goods among nearby communities in ways that tied the peoples of a wide area into a single, interacting system.

In the A.D. 800s, three communities in Chaco Canyon began to build larger houses with many rooms for storage. The location of the canyon between two differing climactic zones made it possible for the residents to amass surpluses from harvests that waxed and waned to different rhythms, providing a secure supply of food in almost every year, not only for themselves, but for trade to those whose crops had failed. In time the canyon people also became specialists in the production of heishi, the strings of disk-shaped beads made from shell and various minerals, while they relied on communities on the edges of the basin where there was a more plentiful supply of firewood for most of their pottery. The initial larger villages

soon had need for even more capacious storage facilities and what had once been rather unimposing structures were in time elaborated into the great houses that make the canyon today such a Mecca for visitors, even as it once must have been for the farmers from the outlying settlements.

As Stuart sees it the simple farming communities were of necessity quite efficient. The canyon dwellers, or at least the elites living in the great houses, developed a power-based way of life, sanctioned by ritual that was seen as the cause and ensurer of the benign environmental conditions that fostered their prosperity. It was still a hard life, one of enforced diligence, a diet that was often not well balanced and sometimes deficient in calories as well, and tasks that taxed the strength and endurance of all.

The spiritual forces addressed by this ritual were not, of course, the controlling factors in the environment. When, inevitably, severe drought struck, the beliefs of the people provided inadequate recourse despite all their efforts. Hard as life was for all, the elites were relatively well off in comparison with the villagers. When faith in their ability to control the weather failed, divisive currents fractured what had once been an open society. A series of droughts eventually led to migrations in search of more productive farms, to rivalries that sometimes degenerated into violence, and eventually to a new and more efficient way of life outside their old homeland, most settling along the Rio Grande and its tributaries, while a sparse population remained westward through Acoma to

Zuni and Hopi.

The arrival of conquering colonists from the Old World cut short their renaissance. Newly introduced tools, crops and domestic animals made for a better life for those who survived the wars, epidemics, famines and enforced subjugation, but in order to preserve something of their lifeways those in the remaining pueblos turned inward, withholding knowledge of their languages from the newcomers and practicing much of their religion in secret.

Does this story hold lessons for our time? Stuart believes that it does, especially in the opposing forces of efficiency and power. He makes what I consider a convincing case for his views as to what we can learn from the Pueblo past and how we might apply that knowledge today to avoid misfortune. While controversial in some matters, this is still a stimulating work, one deserving a wide readership and serious thought.

Reviewed by David M. Brugge
Albuquerque, New Mexico ■

El Llano Estacado – Exploration and Imagination on the High Plains of Texas and New Mexico 1536–1860. By John Miller Morris. (Published by Texas State Historical Association, Austin, 1997, illustrations, maps, \$39.95 hardcover.)

The *Llano Estacado*, or staked plain, is a very large, very level, high plateau, or mesa land, in eastern New Mexico and the panhandle of Texas. The origin of the term “staked” is controversial but seems to come from the Indians’ use of

stakes to mark a trail across this featureless landscape. The land was so flat and featureless that Indians who traveled across it would start in the morning shooting an arrow toward or away from the sun and keep shooting arrows all day as they walked up to the previous arrow in an attempt to move in a straight line.

This book does not relate directly to the Old Spanish Trail, but it is a wonderful tale of man’s exploration of a difficult countryside starting with Coronado and describing various cultures up to the U.S. Army expeditions to locate possible railroad routes west in the 1850s. It is a story of numerous attempts to develop trails across a very arid region and tells tales very similar to stories of the development of the Old Spanish Trail. The Llano trails ended in Santa Fe, which of course was the starting point of the OST.

The book starts as a detective story to try and think out the most likely route of the Coronado 1541 *entrada* across the *Llano* and north into Kansas searching for gold. The author then describes a long list of later explorers of the Llano including Mexican buffalo hunters who obtained meat to feed the slaves in Mexican gold mines.

The book is divided into four parts. The first part draws heavily on the writings of Pedro de Castaneda, the best chronicler of the Coronado expedition. Mr. Morris tries to match the writings of various authors with the physical conditions in west Texas and eastern New Mexico to establish the “best” guess of the actual Coronado route. The second part, 1542–1860, describes the explorations of many different Spanish and Mexican explorers, hunters,

herdsmen, and traders who tried to wrest a living from the *Llano*. The third part, 1803–1844, which the author calls “The Illimitable Prairie,” describes the activities of various Anglo-American explorers who were overawed by the immensity of the prairie land. The final part, 1845–1860, called “The Great Zahara,” describes many more explorations and attempts to figure out the great “terra incognita” which seemed to be a desert. One of the purposes of several of the expeditions was to find the source of the Red River, which had been confused with the Canadian River for many years.

From the dust jacket, “*El Llano Estacado* is a grand history and geography told in an imaginative, interdisciplinary style befitting a high land.” I especially enjoyed the rare maps and illustrations. The author has included detailed maps to help a modern day explorer to trace out local landmarks and old trails. Areas like the Palo Duro Canyon and the Caprock country beckon the traveler of history.

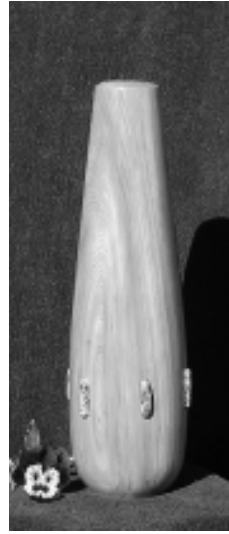
Reviewed by Robert Youker
Bethesda, Maryland ■

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Photos by KnL Carpenter

The award was a simple but colorful vase, intended to represent a bit of the hidden beauty of the Old Spanish Trail.

In Southeast Utah, on the South rim of East Canyon, on a direct line between Piute Spring and South Canyon, there stands an aged mountain juniper. This tree stands separate and alone from all else, and has large deep blazes axed into it from a very long time ago. It may have seen many Old Spanish Trail pack trains go by, and may have even served as a landmark for drovers on the Trail.

Mountain junipers are not usually considered a beautiful tree, for they are often twisted and gnarled, but their wood is both colorful and wonderfully aromatic.

This vase is from a mountain juniper, not the one above East Canyon, but a fallen one of much lesser stature. The embedded stones are "August Blue" turquoise from Austin, Nevada, and the six stones represent the six states through which the Old Spanish Trail passes. ■

Artifacts Display Planned for June Conference

Considerable interest has developed in having a display of artifacts from the Old Spanish Trail days, and so plans are being made to display part of the late Alva Matheson collection. Alva had over his many years learned this country intimately, and probably knew of every spring that was used in the trail days. He worked very closely with Crampton and Madsen in their explorations as they prepared to write their book, *In Search of the Spanish Trail*.



Photo by Carol Corbett

Sherrat Library at SUU, where OSTA board meeting will be held June 7. The collection of Wm. R. Palmer, of the ca. 1948 OST movement, is located here. ■

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