

SPANISH TRACES



Volume 11

Fall 2005

No. 3

From the Editors

This summer we attended the OSTA Board Meeting, the Annual Conference and one of the PNTS workshops in Las Vegas and, later, the Oregon-California Trails Association Conference in Salt Lake City. It became clear that all of trails and the trail organizations, and especially those for the historic trails, face common problems. Three examples discussed in this issue are the deterioration of the Rowland House, the Virgin River diversion project and the Emigrant Pass corridor cattle allotment project. The problems that our organizations face are exacerbated by low membership, and by the fact that the truly active membership is small. In his keynote address, included in this issue, Steve Elkington of the PNTS outlines some important approaches to strengthening OSTA. Many OSTAns already contribute to this effort. Some recent examples that we include in this issue are the efforts of the Interpretation and Marking Committee and the New Mexico, North Branch and Utah chapters to establish interpretive exhibits along the trail, the Tecopa chapter's drive to attain National Register status for trail sites in their area, and the Nevada chapter's accomplishment of a very successful annual conference. Each person contributes in his or her own unique way, some as Board Members, some as active chapter participants, and some as authors of exciting original research, such as the work in this issue by John Robinson on the Armijo family. All of these efforts are needed to interest and involve a greater number of people in the trail.

It seems to us that most of the OSTAns we have met in the last year are already contributing to their full capacity. This means we need to increase our base of active membership. So, keep up the good work, OSTA, but let's get more people involved.

Deborah and Jon Lawrence

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The OSTA 2006 Annual Conference
June 9-11, 2006
Green River, Utah

Visit the OSTA Website

<http://www.oldspanishtrail.org>

We will appreciate your comments and suggestions toward further refinements, and especially about what else **you** want included.

All matters relating to *Spanish Traces* should be directed to the Co-editors and Publishers:

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The OST, one of America's great long distance trade routes, is now our country's most recent National Historic Trail. We encourage you to join OSTA, help in its preservation, and increase appreciation of our SW's multicultural heritage.

Membership Dues:

Regular (single or couple)	\$20/year
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President's Corner

The Old Spanish Trail Association is moving well into its second decade. Thanks again to the perceptive Colorado folks who organized OSTA and started the process for national trail designation.

A few of the highlights from this past year: The Cooperative Agreement with NPS is working well, giving the Association money that has been used to, among other things, produce brochures, develop the website, and provide board training. Pat Kuhlhoff and Doug Knudson, New Mexico and Colorado directors, respectively, have led an effort that has resulted in an OST display at Ghost Ranch in Abiquiu. Board meetings in Santa Fe (November '04) and Grand Junction (March '05) were planned to help the board, chapter, NPS, and BLM to get acquainted and discuss issues of importance to each group.

The Las Vegas convention in June was a great success. It was a time of meeting, greeting, learning and sharing. Kudos to all who helped OSTA host the Partnership for the National Trails System (PNTS), as well as put together our own annual conference. We were happy to welcome the incoming Utah director, Al Matheson, and his wife Barbara from Cedar City. Unfortunately, we were not able to fill the vacant California director position. We have many fine people in California who know and love historic trails—we just need to recruit more of them, and find one willing to serve in a leadership position.



With the high price of gasoline, perhaps it is just as well that the OSTA leadership voted to *not* have a November board meeting, as in the past. The next board meeting will be in mid-January in Barstow, California, with Cliff Walker, hosting. It is expected that we will have an opportunity to spend time with our BLM partners there. We encourage you, as OSTA members, to contact your state chapter, or any of the board members/officers if you have questions, ideas, or suggestions. We encourage you to consider becoming a board member, an officer or chair and/or to serve on a committee. Innovative ideas are welcomed.

Best wishes for a safe, healthy, productive fall season!

Reba Gandrud

For the record In the Spring 2005 issue of *Spanish Traces*, Judge Robb's wife was incorrectly cited as Margaret Sullivan. Her correct name is Margaret G. Robb.

Contributors

Steve Elkington is the Program Director for the National Trails System Programs of the National Park Service, Washington, D.C. Office.

Eva Jensen is an archaeologist for the Nevada Department of Cultural Affairs. She works at Lost City Museum in Overton, Nevada.

Michele Nielsen is the Curator of History/Archives at the San Bernardino County Museum.

John Robinson is the author of numerous books and articles on western history. This fall he will be honored as one of the 2005 Fellows of the Historical Society of Southern California. His most recent book, *Gateways to Southern California*, is due for publication by the Big Santa Anita Historical Society in October 2005.

Sarah Schlanger is the Associate State Archaeologist with the New Mexico Bureau of Land Management. She is a member of the Old Spanish National Historic Trail Planning Team.

Donna Thune is a graduate student at California State University, Fullerton, specializing in women in the American West. For this issue, Donna served as copy editor.

News from the Trail

William Workman Chapter

A chapter Newsletter was circulated to members in May which contained details of the contacts made by Bill Ramsay (Chapter President) and David Fallowfield (Chapter Secretary) when they visited Arizona, Nevada and California in April. In due course we will be fixing a date for our Annual General Meeting and one item already on the agenda is to find out how many members will be able to attend the Annual OSTA Conference in Green River scheduled for June 2006.

David Fallowfield

North Branch Chapter

The Chapter has received permission from the Grand Junction Parks and Recreation Department to place a large sandstone boulder with a bronze plaque in Eagle Rim Park. The park overlooks the Colorado River approximately three quarters of a mile downstream from the historic "Crossing of the Grand." The plaque will commemorate Jim Robb's efforts to get the Old Spanish Trail and its North Branch recognized as a National Historic Trail. A minimum of \$4,000 will need to be raised to complete the project. The Chapter is also working to obtain access to the arroyo leading to the "Crossing of the Grand" for a future trail site.

Bill Chenoweth

New Mexico Report

In August, I attended the opening of the Piedra Lumbre Ghost Ranch Visitor and Education Center. There is a beautiful exhibit, done by the folks from the Colorado OSTA chapters, depicting the trail and those who used it. It looks terrific.

We are looking forward to the Armijo Route Fly Over group of about 50 people, who will be in Santa Fe at the end of September. Claudio Chacón and I will take them on a field trip to Abiquiu to see parts of the Trail and also to view the new wayside exhibit which we hope will be up on the side of Bode Store. On Saturday evening, Sarah Schlanger from the BLM will speak to them about the trail taken by Antonio Armijo from Santa Fe to Farmington in 1829.

On October 1, the joint members of the Santa Fe Westerners, the Santa Fe Trail Association and the Salida Del Sol chapter members of OSTA will ride the Cumbres and Toltec Railroad from Chama to Osier and back. The fall colors should be beautiful!

In November, the two trail groups will have another joint meeting. John Ramsey will be our speaker; he will show slides and talk about the OST from Velarde to Taos in northern New Mexico.

Pat Kuhlhoff

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Tecopa Chapter

The chapter's main focus continues to be drafting the proposal for funding for National Register nomination for sites and segments in our chapter boundaries. Aaron Mahr has concurred that resource identification and preservation through National Register listing is in conformity with what the trail administration is currently doing. We are working with the BLM Barstow office and private owners on this, and we plan to partner with UNLV. Clark County BLM has been successful in nominating three segments, which is an inspiration to us. We will have our proposal ready in time for the spring grant cycle.

Our chapter is hosting an honoring ceremony by George Ross. George is a prominent local historian of Paiute heritage. His mother wove beautiful baskets in the Paiute tradition. One of these precious baskets has survived for 75 years and will be passed along to the next generation in the ceremony.

The Tecopa business community has embraced the OST as their own and has included the trail in their community ad in the Death Valley Chamber of Commerce Visitor's Guide, which has a distribution of 30,000 copies. It is touching to witness this first step toward community pride in the trail.

The remodel of the Valley Wells rest stop on I-15 at Baker is a great opportunity for OST promotion. It has an extensive exhibit area themed "Movement in the Desert." Board member Brad Mastin is the BLM

representative on the project. He doesn't let an opportunity go by for OST interpretation. An estimated 3,000,000 travelers will visit this rest stop yearly.

Efforts to make Highway 127 a Scenic Byway are underway. The OST will be strongly promoted along the Byway. Our chapter board members are involved in this endeavor, which should require five years' effort.

The chapter is concerned about a cattle-grazing improvement proposed by the BLM Needles office for the California Valley that may impact the Old Spanish Trail. Our chapter has been working on this since July and will push for partnership and mutual cooperation.

Cynthia Kienitz

Arizona Report

In August, interpretative stories about the Armijo caravan and his journal were part of the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument summer lecture series. Arizona Director, Paul Ostapuk, made two public presentations at the National Monument visitor centers located in Kanab and Big Water, Utah. These visitor centers lie directly on the trail traveled by the 1829 Armijo caravan which wound its way across northern Arizona and southern Utah *en route* to the San Gabriel Mission.

We still need more members who might be interested in forming an Armijo Chapter of the Old Spanish Trail. Those interested should contact Paul Ostapuk at postapuk@cableone.net.

Paul Ostapuk

Utah Report

Progress has been made in the Montecello/Blanding area towards an exhibit and information point to be incorporated into City of Blanding Visitor's Center. The Iron Mission Museum in Cedar City also has agreed to provide exhibit space in their foyer. A continuing exhibit of original OSTA artifacts is being housed in the Special Collections of the Sheratt Library at Southern Utah University. The exhibit includes amulets, dolls, a friar's key, a pistol, pottery and other artifacts recovered from one of the few known campsites on the trail.

I will host a trail ride for the National Archaeological Society in September; a good turnout is expected.

The Southern Utah University Orchestra has commissioned Marshall McDonald to write an orchestral suite on the theme of the Old Spanish Trail. He is in communication with me and is dedicated to "doing his homework" on the trail. We look forward to hearing the composition.

Al Matheson

Exhibits Tell the OST Story

The Old Spanish Trail Association now has several new “homes.” Through our mini-exhibits—low cost tabletop stand-up displays—we now have over 40 trail partners scattered across the routes. Most of these are in museums, visitor centers, and businesses; at least three are in Ute and Paiute nation facilities. Each exhibit has a pocket for distribution of the OSTA brochure. One panel can contain local information about the trail.

Our latest exhibit is at the Ghost Ranch Piedra Lumbre Education and Visitor Center. On August 19, the Center held a formal opening ceremony with many local and state officials. This revived facility, owned by the Forest Service, is now operated by the Ghost Ranch Conference Center near Abiquiu. The Old Spanish Trail Association acts as a partner, at no cost to us. The outdoor exhibit is 36 feet long and 8 feet deep. There are three scenes behind a railing: a weaver preparing woolen trade goods, a wooden but artistic pack mule and horses, and three travelers sitting around a campfire. There are 17 interpretive signs scattered around these images and around a separate abstract trail map. They emphasize the importance of northern New Mexico to the OST. They also explain the value of the trail to the local economy and the rich heritage of the ancestors of today’s residents. We have room for some more interactive displays, and there is the possibility of live interpretative

activities elsewhere in this elegant outdoor museum.

The origin of the exhibit was a suggestion by OSTA member Claudio Chacón, who ranches in the area. Forest Service District Ranger

Travis Moseley welcomed us and referred us to Pat Roach, of the Ghost Ranch staff. Doug and Judy Knudson originated the concepts, with feedback from Pat Kuhlhoff and others. Camille and Mel Getz developed the concepts, building a mule from old tree parts found near their upper Rio Grande cabin. Camille painted textiles and a Spanish house on the exhibit walls, as well as California horses coming down the canyon toward Abiquiu and Santa Fe.

This exhibit sits directly on the Main Branch of the OST, along US



Doug Knudsen and Pat Kuhlhoff at the new OST exhibit at Ghost Ranch
courtesy Pat Kuhlhoff

Highway 84. Built in 1959, the museum previously operated as a local animal exhibit, but now has been adapted to highlight cultural and natural history. Exhibits on the Jicarilla Apaches, rock art, paleontology, and several other subjects are being planned.

These exhibits should help us to meet our vision of making every American aware of the Old Spanish Trail.

Doug Knudsen, Interpretation and Marking Committee



OSTA Convention
Fremont Route
Field Trip:
Emigrant Pass
photo by Jon Lawrence

Historic Rowland House

In 1841, John Rowland and his partner William Workman led a wagon train from New Mexico along the Old Spanish Trail to California.¹ Governor Alvarado awarded Rowland and Workman a 50,000 acre land grant, called *Rancho La Puente*. In 1855, Rowland built the first two story brick home in Southern California on the property.

Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the Rowland House was rendered structurally unsafe in the Whittier Narrows earthquake of 1987. It is now in disrepair; renovation costs were estimated at \$3 million a few years ago, so the price would be much higher today. The house and the 2.3 acre property on which it stands (including the small Round House Museum) are currently owned by the Hacienda La Puente Unified School District and are located adjacent to the school district office at 15959 E. Gale Avenue in the City of Industry.



Rowland House

photo by Carrie Gonzales

lot to the district at no cost. The school district's proposed property agreement also includes a clause that would revert ownership back to the district if the historical society should fail to make improvements or comply with the agreed upon use. The society claims that the possibility of losing the home would prevent the society from getting grant restoration money.

For further information, contact the La Puente Valley Historic Society at PO Box 3451, La Puente, CA 91744.

(email: westwic@earthlink.net)

¹ See Paul R. Spizzeri's article in *Spanish Traces* 7:3 (Fall 2001): 20-28.

Deborah and Jon Lawrence

With the intent of renovating the Rowland House and reopening it to the public, the La Puente Valley Historical Society has submitted a proposal to the school district to acquire the house and property. The school district has offered to deed the house to the society, but society members say that they also need the Round House Museum and the parking lot in between, which would provide street access to the home. The school district wants to provide the needed access to the home without giving away school district access. The society would be willing to lease back the parking



OSTA Convention Femont Route Field Trip:
Resting Springs *photo by Jon Lawrence*

Virgin River Diversion Structure Threatens the OST

A portion of the Old Spanish Trail in southern Nevada is being threatened by a project to bring water to Las Vegas. The Southern Nevada Water Authority (SNWA) has applied to the Bureau of Land Management for rights of way to build a diversion structure, dam, reservoir, pumping stations, and pipelines to take water from the Virgin and Muddy Rivers into the Las Vegas Valley. The project is known as the Virgin and Muddy Rivers Surface Water Development Project.



The Old Spanish Trail at the rim of Mormon Mesa
photo by Hal Steiner

In public documents released this spring, SNWA outlined its plans for developing its water rights on the Virgin and Muddy Rivers. The two rivers, located in northeastern Clark County, converge below the town of Overton and flow into Lake Mead. An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is required to be prepared to consider the potential environmental effects of the project.

As currently proposed in the application, a diversion structure would be constructed on the Virgin River. Water would be pumped to a reservoir, to be constructed in Halfway Wash. From the reservoir, underground pipelines would carry

the water across Mormon Mesa and then along I-15 to Las Vegas. The dam and reservoir in Halfway Wash would put a segment of the trail behind the dam. This segment is one of the few extant portions of the trail. It is listed in the National Register of Historic Places, but that listing does not give it automatic protection. The site affords a good opportunity to see a portion of the trail and to gain an appreciation of the hardships

encountered on the trail as it ascends the steep face of Mormon Mesa.

There is one alternative that would avoid construction of these facilities and transport of the water via pipelines. This alternative would allow the rivers to continue to flow unimpeded into Lake Mead and use SNWA's existing facilities to remove the river water from the

lake. This alternative, however, would require opening up the Colorado River Compact to renegotiation. All seven compact states – Colorado, Wyoming, New Mexico, Utah, Nevada, Arizona, California – would have to agree to open the compact. Once opened to renegotiate one point, there would be potential for other aspects to be renegotiated. By not opening it, there is no potential for loss of rights, whereas opening it may cause some states to lose rights. For these reasons, it is envisioned that the lake conveyance option would entail a lengthy legal battle; therefore, SNWA is reluctant to pursue it.

The public comment period concluded on August 1. OSTA submitted a letter opposing the impact to the OST. Several OSTA members and other interested parties also submitted letters. The EIS process is slated to conclude in 2006. If approved, the project is scheduled to be completed in 2013.



Nevada Chapter members staffed an OSTA booth at the Southern Nevada Cultural History Fair in Las Vegas in recognition of Nevada Historic Preservation Week. Seated, left to right, are Liz Warren, Hal Steiner, Char Cruze, and Nick Saines. Standing, left to right, are Carol Corbett and Mim Romero.
photo by Gary Beckman.

Book Reviews

The Oatman Massacre: A Tale of Desert Captivity and Survival.

Brian McGinty. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2005. ISBN 0806136677. 258 pages. Hardcover, \$27.95.

Brian McGinty takes us on the trail of the Oatman family in his book and breathes new life into this fascinating story of massacre, captivity, and survival in the Southwest of the 1850s. The Oatman tragedy was first popularized by Royal B. Stratton's *Captivity of the Oatman Girls*. Stratton's account is biased and at times inaccurate. An independent scholar, attorney, and historian, McGinty questions evidence presented by Stratton and other researchers and highlights new information that contributes to the understanding of the Oatmans' tragedy.

McGinty begins his narrative history with a discussion of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints and the tensions that encouraged the Oatmans to oppose the leadership of Brigham Young as the successor to Joseph Smith. He provides readers with Mormon history that gives insight into why the Oatmans were on the trail west. Stratton omitted this pertinent background information, perhaps feeling that mentioning the Mormons would have cost him in sales of his book. Most current research gives only lip service to the Mormon significance in the lives of the Oatmans.

A dissident Mormon, Roys Oatman and his wife left the church and joined the Brewsterites, a religious sect that cut ties from Brigham Young. According to McGinty, "The history of the Oatmans cannot be written without taking account of Brewster's church"(10). James Colin Brewster was a self-proclaimed prophet of the Mormon Church who believed that the prophecies of Esdras revealed that the Promised Land was located at the confluence of the Gila and Colorado rivers, not at Salt Lake City. This splinter group of fifty people, including the Oatmans and their seven children, headed toward their destination via the Santa Fe Trail. Along the way, discord broke out among the emigrants which caused the group to divide in half at Santa Fe. Brewster chose to continue on a northern path, while the Oatmans and others took the southern route to connect with the little-traveled Gila River Trail.

Eager to reach Fort Yuma, Roys Oatman failed to take a break with the other families who had stopped to regroup at the Pima villages. He and his family continued on alone. As a result, they found themselves in a vulnerable position in the desert without the protection of fellow travelers. Approximately 80 miles from Fort Yuma, the Oatman party was attacked by Indians near present day Gila Bend, Arizona, on February 18, 1851. All the family members were brutally murdered except for fourteen-year-old Lorenzo and his younger sisters Olive and Mary Ann. Lorenzo was clubbed and left for dead. Olive and Mary Ann were taken captive by their attackers. McGinty's argues against popular

opinion that the Apaches were behind this clash. His research on Indian tribes of the area contributes information that convinces readers that the Western Yavapais were behind this deed.

After one year of enslavement, the Oatman girls were traded to the Mohave Indians. The Mohaves treated the girls more humanely than their previous masters. McGinty examines the experiences of Olive and Mary Ann with these Native people. He attempts to shed new light on the question of whether the girls were adopted into the tribe as some writers believe. Of course, no book on Olive Oatman would be complete without a discussion of the tattoos given to the girls. McGinty discusses the significance of the tattoos, and examines the evidence that the tattooing could have been a brand signifying slave marks, a symbol of acceptance into the Mohave family, or the result of a religious ceremony. According to McGinty, Olive may have transcultured to the Mohave life after Mary Ann's death.

Olive survived her captivity and was reunited with Lorenzo Oatman through the help of the United States government. Whether she wanted to return to white society is unclear. However, Royal Stratton saw an opportunity and published her story. Olive went on the lecture circuit in America for over five years, promoting Stratton's book and exciting audiences with her facial tattoos. Eventually, she met John B. Fairchild. They married and moved to Texas. McGinty concludes his book with a brief discussion on the legacy of the Oatman story.

McGinty's historical perspective makes this book unique. He focuses on the Mormon connection which has been mostly overlooked by scholars. McGinty leads us to reconsider the belief that the Apaches instigated the attack on the Oatmans and asserts that there is a strong probability that Tolkepayas or Western Yavapais were responsible for the Oatman murders and the abduction of the Olive and Mary Ann. He also reveals the hidden agenda by Stratton and other Americans against Native Americans. Most writers have failed to account for the Indians' side of the story. McGinty's book pursues the Indians' motivation behind the attack. McGinty places the story of one family into the bigger picture of American history.

McGinty does a superb job of building onto the existing research. He uses the church history of the LDS, information on Indian ethnology, and genealogical records to strengthen his work. His organization of photographs, maps, letters, and other primary documents creates both a scholarly account and a convincing story. The chronological format, consisting of background, development, and aftermath of the tragedy, makes his book an easy read from start to finish.

The Oatman Massacre: A Tale of Desert Captivity and Survival by Brian McGinty is a must read for trail enthusiasts, history scholars or readers just searching for an engaging story.

reviewed by Donna T. Thune

The Story of Agua Mansa: Its Settlement, Churches, and People.

R. Bruce Harley. Diocese of San Bernardino, 1998. 111 pages, maps, endnotes, bibliography. Softcover, \$10.00.

Women in Agua Mansa History, 1838-1997.

R. Bruce Harley. *San Bernardino County Museum Association Quarterly* Vol. 49, 2002. 64 pages, maps, illustrations, endnotes, bibliography. Softcover, \$10.00.

There are many approaches to the study of a particular historic period, event or topic. Perhaps one of the most interesting ways to examine the past is through the experiences of individuals. Dr. R. Bruce Harley once again uses this approach to hold the reader's attention with a look at life in the Agua Mansa and La Placita communities, established in 1842 in what is now Colton, California.

In his work *Agua Mansa: Its Settlement, Churches, and People*, Dr. Harley brings to life the available historic data about these communities. He tells engaging stories and relates information concerning the fourteen original families and their descendants who settled and lived in this region from the 1840s forward. In addition, he details other settlers who followed, and their impact on the communities and the general area.

Dr. Harley begins by establishing the point of origin for this group of settlers – Abiquiu, New Mexico. He offers insight into life in Abiquiu and the reasons for the migration of these first families who used the Old Spanish Trail and subsequently established Agua Mansa and La

Placita upon their arrival in the Colton area. The culture of the Agua Mansans, their religious activities, educational system and contributions to life in the Colton area are the focus of Dr. Harley's research. To this end, he utilizes primary and secondary sources that include journal and diary entries, parish records, governmental records, personal recollections and previously published works.

He focuses on individuals that populated the communities, including members of the clergy, such as the first pastor of the San Salvador Parish, Father Amable, and families like the Trujillos and Belardes. The use of background information and descriptive quotes from primary sources brings these people to life and allows the reader to imagine what life was like on a very personal level.

Technical data, such as maps, lists of pioneer family members and school enrollment figures, are included but are not overwhelming. Over the years, interesting stories about the communities have circulated, including the possible migration of New Mexican people with a Spanish/Jewish heritage to Agua Mansa and La Placita and another tale about a phony inheritance scheme involving altered parish records that went awry. Dr. Harley re-tells these stories and sheds light on the hearsay with factual information. The Agua Mansans did not live in isolation, and so he also establishes the activities of the settlers of these unique communities on a time-line that includes events at the regional, federal, and state levels, placing these settlements in a larger historic context.

In a concluding section, Dr. Harley maps out the Agua Mansa History Trail, allowing readers to take a day-long driving trip to visit spots of historic interest in the greater Inland Empire area of San Bernardino and Riverside Counties. This tour features points of historic interest that help to illustrate not only the Agua Mansa story, but the history of the area. Because of inevitable changes over the years, it is suggested that trekkers contact the sites listed to determine current hours of operation before heading out.

In his work *Women in Agua Mansa History, 1838-1997*, Dr. Harley utilizes a public history methodology. He offers short biographies of a diverse group of women involved in the Agua Mansa settlement of 1842 and the subsequent communities that developed in the local area and into the present day. He includes general background information on Abiquiu, the reasons for the original settlements of Agua Mansa and La Placita, and the use of the Old Spanish Trail as a travel-way of the past.

These biographical sketches not only offer valuable information about the lives of the specific women they focus on, but also give insight into the social and cultural practices of the New Mexicans from Abuquiu, and life in the pre and post-American period in what is now southern California. The sketches themselves include family history information for each of the women and, in some cases, quotes from primary source materials such as diaries and journals.

Dr. Harley has chosen a diverse group of women from a range of cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Some, such as Josefa Moya Young, came across the Old Spanish Trail as settlers. Others were descendants of Californio families, and yet others, such as Augusta Joyce Crocheron, came to the greater area during the Mormon period.

Harley offers information on societal norms in each of the communities and briefly looks at how specific women lived within these communities and examines the degrees of self-determination they had. Embedded in the sketches is an emphasis on information related to daily living, including work, food, family and social activities, marriage practices, and religion. The material included on community dynamics and the early education system is fascinating and insightful.

Both books are well written, enjoyable and informative. They bring a fresh perspective to the interesting subject of the settlement of southern California through a focus on the Agua Mansa community and its environs.

reviewed by Michele Nielsen

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The Overland Journey from Utah to California: Wagon Travel from the City of Saints to the City of Angels. Edward Leo Lyman. Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2004. ISBN 0874175011. 288 pages, maps, illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. Hardcover, \$39.95.

When overland routes to the Pacific are discussed, there is rarely any mention of the Southern Route from Salt Lake City to Los Angeles. Desiring to give recognition to this neglected 800-mile road, historian Edward Leo Lyman offers readers a comprehensive history of the Southern Route.

Based on primary and secondary sources, as well as Lyman's own investigation of the route and its branches, *The Overland Journey from Utah to California* examines the development of the old pack mule trail between Salt Lake City and Los Angeles. Interspersed throughout are discussions of the Mormon/Indian relations, tensions between the United States government and Mormondom, and the effects of trail development on the Native American lifestyle.

Chapter One provides an examination of the physical features of the route. Although most emigrant routes followed rivers, the Southern Route traverses a desert terrain. The lack of water made this one of the most challenging of the well-used emigrant trails. Except for a two-year span in the mid-1850s when the Las Vegas mission was functioning, there was very little haven for the travelers. However, the road was not without advantages. It was most



valuable because it was open all winter—whereas northern routes were snowed in. With the notable exception of the Mountain Meadows Massacre, there were few trail-related deaths, with almost none of the deaths due to disease and only a small number of deaths resulting from conflicts initiated by Indians.

From Parowan, Utah, to Los Angeles, California, the Southern Route follows the western segment of the Old Spanish Trail. However, the two roads were not always synonymous: the pack mule trail varied from the wagon road where the former was impracticable for wheeled vehicles. In Chapter Two, Lyman provides an excellent overview of the history of the Old Spanish Trail, including the early explorations of Fathers Garcés, Escalante and Dominguez, of mountain men like Jedediah Smith and Ewing Young, of the government explorer John C. Frémont and the New Mexico trader Antonio Armijo.

Lyman estimates that the Mormons accounted for about a third of all trail travelers on the Southern Route during the initial eight years. However, the California Gold Rush made it a significant road for Gentiles as well. According to Lyman, close to five hundred wagons and three thousand emigrants traveled this trail during the first three years of the Gold Rush. Chapter Three is an account of wagon travel on the Southern Route in 1849. Although the 49ers traveling the Southern Route made many mistakes, most of them arrived at their destinations and were able to provide trail expertise to subsequent travelers of the route. Men like Vincent A. Hoover and

Thomas Wylly kept detailed journals that recorded good campgrounds, water, and grass. Hoover even took odometer readings from one important trail site to the next. These early emigrant journals (some of them previously unknown) provide fabulous details of the road in 1849. In Chapter Four, Lyman examines the increase in traffic over the route from 1850 to 1853. Central to his discussion is the Mormon colony in San Bernardino. According to the author, the Latter-day Saint travelers acted more favorably to the Native Americans than did others, and Lyman begins Chapter Five with a discussion of the Southern Indian Mission among the Southern Paiutes. This is followed by a section devoted to trail travel from 1853 to 1856, completing the middle phase of emigration over the Southern Route. During this period the route was temporarily improved through the establishment of a way station at Las Vegas.

Lyman's overview of the Mountain Meadows Massacre, the most important event in the history of the Southern Route, sets the tragedy in the larger context of the history of the Southern Route. According to Lyman, one of the least known aspects of the Southern Route history is the attempt of Mormon Indian missionaries, especially Jacob Hamblin, to discourage the Indians from further violence and looting after the Mountain Meadows Massacre. Despite their efforts, the situation in southern Utah remained extremely volatile, and there was a significant decline in trail travel over the Southern Route for a while after the tragic event.

From 1855 to 1868, the Southern Route was one of the busiest freight routes in the West, a fact long overlooked by Utah historians because of Brigham Young's emphasis on economic isolation. Lyman provides an extensive discussion of the how the Southern Route served as a vital supply force of goods to burgeoning Utah from Southern California until the completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869. He concludes his study with an overall assessment of the Southern Route.

Lyman's stated goal is to call attention to a significant trail that has for too long gone unrecognized, and he succeeds, with admirable attention to detail. The author's chronological arrangement illustrates the growth, development, and importance of the Southern Route. Additionally, his insightful endnoting provides an invaluable resource tool. One reservation is that in his discussion of the Mountain Meadows Massacre, Lyman's empathy for the Mormons is not equaled with a sympathetic representation of the Fancher party. A more balanced approach would have allowed for a deeper, richer context within which to view the tragedy. (Readers might wish to supplement Lyman's chapter on the Mountain Meadows with Will Bagley's *Blood of the Prophets*, which provides a moving portrayal of those murdered at the meadows, as well as an account of the seventeen surviving children.)

Notwithstanding such modest reservations, this book is essential reading for anyone interested in the Southern Route from Salt Lake City to Los Angeles.

reviewed by Deborah and Jon Lawrence

Southern Nevada's "Lost City": Prehistory Along the Old Spanish Trail

by Eva Jensen



Eva Jensen
at the OSTA Convention in Las Vegas
photo by Jon Lawrence

The Native American history in southern Nevada covers thousands of years of life and adaptation in a hot dry environment. Generations before the Old Spanish Trail was established, the desert in this area, with its small springs and streams, was home for animals and humans. One of the most remarkable communities was that of the Ancestral Pueblo or Anasazi people who lived in the Muddy and Virgin River valleys, establishing what archaeologists and journalists call "the fabulous Lost City."

By 1826, when Jedediah Smith traveled through the area, the Puebloan culture was gone and Paiute encampments melded with the earlier pueblo adobe homes

and artifacts. The early Anglo and Spanish trappers, traders, and travelers on their way to the Colorado River and California say little about the prehistoric ruins along the Muddy and Virgin River valleys. What cryptic notes were written down, or transcribed later in letters, speak only briefly of artifacts used by the Paiute. If the earlier ruins were noticed, they were probably seen as previous homes of the Southern Paiute that the traders encountered along the route.

This paper will serve to explore some of the mysteries of where the ancestral Pueblo peoples came from, how they flourished and where they went when they "disappeared." Their cultural development in southern Nevada was rich and varied, including mining, long distance trade, jewelry, fine painted pottery, and complex social networks.

Southern Nevada has been home to humans for over 10,000 years. The earliest residents were probably mobile hunters known best for the distinctive Clovis type spear points. Clovis points have been identified in the Las Vegas Wash (Seymour 2002), Kane Springs in southern Lincoln County (Jensen 2005), and on the Nevada Test Site (Jones and Edwards 1994; Hartwell and Varley 2003). During this earliest occupation, known as the Paleo period, the climate was cooler and wetter, with flowing spring and streams and with lakes in many of the valley bottoms. Following a drying trend that essentially created the Mojave Desert as we know it today, the human residents adapted

hunting and gathering technologies to the hot dry environment. Smaller projectile points were used to tip the spears that were thrown with atlatls for greater accuracy and force. This Archaic period lasted some eight thousand years.

By about 300 B.C. the cultures in southern Nevada were becoming more sedentary. Corn domesticated from a wild grass plant in Mexico became a staple in the diet of natives in the southwest, including southern Nevada and the Moapa Valley. The earliest cultural developments that included corn horticulture were identified as the Basketmaker. In Moapa Valley, Basketmaker sites have been identified near Overton and on Black Dog Mesa, very close to what would later become the California Crossing of the Old Spanish Trail 1000 years later.

This Basketmaker period of cultural development included the use of pit house dwellings, the absence of pottery, and the use of domestic, as well as wild plants, for food. Pithouses were made by digging a hole into the ground between 3 and 5 feet deep, and sometimes up to 15 feet across. A log structure was



Lost City Pueblo
courtesy Eva Jensen



Map showing the location of Lost City in relationship to the historic trails
courtesy Eva Jensen

small game traps. The earliest Pueblo period was marked by changes in house style and technology. Houses were not as deeply buried in the ground, and more and more space was devoted to storage. One or two connected storage rooms flanked shallow pit house living quarters. By about 600 A.D., a simple grayware pottery was developed. This pottery was made with local clays and hardened in open fires. Pottery development elsewhere in the Southwest seems to coincide with the domestication of

placed over the pit and cribbed to raise the ceiling and increase interior space. The structure was then covered with brush, arrow weed, or cattail, with earth mounded on top. The entrance was usually a single hole in the top with a log or pole ladder. A ventilator shaft on the side provided fresh airflow for a small cooking fire hearth.

Domesticated corn in Moapa Valley has been dated as early as 200 A.D. (Lyneis 1999, 2003). Pottery was not used during this time period. Cooking was done in baskets with heated stones from the fire dropped into liquid to quickly boil the food. Hunting continued to use the atlatl spear thrower and

hard beans. The beans required long soaking and extended cooking times; development of pottery accommodated the change in cooking needs. This period also saw the use of new technology for hunting with bows and arrows. Smaller stone points were developed for the lighter arrows.

The Pueblo II period in the Moapa Valley began about 1000 A.D. and continued through abandonment in about 1150 A.D.. This was a period of population growth, trade, community interaction, artistic expression, social development and change. In the archaeological identification of the Anasazi world,

neighboring cultures included the Chaco Canyon communities in New Mexico, the Kayenta Anasazi of Wupatki in northern Arizona, and the Mesa Verde “cliff dwellers” of Colorado and southeast Utah. Other neighbors included the Fremont in southwest and central Utah, and the Patayan or Mojave of the Lower Colorado River and California deserts.

In this area, the culture is identified as the Virgin River branch of the Anasazi. The area includes the St. George Basin, the Arizona Strip north of the Grand Canyon and southern Nevada to the Las Vegas valley. The largest settlements identified in southern Nevada were along the Muddy and Virgin River valleys, areas that would eventually become part of the Spanish Trail.

Cultural development during the Pueblo II period included complex systems that archaeologists are still working to uncover and understand. Salt and turquoise were both mined by the Anasazi prehistorically, long before the route of the OST was established. The Anasazi mined rock salt from deposits on the Virgin River below the confluence with the Muddy. Artifacts found in the caves included torches, corncocks, fiber bags and cordage, as well as pottery and large stone axes and picks. Puebloan cultures continue to tell stories about traditional salt gathering treks to the Grand Canyon and other areas. The salt provided a dietary supplement necessary for people subsisting mostly on plants or vegetable crops.



Adams Salt Mine on the Virgin River
courtesy Eva Jensen

Early travelers along the OST were very interested in the salt mines. Jedediah Smith noted the large blocks of rock salt in the Indian villages he encountered along what he named the Adams River. The information was related in his journal and in letters to government officials. The Adams River, now known as the Virgin River, flows from its headwaters at Zion National Park in Utah through Arizona and Nevada to where it empties into Lake Mead and the impounded waters of the Colorado River. Smith named the salt cave Adams Cave. After the Mormon settlement St. Thomas was established in 1865 along the Muddy River, it was renamed the St. Thomas Salt Cave.

Some books indicate Smith found artifacts in the salt cave. Although he described the cave in detail in his letters and diary, he did not indicate that the items he collected were from the cave, but rather that they were obtained from the Paiutes who were using similar items at the time he encountered them.

The *Pa Ulches* have a number of marble pipes, one of which I obtained and send you, altho' it has

been broken since I have had it in my possession; they told me there was a quantity of the same material in their country. I also obtained of them a Knife of *flint*, which I sent you, but it likewise has been broken by accident. (Smith, in Morgan 1953: 335).

Other prehistoric pursuits in southern Nevada included turquoise mining near Boulder City, Searchlight, and Halloran, which is across the border in California. Turquoise has been prized by cultures across the world for its color and the ease with which it can be shaped and polished for jewelry and adornment. Many artifacts of turquoise have been recovered in the Lost City sites.

Trade and long distance contact are evident in non-local goods found in the Lost City sites. Some researchers have proposed that the salt and turquoise trade may have been the primary reason for the prehistoric settlements along the Muddy River. However, Lyneis (1992) indicated there was no hierarchy visible in the architecture and the burial goods that would support this theory. It is more likely that items were an important part of the daily lives of a thriving southwest community.

Olivella shell beads and abalone from coastal California and the Gulf of Mexico are found in the Lost City sites (Lyneis 1992; Shutler 1962). This distant travel or transport of goods speaks to the fact that trails and travel routes across Nevada and into Arizona were established long before the Anglo trappers and traders ventured into the Las Vegas valley.

By far the most common non-local item transported was pottery. Archaeologists trace the manufacturing areas and destinations of pottery by analysis of clay and temper. During the early Pueblo II period, pottery was often made on the Arizona Strip north of the Grand Canyon and transported to the Lost City community 80 miles away, either through trade, seasonal movement, or family ties (Lyneis 1992). Other pottery from as far away as Kanab and Blanding in Utah, and Flagstaff in Arizona, were brought to this area.

Equally as important as the transport of material goods was the transport of ideas. Pottery designs show continuity and changes in style through time and geographically across the greater Anasazi world. Archaeologists use design styles to trace change and determine the age of archaeological sites. Styles in the Lost City area follow the well-dated examples of sites in Wupatki and Black Mesa in Arizona (Colton 1952). While ideas embodied in pottery design styles are visible today, other ideas of religious, social relationship, or language are more difficult to trace.

The largest sites date to the middle Pueblo II period, about 1050 to 1150 A.D.. The latest sites in the valley are pueblo sites with large living or communal rooms and several attached smaller rooms, presumably for storage. Reports document 84 rooms for the Mesa House site, including a very large square room and many attached storage rooms, outdoor hearths, as well as detached pit structures and storage pits (Hayden 1929:27-92). Rooms

in the pueblos were of adobe mud construction with stone or wood. They were one-story structures and presumably had mud thatched roofs.

Fine textured corrugated pottery was abundant. Many vessels were locally made and some were imported, although for unknown reasons the Arizona Strip trade seems to have ended during the middle Pueblo II period (Lyneis 1992).

Around 1150 A.D. the Lost City area was abandoned by the Puebloan people. Many hypotheses have been proposed to explain the “disappearance” of the Anasazi people. Drought, disease, conflict, population pressure, and continuity (the idea that they never left but merely lost their cultural identity) have been proposed as explanations. Each of these causes finds some validity in the record, but none, as a single cause, seem plausible to explain the demise of a culture that grew and survived in the area for over a thousand years.

Whatever the cause of the abandonment, the true mystery of the Anasazi in Nevada is how they were able to survive and thrive in the harsh Mojave Desert for hundreds of generations. The Hopi in Arizona claim these people, as well as others associated with hundreds of prehistoric pueblo communities, as their ancestors. They are known as *Hisatsinom*, the ancient ones. Time will only tell if we can survive and adapt to this desert environment as successfully as the Ancestral Pueblo people. Traders and travelers established the first Anglo trails through the desert in the early 1800s.

We have a little over 200 years of written history in southern Nevada. The Ancestral Puebloan people lived here for over 1000 years. We will need to survive for another 800 years in southern Nevada to equal the success of the Puebloan communities of the Lost City.

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Lost City Pottery

courtesy Eva Jensen

Antonio María Armijo: New Mexico Trader to California Ranchero

by John W. Robinson



John Robinson
at the OSTA Board Meeting in Las Vegas
photo by Jon Lawrence

In the fall of 1829 Antonio María Armijo, an inhabitant of the territory of New Mexico, received authorization from José Antonio Chavez, New Mexico Minister of Interior and Foreign Relations, to lead a trade caravan from Santa Fe to California. Armijo gained the services of sixty men, mostly muleteers, and assembled a pack train of one hundred mules. The animals were loaded with woven woolen goods--primarily serapes and blankets--products of New Mexico's sheep industry. Armijo and his backers hoped to trade these goods for California mules, which were considered larger and stronger than the local animals.

On November 7, 1829, Armijo's mule caravan set out from Abiquiú, a small frontier settlement on the

Rio Chama fifty miles northwest of Santa Fe. Fortunately we have Armijo's diary, so we can trace his route to California with a fair degree of accuracy. Instead of heading north where the Chama River flows out of the mountains, on what later became known as the Old Spanish Trail, Armijo's mule train moved west and crossed the Continental Divide, separating the Rio Grande watershed from that of the Colorado River. The caravan veered northwest, descending Largo Canyon, and crossed the San Juan River near present-day Blanco. Continuing west-northwest, the caravan passed the sites of today's Aztec and La Plata, followed the plain below the south boundary of present-day Mesa Verde National Park, and left New Mexico very close to the Four Corners region. Armijo probably carried a copy of the map drawn by Father Escalante in 1776, for his caravan headed westerly in a fairly direct course to the "Crossing of the Fathers," one of the few places where the Colorado River can be safely forded. Armijo and his muleteers led their animals down to the south bank, crossed the river, and ascended the rough steps gouged into the smooth sandstone

by the Domínguez-Escalante party fifty-three years earlier.

After crossing the Colorado, the caravan skirted the present Utah-Arizona border westward through rough canyon country to the Virgin River, which they intersected somewhere near today's Hurricane, Utah. They continued westerly to an intersection with the Jedediah Smith trail of 1826-27, followed the latter down the Santa Clara River to its junction with the Virgin, and then continued down this river to its confluence with the Colorado.



Antonio María Armijo as a California Ranchero
courtesy Jerry Bowen, Vacaville Heritage Council

Instead of crossing the Colorado and taking Smith's route south to the Mojave Villages, Armijo sought a more direct way to the California settlements. One of his scouts, Rafael Rivera, who had traveled from California to Sonora in 1828, left the party near present-day Mesquite, Nevada, to scout out a new route. Rivera was gone thirteen days. He rejoined Armijo's resting caravan near the mouth of Las Vegas Wash on January 7, 1830. Whatever Armijo learned from Rivera, the caravan turned up Las Vegas Wash, crossed the Las Vegas Basin several miles south of the present city, and threaded their way southwest to Goodsprings, then west to the Amargosa River and its foul-tasting water, southeast of Death Valley. From the Amargosa, Armijo's train headed south to Salt Springs. Armijo's route from there to the Mojave River is unclear. Historian Leroy Hafen asserts that he veered southwest, via Red Pass and Bitter Spring, to reach the Mojave some fifteen or twenty miles east of today's Barstow. Elizabeth Warren believes he continued on a southerly course to Soda Lake and the springs at Zzyzx, then up the intermittently-flowing Mojave River. Whichever route Armijo took to reach the Mojave, his packmule caravan ascended the river to its upper reaches, crossed Cajon Pass, and reached Mission San Gabriel on January 31, 1830.

The pioneering trade journey had taken eighty-six days. After trading his woolen goods for California horses and mules, Armijo divided his party. One

group retraced their way back to New Mexico in forty days. Armijo, with the remainder of the party, returned in fifty-six days. The horses and mules brought back from California were highly valued in New Mexico. Armijo's pioneering journey initiated an annual series of trade caravans between New Mexico and California that continued until 1848.¹

The official report of Armijo's trade journey, along with Armijo's diary, was dispatched by Minister Chavez to Mexico City on May 14, 1830, and was published in the *Registro Oficial de Gobierno de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos* on June 19, 1830. A previous, unofficial account dated April 28, 1830, submitted by an unidentified "M.A.O.," saw publication on June 5. Unfortunately, some historians of the Old Spanish Trail used the unofficial account, which differs in some details from the official report. This has resulted in discrepancies in later accounts of Armijo's historic *entrada*.²

While this five-month segment of Armijo's life is well known, the rest of his life has not been explored. Leroy Hafen, author of the

first book-length study of the Old Spanish Trail, could find no more about him than brief references in Chavez's report to the effect that Armijo and his men were "inhabitants of the territory of New Mexico" and that "they are known to be courageous, rugged, and eager to discover new lands, are lacking in instruction and literature."³ While it may be true that the men who accompanied Armijo were uneducated and illiterate, Armijo himself was educated enough to write and keep accounts, and he evidently consulted Spanish reports of earlier journeys over parts of the trail, such as the Dominguez-Escalante expedition of 1776.



Lolita María Armijo, Antonio María's mother, and María Concepción Antonia, his daughter
courtesy Jerry Bowen, Vacaville Heritage Council

Recent research has filled in a few scant details – some contradictory – concerning Antonio María Armijo’s early years. California’s pioneer historian, Hubert Howe Bancroft wrote that Armijo was in San Jose, California, in 1841, at the age of 37.⁴ This would indicate his year of birth as 1804. His father, José Francisco Armijo, was said to have been born in Socorro, New Mexico, around 1785 and was for a time a partner in a Santa Fe Trail trading business. He is said to have traveled the Santa Fe Trail dealing in *aguardiente* (brandy), woolen goods, and hides. Antonio’s mother was Lolita María [surname unknown].⁵ Antonio María probably learned his commercial skills through working with his father on the Santa Fe trade.

Antonio Armijo’s relationship, if any, to three-time New Mexico Governor Manuel Armijo has not been determined. The Armijos were a well-known family in 19th-century New Mexico. A community named “Armijo” on the west bank of the Rio Grande three miles south of old Albuquerque was so-named because a cluster of Armijo families settled there. First to arrive was José de Armijo, a native of Zacatecas, Mexico, who came to New Mexico in 1693 with his wife Catalina Duran and four grown sons. The Armijo clan multiplied rapidly, most of them settling in the Albuquerque area.⁶ Governor Armijo had three brothers and numerous nephews, many of whom were involved in the Santa Fe Trail trade. But just where in the Armijo geneology José Francisco and his son Antonio María belong is not yet known and awaits research in New Mexico archives and church records.

The main reason Hafen and other writers reached a blank wall regarding Antonio Armijo’s life was that they were searching in the wrong place. Research in California mission and archival records, Bancroft’s works, and information from Solano County historian Jerry Bowen of the Vacaville Heritage Council and from Alexander King of Los Angeles, who has done extensive research on the Vaca and Peña families, reveal that both Antonio María and his father José Francisco Armijo came to California to stay in 1830-31.⁷

Mission Santa Clara records reveal that Antonio María married María de los Dolores Engracia Duarte y Peralta on April 30, 1831.⁸ His bride was the daughter of a prominent San José family, led by Mariano Duarte, *alcalde* of the town of San Jose.⁹ The question arises: How did Antonio María meet his future bride? A likely scenario is as follows: Upon arriving at Mission San Gabriel with his hundred-mule pack train in January 1830, Armijo was able to trade a large part of his woolen goods for California mules in the San Gabriel-Los Angeles area. He sent these back with the segment of his pack train that returned to New Mexico in forty days. With the remainder of his train, he traveled north on California’s *El Camino Real* at least as far as San Jose, disposing of the remainder of his woolen goods in exchange for the animals he wanted. Here, in San Jose, he probably met his bride-to-be. He then returned to New Mexico, reaching Jemez in fifty-six days.

When Antonio María returned to California, probably late in 1830, he may have traveled with his father José Francisco Armijo and his mother Lolita Maria. We know that the senior Armijo and his wife arrived that year because genealogical records reveal that José Francisco’s sixth child and Antonio María’s little brother, Jesus, was born in California in 1830.¹⁰

Antonio María began his married life in either the small village next to Mission Santa Clara or, more likely, in the nearby pueblo of San Jose, very possibly working for his wife’s prominent Duarte family. His first three children – José Antonio Francisco, José Bernardo Antonio, and Jesus María, born respectively in 1832, 1833, and 1835--were baptized at Mission Santa Clara.¹¹

It appears likely that Antonio María and his growing family moved to the lower east San Francisco Bay area, known as Contra Costa, in 1836 or 1837. His fourth child, Felix María Antonio, was born at Mission San Jose in April 1837.¹² It should be noted that Mission San Jose was *not* in the pueblo of San Jose, but in the lower east bay within the present-day city of Fremont. Antonio’s father, José Francisco Armijo, was for a time associated with the militia of San Francisco Presidio and was appointed *alcalde auxiliar* for Contra Costa in 1837.¹³ It was here, in *Contra Costa* (which means “opposite coast”), that the Armijos probably became acquainted with the

powerful Vallejo family through José de Jesus Vallejo, brother of Comandante-General Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo of Sonoma. José de Jesus was appointed *mayordomo* of secularized Mission San Jose in 1836.¹⁴ As previously mentioned, Bancroft placed Antonio María in San Jose in 1841, at age 37. While this means that Antonio María was physically present in San Jose for some period in 1841, it does not necessarily mean that he lived there. (Mexican censuses counted people when and where the census taker found them.)



Mariana Guadalupe Vallejo surrounded by adoring daughters
courtesy California State Library

The record for both father and son becomes more distinct in the 1840s. With the secularization of the California missions in 1835, large tracts of free land became available to Mexican citizens. At the same time, the Mexican government in California became concerned about their “open” frontier north of San Francisco Bay. The Russians were already a presence at Fort Ross on the north coast; Johann Augustus Sutter was building his inland “fort” that he called New Helvetia (New Switzerland) in the Sacramento Valley; and the Hudson

Bay Company’s British trappers, based at Fort Vancouver on the Columbia River, were trapping far south into California’s Central Valley. Except for Mariano Vallejo at Sonoma and the small San Francisco de Sonoma mission, there was little Mexican presence north of the Golden Gate. California governor Juan Alvarado was anxious to settle Mexican citizens on this threatened northern frontier. He appointed Vallejo military comandante-general and directed him

to promote settlement in what are today Sonoma, Napa and Solano counties.¹⁵

On November 22, 1839, Don José Francisco Armijo submitted a petition for a land grant in the Suisun Valley area, northeast of San Francisco Bay. The petition was addressed to Señor Comandante-General Mariano Vallejo of Sonoma, as follows:

José Francisco Armijo, by birth a Mexican, before your honor, in the manner which may be best for me in the law, say: That having four sons, natives of the same country, without owning any land to cultivate, find myself owner of about one hundred head of cattle, the product of which I annually lose, supplicate that your Honor will be pleased to concede to me the place known to me by the name of Tolenas. That in company with my son, Antonio María, I dedicate myself to the cultivation of my own land and the breeding of cattle, with the understanding that the land which I solicit is from the place already mentioned to Ololatos Creek, containing about three leagues of land, more or less, and it joins with the Suisun rancho.¹⁶

General Vallejo endorsed Armijo’s petition and forwarded it to Governor Juan Alvarado, who awarded the Tolenas land grant of three square leagues (13,315 acres) to José Francisco Armijo on March 4, 1840, with the proviso that Armijo not in any way molest the “heathens” [Indians] living there.¹⁷ The location of the grant was in the northern portion of the Suisun Valley, immediately east and north of the present-day city of Fairfield, about halfway between San Francisco and Sacramento.



Thompson map, ca. 1870, showing a portion of Solano County with the Armijo Grant in the upper right.
courtesy Jerry Bowen, Vacaville Heritage Council

With the Tolenas land grant officially recorded, the first step was to define the boundaries. A lariat, fifty to sixty feet long, was used to record measurements. The land survey took place on horseback.

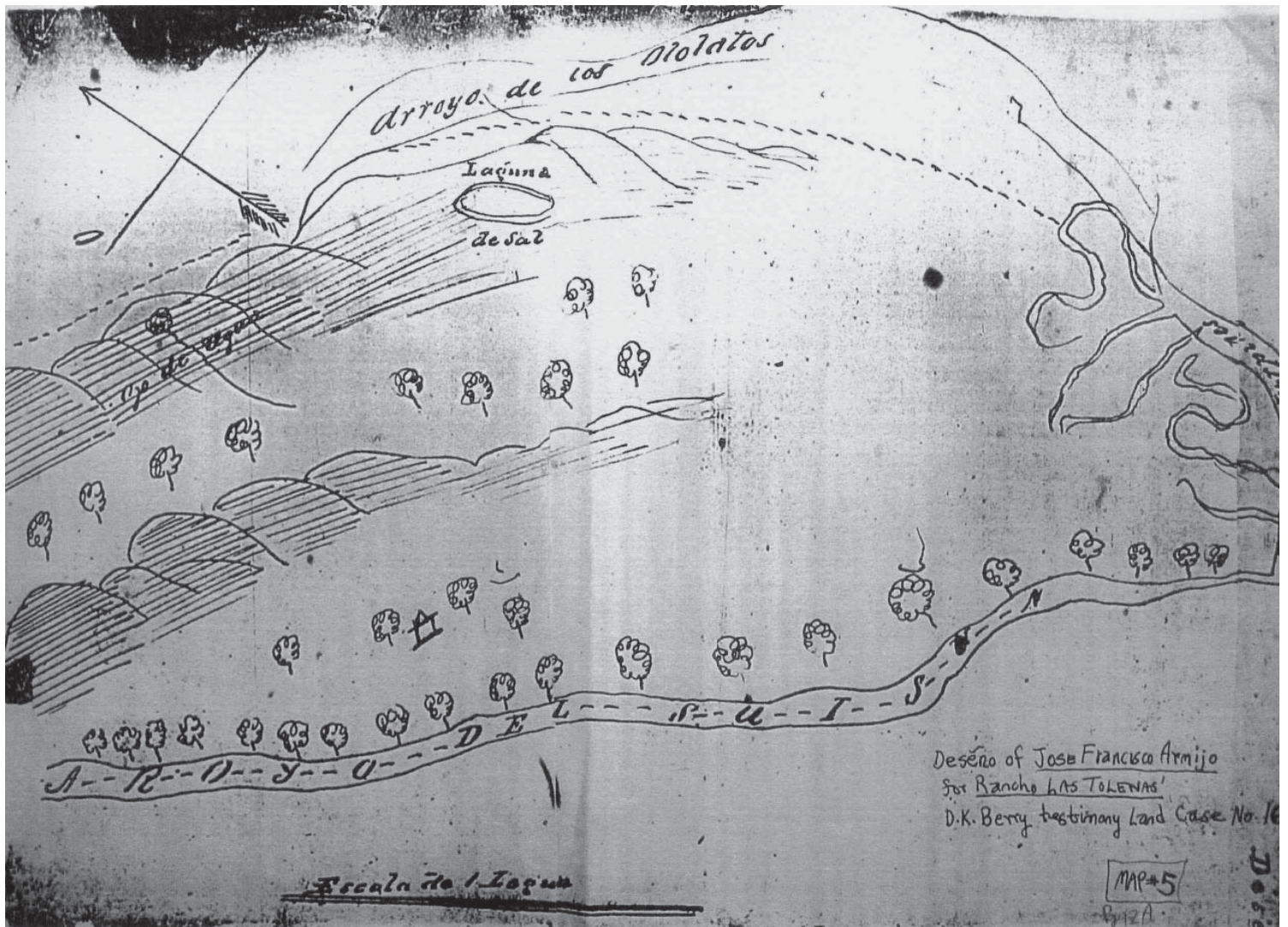
Two vaqueros would stretch 50 varas--150 feet--of lariats between them. At each end of the 150 feet, they would touch the ground with a pole. They in turn were followed by the don, who counted the number of poles. The whole operation occurred at full gallop, slowing only down for the lowering of the posts.. Swamps and other inaccessible areas were measured by eye, with hills and other natural features giving visual aids. Descriptions -- such as "a clump of dogwood," "an oak tree," or "entrance to a bear's cave"--designated specific

points. The survey results would then be recorded on a master *diseño*.¹⁸

Years later, after California became part of the United States, these vague descriptions of rancho borders led to extensive and costly court battles, usually lost by the original grantees.¹⁹

Soon after the grant was awarded, José Francisco moved his cattle, numbering over one hundred head, from Luis Peralta's Rancho San Antonio (bordering the east bay near today's Oakland), where they had been grazing, to his new Rancho Tolenas. General Vallejo is said to have loaned Armijo farming tools to develop agriculture.

Antonio María apparently moved to his father's Rancho Tolenas shortly after it was awarded, and helped the senior Armijo raise cattle and plant crops, including a fruit orchard. He probably helped construct his father's *palizada*, a large adobe home built in U shape, with nine-foot high walls, heavy oak beams and a tile roof. By 1845, the Armijo families, with their many children and grandchildren and a growing number of servants and vaqueros, were too numerous to all live in the *palizada*. A second, smaller adobe home was constructed. Antonio and his growing family moved into the original dwelling, while his aging parents moved into the smaller adobe.²⁰ In a document



Copy of the *diseño* presented by José Francisco Armijo for Las Tolenas in 1840
courtesy Jerry Bowen, Vacaville Heritage Council

dated March 17, 1846, José Francisco transferred all but a half league on the rancho to his son Antonio María “that he may enjoy it freely and exclusively with all the rights which are expressed in the Title of Concession.”²¹

The Armijos soon had neighbors who were awarded land grants on the northern frontier. The main qualifications for obtaining these grants were that the recipient be a citizen of Mexico, be baptized as a Catholic, and agree to occupy the grant, build a home, and engage in

agriculture and/or cattle raising. A surprising number of these grantees traveled from New Mexico to California on the Old Spanish Trail.

First was George C. Yount, born in North Carolina in 1794, who reached New Mexico in 1826. He trapped the Southwest with Ewing Young and others in 1828-1829. Yount, along with William Wolfskill and several others, made the first known traverse of the main Old Spanish Trail in 1830-1831. After a short stint of sea otter hunting along the California coast,

Yount journeyed north to Sonoma and became a friend of General Vallejo. With Vallejo’s backing, Yount, in 1836, was awarded the Caymus land grant of two square leagues (11,814 acres) in the upper Napa Valley. In 1843 he was further awarded the La Jota grant of one square league (4,453 acres). To obtain these grants, Yount became a Mexican citizen and was baptized a Catholic. Yount’s Napa Ranch, as it became known, included a sawmill and a gristmill, and was extensively developed in the 1840s.²²

William Wolfskill, Yount's partner on the initial traverse of the Old Spanish Trail in 1830-1831, was born in Kentucky in 1798. He joined William Becknell on his historic 1822 trading journey from Missouri to Santa Fe and became a trapper. He, too, was with Ewing Young on the 1828-1829 trapping expedition to the Gila River. Wolfskill became a Mexican citizen in 1830, just before taking the Old Spanish Trail to Los Angeles. After a brief period of sea otter hunting, he settled in Los Angeles and became a leading citizen there, developing the first commercial citrus orchard in California. William's brother John Wolfskill, who had traversed the North Branch of the Old Spanish Trail to Los Angeles in 1838, drove a herd of cattle north to Putah Creek, a few miles northeast of the Armijos' Rancho Tolenas, in 1842. John desired to settle there, but was not a Mexican citizen (and apparently refused to become one). So he persuaded his brother William to apply for a land grant. In 1842 Governor Alvarado awarded William Wolfskill four square leagues (17,754 acres) in what became known as the Rio de Los Putos grant. Here John Wolfskill, later joined by three other brothers, raised cattle and planted crops.²³

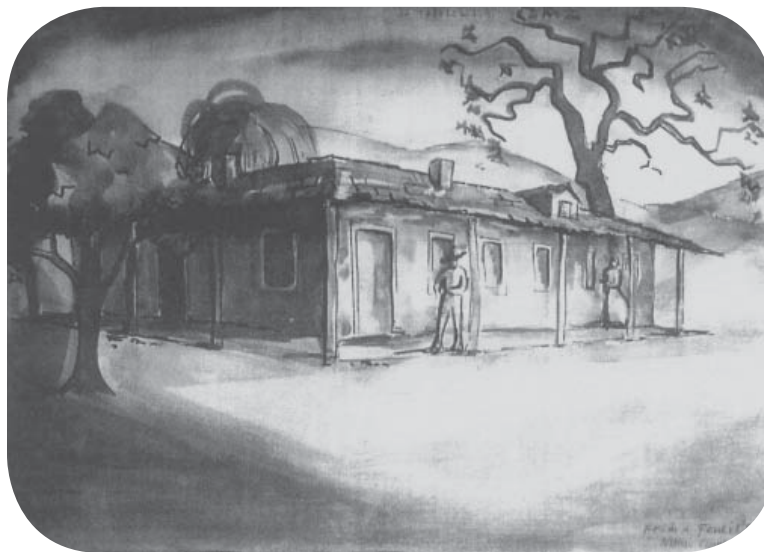
Immediately northeast of the Armijo rancho was the Los Putos land grant, originally known as

Lihuaytos, provisionally awarded by Governor Manuel Micheltorena to Juan Manuel Vaca and Juan Felipe Peña in 1843. The grant was a large one, encompassing more than ten square leagues, and its boundaries were so vague that it appeared to include lands that had previously been awarded to Wolfskill. A heated controversy ensued that was resolved in Wolfskill's favor. In 1845, Pio Pico, last Mexican governor of California, confirmed the revised Los Putos grant of 44,383 acres to Vaca and Peña. Vaca (often

where land was freely available. The other story, reported by Vaca/Peña biographer Wood Young, is that Juan Manuel Vaca was in touch with Vallejo as early as 1837 concerning a northern California land grant, and that the comandante-general, who was authorized by the Mexican government to offer free lands north of San Francisco Bay to Mexican citizens, promised Vaca a grant of land upon his arrival.²⁴

The Vaca and Peña families departed Abiquiu, New Mexico, in September 1841 and traveled the Old Spanish Trail to Los Angeles, arriving there in November. The group with which they journeyed has been called by most historians the Rowland-Workman party, because it was supposedly led by John Rowland and William Workman. This may be misleading. It is more likely Rowland and Workman joined Vaca

and Peña's already planned (and paid-for) expedition.²⁵ Peña family tradition holds that the two youngest children of the Vaca-Peña party, three-year-old Nestoria Peña and two-year-old Appolonia Vaca, rode over the trail in saddle bags balanced on both sides of a trusty mule. The two families traveled north on the Camino Real to Comandante-General Vallejo's home in Sonoma. Vallejo kept the women and small children at Sonoma while the men journeyed to Los Putos to build homes.²⁶



Armijo adobe on Rancho Tolenas
courtesy Jerry Bowen, Vacaville Heritage Council

spelled Baca) and Peña, along with their large families, were relatives of the Armijos. There are two differing stories as to how they decided to resettle from their homes near Santa Fe, New Mexico, to northern California. One is that José Francisco Armijo, possibly accompanied by Antonio María, journeyed to Santa Fe in 1841 and persuaded the Vaca and Peña families to come to the west

Immediately south of the Armijos was the Suisun grant of four leagues (17,754 acres), awarded to Chief Francisco Solano by Governor Alvarado in 1842. Suisun was one of the very few Mexican land grants in California awarded to an Indian. Chief Solano, who once fought Vallejo's attempt to force his people off their hereditary lands and then became a friend of the comandante-general, claimed that the land belonged to him and his people by hereditary right of his ancestors.

By 1846 the Armijos, the Vacas and Peñas, the Wolfskills, and George Yount, all veterans of the Old Spanish Trail, were raising families, planting crops, and tending large herds of cattle and horses on their frontier ranchos.

Raising cattle for the hide and tallow trade was the major economic activity for many, perhaps most of the Mexican *Californio* ranchos. Rancho Tolenas and its neighboring ranchos possessed herds numbering some two hundred to three hundred animals. General Vallejo's herd was by far the largest on the northern frontier with some two to three thousand head. Every year, usually in spring or early summer, the cattle were rounded up to brand the younger animals and slaughter the more mature ones. This was called a rodeo and would take place over several days, sometimes a week or two. Vaqueros from neighboring ranchos would arrive at the host rancho to help with the roundup. Without fences, the cattle ranged far and wide, often onto adjoining ranchos. Often there were disputes among the various rancho owners

regarding just who owned which unbranded calves. A *Juez de Campo* – “Judge of the Plains” – appointed by General Vallejo settled disagreements over ownership. The cattle were driven into the rancho corral for branding and selection.

The portion of the herd selected for slaughter was driven a short distance away, out of sight of the corralled animals to avoid “spooking” them, to a *calaveras* – literally a “place of skulls.” Here skilled vaqueros proceeded to slaughter the doomed animals, taking great care not to damage their hides. The removed hides were then scraped clean of meat and dried in the sun. The fat was melted down into liquid tallow, then solidified and placed in large rawhide vats. Once the rodeo was completed and the animals branded and slaughtered, the time of pleasure began. All joined in a fiesta provided by the host rancho. There were horse races, lassoing contests, and sometimes bear-bull fights. There was plentiful beef, tortillas, and wine for all. In the evenings there was often a fandango with music, dancing, and merrymaking. Beef not consumed during the fiesta was cut into strips and dried into *carne seca* (beef jerky) for use year around.²⁷

Later the hides and tallow were hauled down to San Francisco Bay for barter with Yankee trading vessels. In return for the hides and tallow, the rancheros received items from New England such as furniture, tools, and medicines, as well as items from China such as silk cloth, jade necklaces and combs, and exotic teas, luxuries much

sought by rancho families. This “China Trade” was carried on by New England trading vessels that plied a three-way circuit starting from Boston or New York, travelling around Cape Horn to California, then across the Pacific to Canton, China, and back via Hawaii to California. They then returned to New England loaded with hides, tallow, sea otter skins, and Chinese luxuries.²⁸

Guests from Sonoma and the neighboring ranchos always arrived for the rodeo and fiesta on horseback. It was not considered dignified to walk to a neighbor's home. In fact, horses were used by the rancheros and their vaqueros to travel even short distances. The best young animals were taken from the rancho *caballada* (horse herd) and broken in as saddle horses. The wealthier rancheros such as General Vallejo took great pride not only in their splendid horses, but also in their saddles, bridles, and spurs, which were often lined with silver. A skilled horseman's main tool was a rawhide lariat, which was cut in circular fashion from dried cattle hide in fifty to sixty-foot lengths, stretched, then coiled to fit alongside the saddlehorn. With his lariat, the highly proficient vaquero was able to lasso, throw to the ground, and hold the angriest bull or recalcitrant cow.²⁹

It was probably due to a need for additional labor on his sprawling Rancho Tolenas that Antonio María, in July 1847, committed an act that would darken his name. Accompanied by two unsavory characters, Robert “Growling Mad”

Smith and John Eggar, from the nearby town of Sonoma, Armijo raided an Indian village sixty miles north of Sutter's Fort (Sacramento). They were seeking slave laborers. Technically, Indian slavery was illegal in Mexican and American territories, but in practice many, perhaps most, of the California ranchos utilized forced Indian labor to tend livestock, perform semi-skilled jobs, and work as household servants. The Indian workers were fed and clothed, and usually housed, men and women separately, in crude bunkhouses. They were not permitted to leave the rancho without the owner's permission, which was seldom given. Many of the ranch owners were benevolent toward their Indian workers, but some were not. Often escapees were hunted down, roped together, and dragged back to the ranch.³⁰

What made the Armijo-Smith-Eggar raid noteworthy was its sheer brutality. The *California Star* (July 24, 1847) published the first account of the incident:

Much excitement now prevails among the Indian tribes in the upper part of the [Sacramento] valley, in consequence of outrages having been committed by a party of Spaniards joined by some rascally foreigners. The facts, as well as I can learn, are these: The said party started from Sonoma or vicinity, and proceeded up this valley about sixty miles above this place [Sutter's Fort], to a tribe of friendly Indians. On going into the village, these Indians manifested the most friendly feelings, offering acorn bread and other food. The Spaniards, after having partaken of their hospitality, commenced making prisoners of men, women and children, and in securing them, some

ten or twelve were killed – shot by the Spaniards in attempting to escape. Thirty were secured, principally women and children, tied together and driven to the settlements. Young children who were unable to proceed, were murdered on the road. In one instance, an infant was taken from its mother and killed in her presence, and that too in the most brutal manner.

This savage raid on peaceful Indians caused a stir throughout northern California. It was later ascertained that thirteen, mostly women and children, were murdered and thirty-seven were marched south to be sold as slaves to ranchers. California's acting military governor, Richard Mason, fearing that this outrage might provoke an Indian war, gave John Sutter authority to arrest the culprits and hold them for trial. The governor sent a military detachment under Lieutenant Charles Anderson to enforce his arrest order. Governor Mason further wrote Sutter on July 21: "When arrested, I will organize a tribunal for their trial; and if sentence of death is passed upon them, will have it executed. . . . The Indians that have been captured you must at once seize [free], . . . and restore them to their people. Tell them that these atrocious acts have been committed by lawless scoundrels."³¹

Antonio Armijo, "Growling Mad" Smith, and John Eggar were taken into custody and jailed at Sutter's Fort to await trial. Apparently because Sutter fell ill, the case was moved to Sonoma, home of two of the culprits. The trial, held in Sonoma in October, was a miscarriage of justice. Judge

Lilburn W. Boggs of Sonoma was a friend of Smith and Eggar. Sutter, pleading illness, failed to show up with the incriminating documents, and the court would not allow Indian testimony against whites. All three defendants were acquitted.³²

The slave raid episode was soon overshadowed by a rush of events that forever changed California, and the lives of the rancheros. It had started in nearby Sonoma with the so-called "Bear Flag Revolt" on June 14, 1846. A group of about thirty Anglo settlers, trappers, and run-away sailors, led by William B. Ide, seized the town, made Vallejo a "prisoner of war," and raised the Bear Flag – a white rectangle with a red star in the corner, a grizzly bear in the center, and "California Republic" written across the bottom. (Today a close approximation is the California state flag.) The Bear Flaggers, with Vallejo in tow, rode east through Rancho Tolenas, spent the night at Juan Manuel Vaca's Los Putos ranchhouse, and continued on to Sutter's Fort the following day. Here they met up with Captain John C. Fremont and a small force of American soldiers. Fremont confined Vallejo in a small room at the fort and took command of the Bear Flaggers. Believing that Mexico and the United States were at war (just how he obtained this information is disputed by historians), Fremont led his ragtag band southwest, through the Vaca/Peña and Armijo ranchos, to Sonoma, where the Stars and Stripes replaced the Bear Flag on July 7, 1846. Vallejo, who always considered himself a friend of the Americans, was released after

six weeks of captivity. Fremont continued on to San Francisco where he met an American naval force and received confirmation that the U.S. and Mexico were officially at war.³³

The Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo formally ended the Mexican War on February 2, 1848. California was now part of the United States. The treaty promised full and complete protection of all Mexican California property rights but this later proved to be an illusion, as the Armijo heirs were to find out.

A week before the signing of the peace treaty, on or about January 24, 1848, James Marshall, an employee of John Sutter, discovered flecks of gold below the millrace he was building on the American River, in the Sierra Nevada foothills east of Sutter's Fort. News of the gold discovery spread like wildfire, first in California, then to Mexico, the eastern United States, and the world. By 1849 the great California Gold Rush was in full swing.

The California rancheros, with their great herds of cattle and horses, at first profited from the Gold Rush. The tens of thousands of prospectors who converged on the Mother Lode country of the Sierra foothills had an insatiable appetite for beef. Cattle from all over California were driven to Sacramento

City, the new town that arose almost overnight at the convergence of the Sacramento and American rivers, close to Sutter's Fort. Sacramento (the "City" was soon dropped from the name) became the logistical center for supplies going to the mining settlements. By 1850, cattle were being raised primarily for beef, and the hide and tallow trade faded into a secondary bi-product.

The Armijos are said to have become moderately wealthy by driving cattle from their rancho to Sacramento, a distance of about forty miles. This was no easy task. There was much swamp land between Rancho Tolenas and Sacramento and the broad Sacramento River had to be forded, resulting in the drowning of some of the animals. The Armijos also reportedly sold fruit to the Sacramento merchants, who distributed the produce to the mining communities.³⁴



Present-day photograph showing the location of the Armijo home on Rancho Tolenas
courtesy Jerry Bowen, Vacaville Heritage Council

It was a chilly November day in 1849 when José Francisco Armijo, patriarch of the family, returning from Sacramento, caught a cold. The cold apparently turned to pneumonia, and the senior Armijo died. A few months later (date unknown) Lolita María, his widow, passed away.³⁵ Both were buried in the little Armijo family plot, shaded by oak trees, on a slight hill behind the rancho adobes.

Antonio María Armijo now became sole proprietor of Rancho Tolenas, but he only lived five months after his father's passing. Court records reveal the date of his death as April 10, 1850. The cause of death is unknown.³⁶ He was buried beside his parents in the family gravesite.

Antonio María's heirs were his widow, María Dolores, and his seven surviving children. His widow married Joaquin Riesgo, who was granted guardianship of the last two Armijo children, who were minors at the time.³⁷

Legal problems plagued the Armijo heirs. When the senior Armijo died in 1849, there was already a bitter dispute with Mariano Vallejo--once a friend of the Armijos--over the boundary between the Tolenas and Suisun grants. Vallejo had taken over Rancho Suisun from Chief Francisco Solano

in 1847 and claimed that a certain *arroyo seco*, or dry gulch, formed the line, placing the boundary some distance north. The dispute involved several thousand acres in the western section of the Armijo grant. Two arbitrators were appointed to settle the conflicting claims. The arbitrators first ruled in favor of the Armijos, but a later court decision supported Vallejo's claim. The result was that some 4,000 acres in the southwestern portion of the original Rancho Tolenas, including the later townsite of Fairfield, went to Vallejo's Suisun grant.

Rancho Tolenas, parcel by parcel, was lost by the Armijo heirs to land-hungry squatters. The notorious Land Law of 1851 forced ranch owners to spend huge sums to prove their ownership. The new American legal system was foreign to most Californios, including that bane of large land owners, property taxes. The U.S. patent for Rancho Tolenas was finally granted in 1868, but by then all but two of the Armijo heirs--María Concepción Antonia and Mariana del Pilar, the youngest children--had lost their share of the property, either by selling out, by squatter takeover, or through foreclosure. By 1870 all the Armijos had departed, and the Tolenas grant was owned or claimed by a number of squabbling settlers. Lawsuits among the various claimants continued for several years.³⁸

According to a story in the *Solano Republican* newspaper of September 11, 1896, Armijo buried gold coins, presumably earned from selling cattle and fruit during the Gold Rush, under an oak tree near his

adobe ranchhouse. Forty years later, a nephew of Antonio Armijo arrived from Mexico to dig for the supposed buried treasure. Despite extensive digging, no gold was found.

Today, Old Spanish Trail veterans who settled in Sonoma, Napa, or Solano counties are memorialized by various place names. Yountville, a small town in the upper Napa Valley, honors George C. Yount, who with William Wolfskill made the first traverse of the main trail in 1830-31. Armijo High School in Fairfield honors José Francisco Armijo. Juan Manuel Vaca is remembered by the city of Vacaville and by Vaca Mountain, a summit twenty miles north. The Peña Adobe, honoring Juan Felipe Peña and his family, has been restored as California Historical Landmark #534 and lies two miles southwest of Vacaville, just off Interstate 80. (Peña family descendents lived in the adobe until 1918.) John Wolfskill was remembered by the small settlement of Wolfskill, later renamed Wolfs Hill; it has now disappeared from maps. However, in 1937 a Wolfskill descendent bequeathed 107 acres to the University of California at Davis for agricultural experimentation. The U.C. experimental "farm" is near today's community of Winters and is known as the Wolfskill Grant.

Nothing is left of the Armijos' Rancho Tolenas. The heart of the ranch was bought by developers in the 1990s. The Armijo adobe sites and unmarked graves were bulldozed into oblivion. An upscale country club, golf course, and luxury housing tract now occupy the once-pastoral area.

End Notes

- 1 Elizabeth von Till Warren, "Armijo's Trace Revisited: A New Interpretation of the Impact of the Antonio Armijo Route of 1829-1830 on the Development of the Old Spanish Trail," M.A. thesis, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, 1974. Warren's thesis uses the official report and diary, published on June 19, 1830. LeRoy and Ann Hafen, *Old Spanish Trail: Santa Fe to Los Angeles* (Glendale: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1954), pp. 155-169, uses the unofficial account. See also Joseph P. Sanchez, *Explorers, Traders and Slavers: Forging the Old Spanish Trail, 1678-1850* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1997), pp. 103-107.
- 2 Hafen, p. 156; Warren, thesis.
- 3 Hafen, p. 157.
- 4 Hubert Howe Bancroft, *The Works of Hubert Howe Bancroft, Vol. XIX, History of California, Vol. 2* (San Francisco: The History Company, 1886), p. 703. Bancroft was a San Francisco bookseller and publisher who began collecting all the books and documents he could find on California, and to a lesser extent all of western North America, in the 1850s. By 1880 he had amassed over a thousand books and some 60,000 documents, covering Spanish, Mexican, and early Anglo California. He formed what he called The History Company and employed a corps of young researchers and writers to compose the first serious history of the American West. During the decade of the 1880s, *The Works of Hubert Howe Bancroft*--all thirty-nine volumes--were published by his history factory and sold on a subscription basis. Seven of *The Works* covered California history up to 1890. Today, Bancroft's California volumes form the starting point for any serious study of 19th-century California. Although many of his conclusions are outdated, his facts, based on documentary

- evidence, are generally considered reliable by California historians.
- 5 Armijo Genealogy Summary, Solano County Genealogical Society data base.
 - 6 T.M. Pearce (ed.), *New Mexico Place Names: A Geographical Dictionary* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1965), p. 10. For mention of other Armijos who were associated with the Santa Fe Trail trade, see Susan Shelby Magoffin, *Down the Santa Fe Trail and Into Mexico* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1926), pp. 5n, 96n, 152; William C. Conner and Jimmy M. Skaggs, *Broadcloth and Britches: The Santa Fe Trade* (College Station: Texas A & M Press, 1977), p. 122; William Y. Chalfant, *Dangerous Passage: The Santa Fe Trail and the Mexican War* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1994), pp. 27, 28, 66-69, 71, 110; Max L. Moorhead, *New Mexico's Royal Road: Trade and Travel on the Chihuahua Trail* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1958), pp. 110n, 153, 195. David Lavender, in *Bent's Fort* (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1954) p. 192, mentions that Governor Armijo had three brothers.
 - 7 Bancroft, *Works*, Vol. XIX, pp. 605, 703; Vol. XX, pp. 194, 606, 636, 705, 729; Solano County Historical and Genealogical Societies papers and data base, Vacaville Heritage Council records, both courtesy of Jerry Bowen of Vacaville; 1850 Federal Census of Solano County, California, and the 1852 State Census of California, courtesy of Alexander King of Los Angeles. Helpful, too, was the Sidney Clark vs. Wm. S. Wells, et al, "Complaint for the Partition of the Tolenas or Armijo Ranch," 7th Judicial District Court file, May 26, 1870, provided by Bowen.
 - 8 Mission Santa Clara register, Orradre Library, Santa Clara University; Doris Shaw Castro, *California Colony: Genealogy, Landgrants and Notes of Spanish Colonial California* (Bloomington, Indiana: AuthorHouse, 2004), pp. 46-47. Ms. Castro went through all the California Mission records, listing births, baptisms, marriages, and deaths of Spanish and Mexican Californio residents and immigrants up to the American conquest.
 - 9 Bancroft, *Works*, V. XX, p. 705.
 - 10 1850 Federal Census of Solano County, California gives birthdates of all of José Francisco Armijo's and Antonio María Armijo's children. José Francisco's first five children were born in New Mexico. His sixth, Jesus, was born 1830 in California. Census record courtesy of Alexander King.
 - 11 Mission Santa Clara birth records; 1850 Federal Census, courtesy of Alexander King.
 - 12 Mission San Jose records; 1850 Federal Census.
 - 13 Bancroft, *Works*, V. XIX, p. 703; V. XX, p. 705.
 - 14 Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo (1808-1890) was an influential figure in Mexican California. Born in Monterey, the Mexican capital of Alta California, he became a soldier at the Monterey garrison at the age of fifteen, and four years later, at age nineteen, he was assigned to the San Francisco Presidio with the rank of *alferez* (ensign). He proved his skill in military operations by leading several expeditions into California's interior to fight insurgent Indians. In 1835 Vallejo, under orders from Governor José Figueroa, established the military post and community of Sonoma north of San Francisco Bay to guard against foreign intrusion. A year later he was made Comandante-General of California by Governor Juan Alvarado and assigned the task of colonizing the northern frontier. The administrative title *Comandante-General* authorized Vallejo to serve as military chief of Mexican California but was not the same as the army rank of general. No Mexican officer serving in California ever reached that top rank. The highest rank officially given to Vallejo was lieutenant colonel of California's civil militia. The title "General" that Vallejo used most of his life was strictly an honorary appellation. From 1836 until the American conquest ten years later, Vallejo "was in some respects the most independent and powerful figure" in Mexican California. See Bancroft, *Register of Pioneer Inhabitants of California, 1542-1848* (Los Angeles: Dawson's Book Shop, 1964), pp. 757-759. For his brother José de Jesus Vallejo, *ibid.*, p. 747. Vallejo's military career and rank are courtesy of George Stammerjohan of Sacramento, former historian for California Department of Parks and Recreation.
 - 15 John W. Caughey and Norris Hundley, Jr., *California: History of a Remarkable State* (Englewood, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 4th Edition, 1982). The chapter "A Mexican Province," pp. 67-82, covers Mexican fears of the encroaching foreigners.
 - 16 Burgess Shumway, *California Ranchos: Patented Private Land Grants Listed by County* (San Bernardino: The Sidewinder Press, 1988 – reprint of 1942 edition), p. 105. The Solano County Historical Society has a copy of Armijo's Petition.
 - 17 *Ibid.* See also Sabine Goerke-Shrode, "How José Armijo Got A Land Grant," *Vacaville Reporter*, July 25, 2004.
 - 18 Wood Young, *Vaca-Peña Los Putos Rancho and the Peña Adobe* (Vallejo: Wheeler Printing Co., 1971), pp. 7-8. Young is referring to the measurements of Rancho Los Putos, but the method was used by most of the land grant ranchos in Mexican California.
 - 19 W.W. Robinson, *Land in California: The Story of Mission Lands, Ranchos, Squatters, Mining Claims, Railroad Grants, Land Scrip, Homesteads*

- (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1948), pp. 73-107.
- 20 Goerke-Shrode.
 - 21 Sidney Clark vs. Wm. S. Wells, Exhibit A.
 - 22 Charles L. Camp, ed. *George C. Yount and His Chronicles of the West* (Denver: Old West Publishing Co., 1966), pp. 85-152.
 - 23 Iris Higbie Wilson, *William Wolfskill, 1798-1866, Frontier Trapper to California Ranchero* (Glendale: The Arthur H. Clark Co., 1965), pp. 115-142; Mildred Brooke Hoover *et al*, revised by Douglas E. Kyle, *Historic Spots in California* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 4th Edition, 1990), p. 464.
 - 24 Goerke-Shrode. The story that José Francisco Armijo, possibly accompanied by Antonio María, returned to New Mexico in 1841 to persuade the Vaca and Peña families to come to California, is based on an undocumented story written by the late David Weir, editor of the *Solano Republican* newspaper. Wood Young, in his well-documented book, writes that Vaca and Peña were in contact with General Vallejo as early as 1837 concerning a grant of land, and made their own decision to come to California in 1841.
 - 25 Alexander King of Los Angeles, in correspondence with this writer, January 24, 2005. King has done a great amount of research on the Vaca and Peña families, and believes that Vaca and Peña organized and paid for the trip to California in 1841, and were joined by Rowland and Workman. King writes, "Regarding the sources on the Rowland-Workman party, one has to remember there are very few contemporaneous accounts. In fact, the several messages from scouts to the *Ayuntamiento* (town council) at Los Angeles in the fall of 1841, plus Workman's report to the *Ayuntamiento* the following February, are the only contemporaneous accounts of which I'm aware. All the rest were highly colored 'personal accounts' done years later by the Anglo-adventurers in the party." For the Rowland-Workman point of view, see Donald E. Rowland, *John Rowland and William Workman: Southern California Pioneers of 1841* (Spokane: The Arthur H. Clark Co., and Los Angeles: The Historical Society of Southern California, 1999), pp. 49-59.
 - 26 Wood Young, pp. 2-3.
 - 27 Robert Glass Cleland, *The Cattle on a Thousand Hills* (San Marino: Henry E. Huntington Library, 1964). Particularly enlightening is the chapter "Life on the Ranchos," pp. 51-74. Cleland writes mainly on the southern California ranchos, but much of it applies to the northern California ranchos as well. See also Wood Young, pp. 6-8.
 - 28 Wood Young, pp. 6-8; Cleland, pp. 52-56. None of these sources specifically mention Armijo's Rancho Tolenas, but they apply, in a general sense, to rancho life and the cattle trade prevalent in Mexican California. For the China trade involving the *rancheros'* hides and tallow, see D. Mackenzie Brown (ed.), *China Trade Days in California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1947). For a vivid description of Yankee trading ships rounding Cape Horn to California for hides and tallow, see Richard Henry Dana's classic *Two years Before the Mast* (New York: Harper Brothers, 1840, many reprints). Another trade item much sought by the New England sea captains was sea otter pelts, until the little furry marine mammal was hunted to near extinction by the late 1830s.
 - 29 Wood Young, pp. 6-7; Cleland, pp. 52-56.
 - 30 James J. Rawls, *Indians of California: The Changing Image* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1984), pp. 19-21, 96-97; Richard Steven Street, *Beasts of the Field: A Narrative History of California Farmworkers, 1769-1913* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), pp. 89-114. For General Vallejo's "benevolent" handling of his Indian workers, see Alan Rosenus, *General M. G. Vallejo and the Advent of the Americans* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995), pp. 6, 41.
 - 31 George Harwood Phillips, *Indians and Intruders in Central California, 1769-1849* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1993), pp. 145-146.
 - 32 California Star, July 24, 1847; Bancroft, XXII, p. 610; Albert L. Hurtado, *Indian Survival on the California Frontier* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), pp. 93-94; Phillips, p. 146; Street, p. 110. Robert "Growling Mad" Smith of Sonoma was described as a very unpopular mountain man, with a nasty reputation for quarreling and fighting. He was small but muscular and usually wore a distinctive badger coat. He was known also as "Badger" Smith because of his attire. Smith had a pathological hatred of Indians. The slave raid of 1847 was not the only instance of "Growling Mad" killing Native Americans. In 1849, upon learning that two whites had been killed by unknown Indians in the upper Napa Valley, "Growling Mad," along with several cohorts, decided to rid the entire valley of Indians. Smith and his gang rode first to George Yount's Napa Ranch, but were thwarted in their attempt to kill the Indian workers there when confronted by Yount and his cowboys. The gang then rode over to William Fowler's ranch, where "they executed their bloody work and perpetuated a multitude of murders and left the ranch covered with slain men, women and children." They then rode over to Santa Rosa, killing every Indian they encountered. Upon returning to Sonoma, "Growling Mad" and his gang were arrested and taken to Benicia for a hearing before the alcalde, Stephen Cooper, who decided he had no authority to hear the case and released the men. They never were tried for their murderous spree. See Camp, *George C. Yount . . .*, pp. 152, 219, 221; and Barbara Warner, *The Men of the California Bear Flag revolt and their*

Heritage (Spokane: The Arthur H. Clark Co., 1996), pp. 460-461. "Growling Mad" Smith was a Bear Flagger in 1846. Nothing is known about John Eggar other than that he was an associate of Smith and lived in Sonoma.

- 33 Neal Harlow, *California Conquered: War and peace on the Pacific, 1846-1850* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), pp. 97-114, gives an excellent account of the Bear Flag Revolt and John C. Fremont's activities. For the Bear Flaggers' overnight stay at Los Putos, see Rosenus, pp. 117-118.
- 34 David Weir manuscript, Solano County Historical Society. Cattle raising during Gold Rush days was the economic mainstay for many California ranchos. This reliance on a single enterprise proved a boon for several years, but turned into a bane that eventually help cause the breakup of the great land grant ranchos. The Gold Rush years saw cattle prices rise "to levels never before dreamed of by Californios." Beef cattle, such as those driven to Sacramento by the Armijos, sold for as high as \$45 per head (\$75 in San Francisco!) for a brief period in 1849 and 1850. But the cattle boom soon collapsed after the market was saturated by livestock driven to California from Missouri, Texas and northern Mexico. Prices fell from over \$40 per head to less than \$10 per head

by the late-1850s. See Robert Glass Cleland, *The Cattle on a Thousand Hills* (San Marino: The Huntington Library, 1964), pp. 102-108; and Siegfried G. Demke, *The Cattle Drives of Early California* (San Gabriel: privately printed, 1985), pp. 8-13.

- 35 Correspondence and photocopies from Dolores Armijo McLean, an Armijo descendent, dated Feb. 9, 1996; unpublished article on the Armijos, Solano County Junior College; Ian Thompson, "Forgotten Founders," *Fairfield Daily Republic*, Feb. 17, 1987. (All courtesy of Alexander King.)
- 36 Sidney Clark vs. Wm. S. Wells, court document, gives Antonio María Armijo's death as April 10, 1850. Based on legal proceedings over the settlement of the Rancho Tolenas estate that began in 1852, this date of death appears to be accurate. The Solano County Death Database mistakenly gives 1856 as the year of Antonio María's death.
- 37 Alexander King correspondence, January 24, 2005.
- 38 Sidney Clark vs. Wm. S. Wells, Solano County court document, 1870; undated newspaper clippings covering probate of Armijo estate, 1855, and administrator's sale of parts of the estate, n.d., courtesy of Jerry Bowen of Vacaville Heritage Council.



OSTA Convention
Fremont Field Trip:
Emigrant Pass looking
west
photo by Jon Lawrence

Tips and Tricks for a Successful National Historic Trail

by Steve Elkington



Steve Elkington at the OSTA Conference
in Las Vegas
photo by Jon Lawrence

Good morning to all of you. It was my privilege to address this group exactly three years ago when you met in Cedar City, Utah. That was even before the Old Spanish National Historic Trail bill had been passed and signed. I remember three things vividly from that trip: the forest fires that were burning fiercely just over the mountain, threatening Zion and Cedar Breaks; the colorful rehearsals of the Utah Shakespeare Festival; and the discovery that OSTA had a long and venerable history, with roots back at least 50 years to some of the pioneer trail preservationists of the Nation.

So, indeed it is my great pleasure to join you again this morning and make a few remarks about the work we have before us – making

the Old Spanish National Historic Trail into a meaningful, inspiring route for all Americans to enjoy and appreciate, and making it an integral part of America's National Trails System.

I want to thank you especially for inviting the 10th Conference on National Scenic and Historic Trails to meet here in conjunction with your annual meeting so that trail buffs and staffers from all over can come to appreciate the romance and significance of the Old Spanish Trail.

Looking back over my 2002 talk, I was surprised how relevant much of it still is. I would like to summarize a few key points for those of you who weren't there, for they continue to form the basis of our work together on this trail:

- Strengthen OSTA as much as you can so that it will stand the test of time, bringing in a steady stream of new trail enthusiasts and providing a counter-balance to Federal agency work along the Trail. Remember, for these trails, the Feds can't (and won't) do it alone.
- Stay involved in the comprehensive management plan for the trail. Three years ago, money was easily available for such plans. Now the budget situation is tighter, sometimes slowing things down. Even so, if well crafted, it should be the guiding document that together we will use to make the trail come alive. The more you are involved in the plan,

the more likely you will feel a sense of "ownership" in it and work to get it implemented. Specifically, help the team identify and locate trail partners and alert them to resources associated with the trail and its various branches. Let me introduce the Planning Team members – Aaron Mahr and Sharon Brown from NPS. BLM's Sarah Schlanger is unable to be with us this weekend.

- Be prepared for the long-run. What will OSTA be like 20 or 50 years from now? The trail itself? Federal agencies? We're in this together for perpetuity (unless the law is changed), so let's think long-term. Let's prepare for "full performance" even though it may seem years away. We won't get where we need to if we don't agree on the path to get there.
- Develop a vision statement of what you, as a group, want this trail to be. The clearer you are about your vision of what this trail is all about and how it should be presented coherently to the public, the more likely your Federal and State partners will help you achieve that vision. There is still time to develop such a vision so that it can help shape the trail's management plan. Be broad in your vision. Include community relations, land protection, effective presentation to the public, further research, etc.

Last fall I celebrated my 15th anniversary at this job – and it gave me pause to look back over this decade and a half to try to understand what has been achieved, where we might be going, what is possible, and what we have missed regarding the National Trails System. A couple of guiding principles that have revealed themselves over this period are relevant here.

- "Things take longer than you expect." So, be ready for the long haul. National trails seem to take a lifetime to make happen. Therefore, we need to figure out how to include the rising generations and make this Trail fun for young people. Involve university outing clubs, publicize the trail with trading cards, encourage Boy Scouts and other youth groups to get involved with the Trail, develop an Old Spanish Trail video game, keep the trail from being a dusty, boring thing that just old people do something about.
- Remember, "the creation of this trail as a national historic trail was a political act." Building and sustaining the operating budget for this trail, as well as negotiating at the interface of the National Park Service and the Bureau of Land Management, will require a succession of delicate political acts. Even as the planning gets into full swing, we will need to work together to build the operating budget and continuing political support for this Trail. Otherwise, once the plan is

over, the Feds go on to other jobs. Get comfortable with being political: it will pay off.

- “Think grass roots.” The more you and your local chapters can get to know, give briefings to, have fun with, give tours to, and give help to the on-the-ground managers of the local units of State and local government – as well as Federal land managing agencies – the better. Hang out with the district ranger. Bring volunteers to the next National Trails event (or organize one if there isn’t one). Welcome new staff when they replace your old friend. Help educate local mayors and county council persons about the roles of OSTA and the Federal trail administering agencies. Help local land jurisdictions appreciate their roles as trail segment stewards. In short, build trust and credibility as close to the resources as you can, and challenge field folks to see the larger horizon.

- “Travel the country and learn what works (or doesn’t) along other trails.” Even though each national trail is unique, each also offers lessons that can be useful. For example:

Appalachian NST:

Detailed user guidebooks

Pacific Northwest Trail:

At risk youth programs

Ice Age NST:

GIS services

Overmountain Victory NHT:

Annual re-enactment

Lewis & Clark NHT:

K-12 curriculum guide

Oregon NHT:

Citizen marking program

- This brings me to marketing and marking. Many of these trails are invisible to travelers and local communities until they are marked. The trail logo is a Federal insignia and has to be used in an approved way. But there are additional ways to mark the trail – and then use the marked trail to market it in local communities. Follow up a local marking effort with programs for the Rotary and Kiwanis. In each community, build up support for the Trail; you will build the membership of OSTA as you do so. Another aspect of marketing might include encouraging a well-known author or two to write a compelling book about the trail and its stories. Whether it’s fiction or nonfiction, a best-seller never hurt a trail.

Lastly, I’d like to share a story about the Pony Express National Historic Trail. Once the law had been passed establishing the trail and the planning team convened, some of the members of the National Pony Express Association were present. As the meeting got under way one of them is reported to have said, “Well, now that this is a national trail, you’re just going to come in and buy up all the land, right? So what else is there for us to do?” The planning team captain stopped in his tracks and realized that his partners had a very hazy, certainly unrealistic,

idea of what everyone’s roles were to be. The rest of that meeting turned into an educational session. And, as far as I know, not one acre of land has been bought yet by the Federal Government solely for the Pony Express National Historic Trail.

Lesson: just because the Government is now involved in your trail at both the local management level and the trailwide administrative level, tempting as it might be, you can’t just sit back and say, “Oh, we’ll let the government do it.” This is definitely a partnership, and we need you to be as strong, as fierce, as resourceful, as independent, and as capable as you can be.

To close, I have a poem that I have adapted from “To Future Classes,” written in 1986 by Don Hirsohn about the Appalachian Trail:

Embark upon this hallowed trail,
Prepare the fabric of your life.
While some will make it, most will fail,
But all will know both joy and strife.
Joy of friendship and challenge met,
Strife in hardships to endure,
And guaranteed you will think yet
Through much of what you’re traveling for.
Consider this from one who’s done:
Before you move on down this path,
For every three days in the sun
You’ll taste a day of nature’s wrath.
When pain rears up its ugly head
You have to walk your way right through;
Adventures always lie ahead,
Each day is altogether new.
But no amount of words can tell
Or ever manage to convince
How, once you’ve tracked the Spanish Trail,
You’ll live your life with confidence.

Old Spanish NHT Planning Team Hits the Trail

by Sarah Schlanger

The Old Spanish National Historic Trail planning team has been traveling! Aaron Mahr and Sharon Brown, National Park Service (NPS), and Sarah Schlanger, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), logged thousands of trail miles over the past eight months as they prepare to launch the public participation phase of the planning effort this winter. Their reconnaissance of the route began in December 2004, with Aaron and Sarah following the Armijo Route up the Chama River and across to Largo Canyon, the Animas, and the La Plata. Along the trail, Aaron and Sarah met with Jim Copeland, New Mexico BLM, and Superintendent Dennis Carruth, Aztec National Monument. That same trip saw the team following sections of the Northern Route from Abiquiu north to Taos.

In February 2005, Sharon, Aaron, and Sarah traversed Nevada in the company of trail experts and OSTA members Hal Steiner and Liz Warren, and pushed into California through Emigrant Pass. The Nevada explorations were a chance to meet with BLM, NPS, Nevada Historic Preservation Office (NV SHPO), and USDA Forest Service (USFS) staffers, including Stan Rolf and Susanne Rowe (BLM Las Vegas), Superintendent Bruce Noble of Colorado National Monument, Assistant Superintendent Gary Warshefski of Lake Mead National Recreation Area, Terri McBride,

Nevada SHPO, and Kathleen Sprowl and Connie Moen, USFS.

In March, Aaron and Sarah traveled north on the North Branch, taking an easterly path up the San Luis Valley, then over North Pass to the Gunnison and the Grand River (now the Colorado) and finally, following the Book Cliffs over to Green River, Utah. Their trail explorations took them to Grand Junction for the OSTA quarterly board meeting as well. Britta Laub,

Grand Junction BLM, and Field Office Manager Catherine Robertson provided a warm welcome for the trail planners and Colorado BLM trail managers, including Dan Haas, Arden Anderson, Julie Coleman, and Julie Stotler.

April found Aaron, Sarah, and Sharon out in California for a full week of driving the Old Mohave Road, dodging tanks on Fort Irwin National Training Center, and bumping along mining roads through the Kingston Range. OSTA members Cliff Walker, John Hockaday, Bob Hilburn, Jim Mustra, and David Romero joined the team for some of this exploration, which included a twilight trip past Silver Dry Lake and Salt Springs to China Ranch and the warm hospitality extended to the team by Cynthia Kienitz and her dog Blue. The team also met with BLM staffers Deb Salt (Trails Program Manager), Joan Oxendine and Bruce Shafer, at the California Desert District offices, as well as Field Office Managers Roxie Trost and Larry Morgan, and Harold Johnson, Amy Lawrence, Shelley Jackson, Charles Sullivan, Edyth Seehafer, Brad Mastin, and George Meckfessel at the Barstow office.

Larry Morgan and George Meckfessel came into the field with the team to discuss their work at Horsethief Springs. The NPS and Mojave National Preserve Superintendent Mary Martin hosted the team at their Barstow offices for a briefing, and Bob Bryson, Dave Nichols, and Gordon Chappell spent the day driving the team across the Old Mohave Road to sites on the Preserve. Luz Ramirez de Bryson and her staff at Fort Irwin and Cliff Walker showed the team critical sites on or near the training range, including Bitter Springs, Red Pass, and Impassible Pass. The team also had the opportunity to meet with the Desert Managers Group and California Desert District Manager Linda Hansen, in Ridgecrest, California.

The trail planning team headed back to Las Vegas in June, where they joined OSTA for their annual meeting and board meeting, and trail administrators and managers from a number of federal and state agencies at the annual National Trails meetings hosted by OSTA and the Partnership for the National Trails System, headed by Gary Werner.

August and September found Aaron and Sarah on the road again, with trips to Los Angeles, the San Luis Valley, and Cochetopa Pass. In Los Angeles, Sarah and Aaron made a pilgrimage to Chavez Ravine, one of two settlements colonized by northern New Mexico families emigrating over the trail to California, and now home to Dodger Stadium (Dodgers beat the Diamondbacks 9-6). They met briefly with William Estrada, El Pueblo de Los Angeles curator, at the Plaza, and spent a day with Robert

McKernan, Dee Schroth, and Michele Nielsen of the San Bernardino County Museum in Redlands. In Colorado, they joined Doug and Judy Knudson, OSTA, as well as Vince Spero and Ken Frye, USFS, for a trip to North Pass. Doug and Judy also joined the team for a subsequent meeting with Superintendent Steve Chaney, Interpreter Carol Sperling, and other members of the NPS staff at Great Sand Dunes National Park & Preserve. The planning team has been out on the trail meeting OSTA members, trail scholars and enthusiasts, and land managers in New Mexico, Colorado, Nevada, and California. Trips to Utah and Arizona are planned for October and November 2005.

As they work their way across the West, the team is briefing trail managers on the planning process, visiting historic sites that played critical roles in the trail's development and history (the "high potential sites" described in the National Trails System Act) and looking at what different portions of the route can offer future trail visitors. The National Trails System Act tasks the trail planners and administrators (NPS and BLM) with finding and preserving those sections of the route that afford visitors "a vicarious experience of the trail." The Trails Act describes route sections that can yield this kind of experience as "high potential route segments." In addition to identifying "high potential route segments," the trail team is also beginning to note where the route is "compromised"



Aaron Mahr and Sarah Schlanger at the Pueblo de Los Angeles
courtesy Sarah Schlanger

by visual intrusions (housing and commercial development, utility corridors, energy exploration, and other potential impacts to the trail corridor).

Even where the route itself no longer looks much like the rugged terrain crossed by the early 19th-century traders, individual trail sites can still

offer the visitor a high-quality experience that relates the story of the trail. The team is currently grappling with the question of how to characterize the various sections of the trail they have seen to date. Up to this point, the team has looked at about 1600 miles of trail route. Every section of the trail has something to offer—an interpretive opportunity, a vista, an historic site, a puzzle to be solved over where the trail caravans actually passed.

An "interactive map" of the California portion of these explorations is available from Sarah Schlanger for those interested in seeing how the planning team looks at the trail and the kinds of information they are gathering for use in developing the comprehensive management plan. Maps of route potential for New Mexico, Colorado, and Nevada are being compiled now and will be available soon. Contact Sarah at Sarah_Schlanger@blm.gov for more information.



OSTA Convention Carson Route Field Trip: Old Mormon Fort
courtesy Char Cruz

Board Meeting and Annual Meeting

The OSTA board meeting was held on June 17, 2005. The general membership meeting was on June 18. Both meetings were held at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Las Vegas, Nevada. The following are some highlights from the meetings.

1) OSTA's 2006 Annual Conference: The conference will be held in Green River, Utah, on June 9-11, 2006. Wayne Hinton will be the conference organizer.

2) Interpretation and Marking: The joint BLM/SHPO kiosk project in southern Nevada is progressing. In addition, four mini-exhibits have been placed in three states. An exhibit has also been located at the Ghost Ranch Piedra Lumbre Education and Visitor Center, north of Abiquiu, New Mexico. An interpretive panel will be put on the Bode Store in Abiquiu, NM, later this year.

3) Armijo Flyover: In late September, a flying group will take 15 to 30 planes over the Armijo Route. OSTA members will give talks at key sites along the route.

4) Board Meetings: In the future, there will be only two board meetings a year, one at the June conference and one in the winter. The next meeting will be in January 2006, in Barstow, CA.

5) Membership: Current membership is 385 individuals and 18 institutions.

6) Tecopa Chapter: The new California desert chapter is focusing on getting key sites in their area onto the National Register of Historic Places. They also are concerned about a BLM cattle allotment project in the California Valley area, and a new Charleston View housing development; both projects could adversely impact the OST

7) The Nevada Chapter reported concerns about a Southern Nevada Water authority project to construct a reservoir that would obliterate part of the trail onto Mormon Mesa.



OSTA June Board Meeting
photos by Jon Lawrence



Right:
OSTA Convention
Carson Route Field Trip:
California Crossing
courtesy Char Cruze



Report on the 12th Annual OSTA Conference

OSTA's 12th Annual Conference was held June 17-19, 2005, in Las Vegas, Nevada, in conjunction with the Partnership for the National Trails System (PNTS) Conference. According to all reports, the conference was an outstanding success. OSTA members and friends took part by going on one of the three excellent tours on Old Spanish Trail routes, listening to the topnotch speakers, attending PNTS workshops, and enjoying good food and fellowship.

It was a full weekend. The OSTA national board met on Friday morning. During the afternoon symposium, talks were given by John Robinson on recent research into the Armijo family and by Eva Jensen on the Lost City ruins (See the articles in this issue). Liz Warren discussed the history of the Las Vegas area. Saturday began with chapter reports and presentations. Steve Elkington, the National Trails System Program Leader, gave the keynote address. (The full text of his paper is printed in this issue.) Following the General Membership Meeting, attendees participated in the first of three PNTS Capacity/Building

Training Workshops. The workshops focused on recruiting and training volunteers, developing dynamic boards of directors and committees, and fundraising.

Following Saturday evening's buffet at the Embassy Suites Hotel, the attendees listened to a talk by Michael Green, author, editor and professor of history at Community College of Southern Nevada. Informative and very entertaining, Dr. Green's presentation was entitled "Las Vegas: What Happens Here Could Happen Anywhere."

Sunday was a day of field trips and PNTS Capacity-Building Workshops. For those of us who went on the field trips, it was hard to choose which one to join—they all looked so good. One bus tour followed Frémont's 1844 trek. Led by Hal Steiner, this tour visited notable sites along the trail, including Mountain Springs, Emigrant Pass and Resting Spring. It ended at the historic China Ranch on the Amargosa River. Char Cruze led a bus tour that followed Kit Carson's route north along the OST. Stops included the California Crossing of the Muddy River, Carson's

1848 camp, and a view of the OST descending the Mormon Mesa. Led by Sam Wright, a third tour went past the Preserve at Las Vegas Springs to the north end of Red Rock Canyon, with a stop at the BLM Visitor Center. We extend our thanks for the transportation services provided by Coach USA and Lucky Limo.

Sunday evening we met at the Spring Mountain Ranch State Park. During a walking tour, the docent pointed to grapevines near the ruins of an old cabin, and claimed that the grapes grew from raisins dropped by early travelers on the OST. We concluded the day with dinner at the ranch. Kudos to Dave Kent of the Desert Sands Ranch for hauling in his barbecue and firing up a delicious meal.

Our hearty thanks go to those who worked so hard to ensure that attendees had a good time: Liz Warren, Carol Corbett, Hal Steiner, Char Cruze, Sam Wright, Kenn and Lorraine Carpenter, Juan Palma, Charles Carroll and Chris Macek, as well as other members and friends of the OST who assisted in making the 2005 meeting so memorable.



Left:
OSTA Convention
Fremont Route Field Trip:
Hal Steiner leading a discussion
at Cottonwood Springs
photo by Jon Lawrence



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