

# SPANISH TRACES



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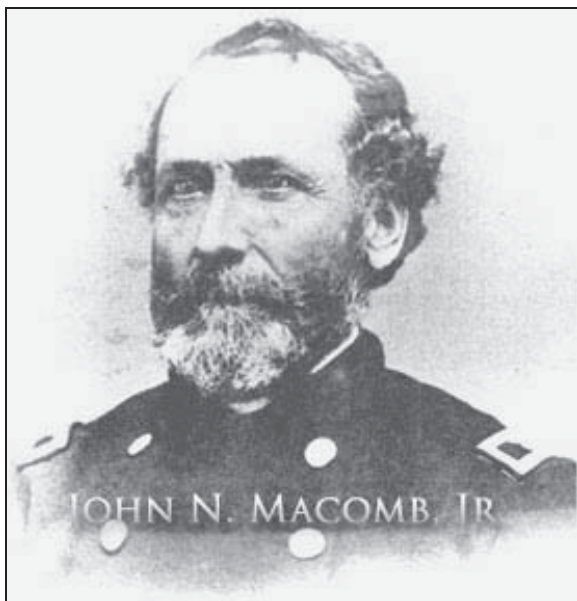
## The 1859 San Juan Exploring Expedition Along the Old Spanish Trail

by *Steven K. Madsen\**

The focus of our sights on an obscure exploring expedition sent from Santa Fe nearly 150 years ago by the United States War Department to find a military route through the legendary land near the junction of the Green and Colorado rivers, adds fresh interpretations for Old Spanish Trail researchers.

Despite its political and military origins, the expedition culminated in a quintessential scientific endeavor in which rare and unique specimens were collected for the Smithsonian Institution and important contributions were made to America's scientific foundation. With a prime objective "to examine especially...the region...traversed by the old Spanish Trail," the reconnaissance would explore more than 200 miles of the historic trace and fill a great gap in the geographical knowledge of the American West.<sup>1</sup>

Until recently the results of the San Juan Exploring Expedition, as it was known, have remained largely ignored. The conditions of the Civil War and the Reconstruction period delayed the publication of the final report for more than 15 years. When issued in 1876 the report drew little public attention since America's frontier exploration focus was set



John Macomb. *National Archives*

*continued on page 16*

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# THE OLD SPANISH TRAIL ASSOCIATION

The Old Spanish Trail (OST), one of America's great long distance trade routes, is our country's fifteenth National Historic Trail. From 1829 to 1848, the OST took traders and pack mules on a six-week trek from northern New Mexico to Southern California, where New Mexico's woolen goods were swapped for horses and pack stock raised on California's ranchos. Many took the trail—traders, frontiersmen and trappers, a handful of hardy families moving West, military expeditions, and Indian guides.

The mission of the Old Spanish Trail Association (OSTA) is to study, preserve, protect, interpret, and promote appropriate use of the Old Spanish National Historic Trail (OSNHT). OSTA promotes public awareness of the OST and its multicultural heritage through publications, a website, and interpretive activities, by encouraging research, and by partnering with governments and private organizations. We encourage you to join OSTA, help in trail preservation, and help increase appreciation of the multicultural heritage of the American Southwest.

## Visit the newly upgraded OSTA Website

<http://www.oldspanishtrail.org>

The OSTA webpage has been extensively remodelled. The site now contains a set of maps, including NPS and BLM versions; an overview history of the OST, including a bibliography; a listing of relevant books, with links to sites where they can be purchased; an updated news page, currently containing a link to the recently published Report on the OSNHT Public Scoping Meetings held earlier this year, and containing links to program notes, playable excerpts and a downloadable Podcast of the Old Spanish Trail Suite. The web page also links to NPS and BLM webpages which have further links to public documents (e.g. the OSNHT Feasibility Study, the Scoping Report, and news about the Comprehensive Management Plan) and maps of the OST.

*Spanish Traces* is the official publication of the Old Spanish Trail Association, a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization, incorporated under the laws of the State of Colorado. *ST* welcomes submission of letters, articles, book reviews, and OST related news. The next deadline for submissions is December 15, 2006.

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## President's Corner

Another memorable mid-June annual OSTA Membership Meeting and Symposium is behind us. Green River, Utah, was the site selected more than two years ago, and what a splendid choice it turned out to be. Conference participants enjoyed informative talks, interesting field trips, comfortable meeting rooms, and good food. We had opportunities to meet friendly townspeople, to tour the J. Wesley Powell Museum and its sister facility in Castle Dale, and to gaze on the wide Green River as it flowed swiftly past the conference rooms. We were favored with an unexpected but outstanding live music program featuring the "Spanish Trail Suite," and, not least of all, we enjoyed the unrivaled beauty of southeastern Utah's canyon lands.

I am happy to report that the board positions are filled: Cliff Walker was appointed as California Director at the January '06 board meeting and is proving a faithful

trooper—he took an active part in the Mapping Workshop in March, chairs the Ethics Committee, and is the 2007 Conference Chairman. Our Vice-President, Wayne Hinton, resigned in June since he will be teaching in Sri Lanka for the next year, but another OSTA stalwart, Mark Franklin of Durango, agreed to serve in that position until June 2007. Last, but not least, past president Steve Heath has returned to Cedar City after being away this last year, and he has agreed to chair the 2007 Nominations Committee.

Other good news:

- Ranchos Chapter/CA has a new president, Rick Whitaker.
- Utah Director A. L. Matheson led in the formation of the Southern Utah Chapter on July 13 and the membership has already doubled in size from the requisite ten. Rob Dotson of Enoch is the president. Enoch City has designated its main street as the National Historic Old Spanish Trail. Matheson reports that there is interest, also, in forming a chapter in Parowan, Utah.
- On August 12, Arizona Director Paul Ostapuk put together the initial informational meeting for a new group, the Armijo Chapter; eleven current OSTAns have signed on, with six new members. Officers will be elected soon.
- On July 27, 2006, ownership of the historic Rowland House was officially transferred from the Hacienda La Puente Unified School District to the La Puente Valley Historical Society.

The work of the NPS/BLM/OSTA team is moving along, the new website and web office are a joy to use, and new educational materials are being produced. A larger budget is in the offing, and OSTA is expecting to set up an Association office in the next few months.

Stay involved!

*Reba Wells Grandrud*

## OSTA's Online Store

[www.cafepress.com/osta](http://www.cafepress.com/osta)

Visit OSTA's online store and purchase merchandise (T-shirts, sweatshirts, caps, tote bags, mugs, stickers, and more) with the OST and OSTA logos.



## Special thanks to our corporate sponsors!

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## From the Editors

In her article in this issue, Pat Richmond, a founding member of OSTA and president of the La Vereda chapter, raises several points that should be of interest to all OSTAns. For one, she gives well-reasoned arguments as to why the West Fork of the North Branch should be included as part of the National Historic Trail. In addition, she provides convincing support for expanding the time scale for the trail to years both earlier and later than the "official" 1829 to 1848 period.

*Spanish Traces* regularly includes articles that are relevant to the OST but outside the official geographical areas and time frames. An example is the article in this issue on the Escalante expedition by Leo Lyman, author of *The Arduous Road: Salt Lake to Los Angeles*. Lyman points out that the expedition opened the eastern segments of the OST. Another article by Steve Madsen, co-author with Gregory Crampton of the comprehensive trail guide *In Search of the Old Spanish Trail*, focuses on a government expedition that occurred 11 years after 1848. The expeditions of the 1850s were crucial for giving us knowledge of the precise location of the OST.

The books reviewed in *Traces* also frequently extend outside the official geographic and temporal limits. In this issue we include our review of *The Witches of Abiquiu*, an examination of the witchcraft trial that took place at Abiquiu, New Mexico, between 1756 and 1766. Another review, by Danna Voth, a graduate student

at California State University at Fullerton (CSUF), concerns a new book, *Captives and Cousins: Slavery, Kinship, and Community in the Southwest Borderlands*, which reaches beyond OSTA's geographic scope; this book should be of interest to OSTAns as it examines indigenous slavery in the Southwest. The review of Janet Lecompte's *Pueblo, Hardscrabble, Greenhorn* by OSTA member Bob Youker reminds OSTAns of this award winning study of the early attempts to settle the region of the upper Arkansas River in southern Colorado. This issue even includes a review of a novel, Isabel Allende's *Zorro*, by CSUF undergraduate Sharone Williams.

The Old Spanish Trail had its beginnings in the mid-1700's, with Spanish-era exploration and trading expeditions into Ute territory. While it had its formal heyday during the era of Mexican control of the Southwest, portions of it continued to be used after the Mexican-American War, up to the time of the railroads. As such, it encompasses important history over a broader timescale and geographical range than has been formally designated in the OSNHT legislation. We would like to encourage this broader perspective.

*Spanish Traces* welcomes expressions of all views. We hope to hear from readers on this subject, as well as any trail-related issue.

**Deborah and Jon Lawrence**

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# News from the Trail

## Utah Roads Officially OST

We are pleased to announce the success of several Old Spanish Trail initiatives in the Utah region. Commissioner Gary Kofford of the Museum of the San Rafael in Castle Dale, UT, was responsible for having a series of signs posted along the highway route from Green River Trail through Emery County, Utah. The signs use the logo from the older Palmer/Mathesen signs of 1951. [Copies of these signs will be available on the OSTA web site in the near future for \$25.00 ea, plus postage/handling of \$5.00.]

The Iron County Commissioners have accepted a draft resolution designating all roads through Iron County associated with the Old Spanish Trail, as the "Old Spanish Trail National Historic Byway." The goal is to have all Utah roads that are associated with the OST to be so marked.

Rob Dotson, Commissioner for the City of Enoch, Utah, successfully supported a petition to title the main road through Enoch as the Old Spanish Trail. Signing and interpretation of the trail is now in process. In order to not disturb existing traces of the trail, the city has built a special bridge to reach their new library. Dotson, together with Larry Brough, Enoch City Manager, are also responsible for changing the Enoch City logo to include the Old Spanish Trail on its identifying shield.

*Al Mathesen*

## New Armijo Chapter

Formation of a new OSTA Chapter for residents in northern Arizona and southern Utah is well underway. Interested parties met along the Armijo Route at the BLM Grand Staircase-Escalante Visitor Center in Big Water, UT, on Saturday, August 12, to discuss action items necessary to form a new local OSTA Chapter. All agreed to proceed with the necessary steps. Nominations for Armijo Chapter officers are being solicited and an Advisory Board consisting of representatives from federal land agencies and tribal partners was created. The area of interest for local trail stewardship of the Armijo Route stretches from Pipe Spring National Monument to the Navajo Nation. This includes the towns of Fredonia, Kanab, Big Water, Page and Kayenta. Any OSTA member with an interest in the Armijo Route is encouraged to join the new Armijo Chapter. We presently have chapter members living in California and Phoenix. Contact Paul Ostapuk, (postapuk@cableone.net) for further information.

*Paul Ostapuk*



## Winn's Canyon Inscriptions

In the chapter entitled "Trail Makers" in Hafen and Hafen's book *Old Spanish Trail: Santa Fe to Los Angeles* (U. Nebraska Press, 1993), footnote 19 (p 147) reads as follows: "In the vicinity of Little Salt Lake are some inscriptions that may have been made by the Wolfskill-Yount party. These have been pecked on the flat surfaces of some black volcanic rocks in Winn's Canyon..." For years a number of people tried in vain to locate that site. In the past we followed numerous clues left by Alva Matheson and William R. Palmer (both deceased) and searched the general area based on interviews with some seven different persons who thought they knew the location of the missing Trail Rock inscriptions, but all to no avail.

Recently, with the help of Jim Guyman, a new member of OSTA, we found the inscription. The reason for the past difficulties in finding it was that someone had dynamited the hill side. The inscription rock was thrown to the bottom of the canyon, where it remains hidden today, upside-down in a tangle of scrub oak. Initiatives are being taken to recover the inscription rock and protect it, as well as numerous other trail inscriptions in the vicinity that date back as early as 1833. The latter were discovered at the same time the rock was re-located; we have no knowledge of their previous discovery or documentation.

*Al Matheson*



Pat Kuhlhoff, Elizabeth James-Tallman and Therese Janowski by the OST Game Board at Abiquiu Dam Visitor's Center. *courtesy Pat Kuhlhoff*

## Old Spanish Trail Game Board at Abiquiu Dam

At the Camino Real Historic Cultural Center near Socorro, New Mexico, is a board game of the Camino Real Trail that was created by Lou Ann Jordan of Rancho de Las Golondrinas. The game board is 8' long and 2' wide and about 2.5' tall.

This exhibit inspired us to create a game board depicting the Old Spanish Trail. The suggestion of a game board drew the enthusiasm of Dave Dutton of the Army Corps of Engineers and his staff at Abiquiu Dam who wanted to establish a children's interest center. This seemed to be an excellent way to start. Dutton assigned the project to summer intern Elizabeth James-Tallman. It was decided that the staff at the visitor's center would build the table while we would draw and

paint the trail routes and branches, the cartoons, and the spinner. The size of the board at the Abiquiu visitor's center was reduced to 6'x18" to meet special needs unique to the center. We made the initial draft and Lou Ann Jordan did the final version and cartoon



Lou Ann Jordan works on the Game Board. *courtesy Pat Kuhlhoff*

caricatures. The board's instructions include interesting information about trail travel (for example, "Trade blankets with Indians, take an extra turn."). We finished the project in early August and later visited the center to see the game board installed and accompanied by a wall-mounted Old Spanish Trail information display. Everyone was pleased with the end result, including two small children who loved the game.

Salida Del Sol Chapter members hope to repeat this project in other places, such as the Kit Carson Museum in Taos.

*Patricia Kuhlhoff*

## News Briefs

The NPS/BLM scoping team completed 21 scoping meetings earlier this year. The scoping report is now available on the OSTA website ([www.oldspanishtrail.org](http://www.oldspanishtrail.org)).

Dr. James Jefferson of the Southern Ute Tribe has accepted an invitation to serve as a member of the Interpretation and Marking Committee.

Cliff Walker, David Romero, and Rick Whitaker have agreed to host the next OSTA conference in Barstow, CA, on June 7-9, 2007. The theme will be "The Desert Experience."

The next meeting of the OSTA Board of Directors will be held in Phoenix, AZ, in early January.

## North Branch West Fork Interpretive Material

Members of the La Vereda Chapter are preparing a map brochure for the North Branch's West Fork trail. Publication of educational and interpretive materials for the West Fork became possible as a result of a \$5,000 Temple Buell Foundation grant awarded to the chapter's past president, Max Lara.

We plan to include a time-events chart of the historic use of the West Fork trail. We have met with local Forest Service and BLM personnel to explore graphics design concepts for the brochure as well as for a map of the San Luis Valley, which will highlight the West Fork trail. Documented points along the East Fork trail, already designated as part of the National Historic Old Spanish Trail, will also appear on the San Luis Valley map.

Funds have been set aside for Carsonite posts bearing a medallion with a logo. The committee has designated points where the West Fork trail intersects commonly used public roads. An important step in the trail marking process is acquiring permission from county and state officials to set the posts. Conejos County's commissioners have already granted their approval. Alamosa, Costilla, Rio Grande, and Saguache counties and the Colorado Department of Transportation will be contacted as soon as a mock-up of the map brochure is available for their review.

*Pat Richmond*

## Old Spanish Trail Association Trail Partners

The following organizations have accepted brochures, mini-exhibits and other interpretive exhibits from OSTA.

### New Mexico

- Abiquiu Public Library
- Largo Canyon School, Counselor
- Santa Fe Public Library
- Santa Fe Visitor Center
- Ghost Ranch Piedra Lumbre Visitor Center, Abiquiu
- Aztec Public Library

### Arizona

- John Wesley Powell Museum, Page
- Page City Library
- Pipe Spring National Monument, Fredonia
- Navajo National Monument, Tonaalea

### Nevada

- Valley of Fire State Park
- Virgin Valley Heritage Museum, Mesquite
- Las Vegas Public Library, Rainbow Branch
- Red Rock Canyon NCA, BLM, Las Vegas

### California

- China Ranch, Ranch House Inn, Tecopa
- Mojave River Valley Museum, Barstow
- Workman and Temple Family Homestead, City of Industry
- San Bernardino County Museum, Redlands

### Colorado

- SE Colorado Heritage Center, Pueblo
- Rio Grande County Museum, Del Norte
- Transportation Museum of the West, Monte Vista
- San Luis Valley Information Center, Monte Vista
- San Luis Museum and Cultural Center
- Fort Garland Museum
- Great Sand Dunes National Park, Mosca.
- Anasazi Heritage Cultural Center, Dolores
- Southern Ute Museum, Ignacio Ute Mountain Tribal Park
- Interagency Visitor Center (BLM, etc.), Montrose
- Fort Uncompahgre Living History Center, Delta
- Museum of Western Colorado, Grand Junction
- Colorado National Monument, Fruita

### Utah

- Interagency Visitor Center, Monticello
- Spanish Trail Supply, Veyo
- Kane County Tourism Council, Kanab
- Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument, Kanab
- Interagency Visitor Center, St. George

*Doug Knudson*

## Old Spanish Trail Convention Held in Green River

by *Corey Bluemel*

The Old Spanish Trail Association held its annual convention in Green River, at the John Wesley Powell River History Museum. This was the 13th annual meeting of the OSTA members. Nearly 80 people from Arizona, New Mexico, California, Nevada, Colorado, Idaho, Washington, the United Kingdom, and Utah attended the annual meeting.

Since the designation of the Old Spanish Trail as a National Historic Trail on Dec. 4, 2002, the OSTA and its board have worked with the Bureau of Land Management and the National Park Service in scoping, mapping and planning the management of the trail.

Members of the OSTA meet at this annual convention to be updated from the federal partners about the scoping process, and also to visit portions of the trail. They met and many informative workshops were held.

Along with the workshops, the group was taken on a float trip on the Green River where they viewed the ford location the trail took through the river. Those who did not attend the float trip were taken by vehicles for a tour of the Green River area, which also included a look at the ford on the river. These tours were led by local residents who were able to relate some local history and folklore.

To conclude the conference, the group took a tour of the trail route from Green River to Castle Dale. Along the way, they were treated to many of the points of interest in the San Rafael Swell.

Upon their arrival at the Museum of the San Rafael in Castle Dale, they were welcomed by Commissioner Gary Kofford, and Sylvia Nelson and Bert Oman of the Emery County Historical Society. Commissioner Kofford asked them what they thought of Emery County and was answered with a thunderous round of applause.



Willard Young (on the right) greets convention goers at the Museum of the San Rafael.  
*courtesy Corey Bluemel*

“We are very proud of our Old Spanish Trail heritage. We are very happy to have you here and you are welcome to come back anytime,” Commissioner Kofford said.

The group was given a tour of the museum and encouraged to ask any question concerning Emery County or the Old Spanish Trail in our area. Many of the attendees were interested in the size of Emery

County because they had left Green River and traveled all day and were still in Emery County. They were also interested in the geological aspects of the Swell.

One visitor, David Fallowfield of Penrith, Cumbria, England, stated, “I have been on the Santa Fe Trail, the Oregon Trail, the Pony Express Trail, and I think this portion of the Old Spanish Trail is the most diverse. You see a different view through the windscreen every five minutes. This place should be a national park.”

Fallowfield explained his interest in the trails in the United States. “When I was growing up, many of my family members would immigrate here, and they never came back. As I grew older, I needed to know what was so special about the U.S. In 1985, I became interested in the Family History Society and discovered a family connection with the Old Spanish Trail.

William Workman, who used the trail was in my family history, so I wanted to see it. I came over on vacations and have become very fascinated with the lands here,” said Fallowfield.

He went on to say that the town he was from in England, Penrith, meant “Red Hill” in Celtic. “I find it very ironic that I’m from Red Hill and come here and I am surrounded by red hills.”

[Reprinted with permission from the *Emery County Progress*, June 20, 2006. See [www.ecprogress.com](http://www.ecprogress.com)]

## Green River Conference Photos



Field trip caravan at Trail Springs.  
*courtesy Reba Grandrud*



Roan Cliffs.  
*courtesy Reba Grandrud*



Barrier Canyon petroglyphs.  
*courtesy Reba Grandrud*



Brits at the Green: Donald Harrison, John and Anne Thompson, Shirley and Maurice Bell.  
*courtesy David Fallowfield*



David Fallowfield and John Ramsey, seated, with Ed Bentley, Mayor of Green River, UT.  
*courtesy Reba Grandrud*



Conference attendees raft the Green River.  
*courtesy Dan Dugan*

## Book Reviews

### *Captives and Cousins: Slavery, Kinship, and Community in the Southwest Borderlands.*

James F. Brooks.

Chapel Hill: North Carolina University Press, 2002.

ISBN 0807853828. 419 pages.

Photos, maps, tables, index.

Paperback, \$24.95.

As part of the cultural legacy of both the indigenous and colonizing peoples of the Southwest borderlands, human captive exchange underlay the region's barter economy during the Spanish colonial era until the end of the nineteenth century. Cross-cultural and retaliatory cycles of capturing and trading in humans—predominantly women and children—helped support both the movement and settlement of people in the area as the practice inscribed its violent roots in their cultures. In *Captives and Cousins*, James F. Brooks uncovers a nexus of complex relationships between captives and captors that enmeshed kin affinities with sexual and economic exploitation. Examining the evolution and effects of these human exchange networks, Brooks locates them in relation to the geographical cultures and resources of the plains, ranges, mountains, and valleys of the Southwestborderlands.

While Brooks provides maps of the area's Spanish settlements, tribal territories, pueblos, Navajo migrations, Comanchero cattle

trails, and Kiowa, Apache, and Comanche raiding trails, his study informally refers to these routes and does not always name them. Brooks occasionally discusses the effects of some major trails, such as the arrival of American-allied traders with the 1821 opening of the St. Louis to Chihuahua Trail, or the advent of trade with California and Asia through the Old Spanish Trail after 1830. However, most trails are not named or described in the study, but are left to be inferred by trail scholars as they read the histories of the geographical regions through which the trails pass. Interweaving folklore and individual stories with archeological and documentary evidence, Brooks gives us a history of the southwestern slave trade that relied on, avoided, or generated various trails.

For readers interested in a nuanced look at the economic, political, class, gendered, ethnic, and social complexities of the Southwest borderlands' cross-cultural networks of slavery, *Captives and Cousins* provides an understanding of power distributions at all levels of colonial Southwestern societies. Originating from similar patriarchal notions of the honor in controlling and distributing women and the shame in poverty, Brooks asserts that the taking of slaves in battle and trading them as commodities were tactics familiar to both the indigenous peoples of the Southwest borderlands and the Europeans who colonized the area. Brooks provides evidence that suggests

this slave trading network reached as far north as Oregon and as far south as Cuba.

In his geographic overview, Brooks begins with the plains. He shows that the raiding and trading networks across the Southwest grasslands resulted in a broad distribution of Indian slaves between pueblo farmers such as the Hopi, semi-sedentary Navajos, and nomadic buffalo-hunting Indian tribes such as the Apaches and Comanches. Spanish colonists acquired Indian slaves in battle and trade, while Indian tribes raided the Spanish and each other in retribution, trading some of their captives as commodities. Brooks argues that the labor value—in addition to status—captives provided created a great incentive to continue the raids and trades on all sides. As growing markets demanded more buffalo hides, more labor was needed to tan them. As Spanish households and enterprises prospered, more labor was required to run them. And as Catholic missions expanded, the desire for cheap labor increased. In a move making the local slave trade customary, the Spanish established *rescates*, market events for purchasing slaves. Spanish Catholic orders rescued many slaves for religious conversion. The slaves then spent their lives paying back the favor by laboring at mission farms and ranches. Similarly, some members of the Catholic lay brotherhood acquired family servants through Catholic godparenthood practices that required the lifelong service and gratitude of their “wards.”

According to Brooks, both the Spanish colonists and the various Indian tribes and divisions distinguished multi-level status positions for their slaves, which were complicated by the acknowledgement of both fictive and actual kinship ties. Both Spanish and Indian captors practiced ritual “adoption” of some of their slaves. Many women taken as wives by Indians or taken by the Spanish and used sexually, sometimes as concubines and occasionally as brides, produced children. Often such captives were installed in homes and families to augment losses, and their relationships and offspring created kinship ties to their captors, which often included expectations to proffer elder care and receive occasional (paltry) inheritances. Some slaves were ransomed back to their original home and family groups, but not all were given the opportunity chose to return to their previous lives. For some, the guarantee of food and shelter weighted their decision; for others, the longest and thus most familiar cultural experience garnered loyalty, and some remained with their captors out of the shame of a reduced status. Yet others leveraged their cross-cultural capital in trade negotiations between various groups, often very lucratively.

The redistribution of wealth that captive exchanges facilitated concomitantly created inequalities which increased raiding. Describing the plains hunters’ adjustment to low yield periods of

establishing farming settlements and trading centers, Brooks moves his discussion from the plains to the grazing pastures and farming valleys. He notes that ethnographic surveys “reveal that 73 percent of pastoral societies include some form of slavery in their social organization.” For Indians, access to wealth depended on capital resources such as horses, cattle, sheep, cheap labor, family shares of pasturage traditionally endowed through marriage, and free time to learn and practice prized skills such as weaving. As those resources were controlled by elite members of tribes, “getting ahead” for many poorer Indians was a difficult and sometimes hopeless process. Uneven accumulations of larger herds of livestock, greater areas of farmland, and better opportunities to produce marketable items created sharp divisions of labor and class bifurcation within tribal groups. Tensions formed between the few rich ranchers and many poor herders, the few land owners and more numerous tenant farmers. As a result, Navajo livestock raiders, *ladrones*, rode out to the plains to counter the imbalance of wealth through theft. Other low-status Indians migrated to the eastern mountains, where they capitalized on their cultural knowledge and gateway position as negotiators of trade.

Brooks shows that the Spanish underwent the same desires and divisions that produced cattle rustlers who swooped in to raid herds and *ciboleros*—

Spanish buffalo hunters—who systematically killed bison to meet market demand. Concerned with the many “freelance” and untaxed methods of illicit trade, various local governors repeatedly attempted to regulate trade between cultures. These efforts went mostly ignored and met with revolt, remarkably once by a coalition of Indians and Spanish citizens. In trying to protect their local custom, Spanish colonists even defied certain edicts from Spain. As the Southwest borderlands’ captive exchange system evolved through political upheavals, its paradoxical combination of cultural ties and economic importance was eventually sublimated into ritual ceremony under pressure from American westward expansion and capitalism. Brooks notes how the U.S. abolition movement’s attempts to buy slaves’ freedom ironically kept the slave trade alive by feeding the market forces so much longer. He also labors to show the unacknowledged and reciprocal commodification of human subjects by both indigenous and colonizing peoples, who revealed such interests through legal documents. In some cases wills deeded slaves and property to slaves connected through family ties. Beyond the economics of the system, the kinship affinities kept the system lingering long after it was legally abolished. Finally, Brooks mourns the lost opportunity for positive use of the unique kinship affinities and cross-cultural capital that was destroyed in the American push toward assimilation and

individual versus communal experience.

*Captives and Cousins* is sensitive to the cruel fates and exploitation of many captives in the bureaucratic, ruthless, and violent colonial efforts to establish dominance in the Southwest borderlands, as well as the indigenous peoples' equally violent and brutal response to economic opportunities within the mutual system of captive exchange. But Brooks also offers a geographically organized reading of power relations that uncovers many surprising avenues for differentiated power flows. The story of the Spanish colonization efforts of the Southwest borderlands offers an opportunity to re-examine overly simplistic binary notions of one-dimensional native resistance to hermetic European expansion and discover the amazing innovation, connection, and influence that some of the most vulnerable subjects, as well as some of the most privileged brokers, of colonization created while negotiating from their multiple cultural positions. Brooks' work is very thoroughly researched and includes many detailed footnotes that offer starting places for further study and put into a global historical context the story of economic and cultural exchanges in a system that brought a variety of peoples "closer and closer apart."

**Danna Voth**

***Pueblo, Hardscrabble, Greenhorn: The Upper Arkansas, 1832-1856***

Janet Lecompte.

Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1978.

ISBN 0806117230. 354 pages.

Illustrations, map, appendixes, index. Paperback, \$29.95.

In *Pueblo, Hardscrabble, Greenhorn*, Janet Lecompte describes the first attempts to settle the region of the upper Arkansas River in southern Colorado. A major portion of the book is concerned with Pueblo, Hardscrabble, and Greenhorn, three small settlements that were established by trappers and traders and frequented by Indians, Mormons, Mexicans, Anglo fur traders, military men, explorers, and English gentry.

A readable synthesis of information regarding the first attempts at settlement of the upper Arkansas Valley, Lecompte's book narrates the story of the pioneers' attempts to establish permanent homes during the period from 1832 to 1856. She details the handful of trading posts and ranches of the area and examines the Anglo American settlers' influence on the region and their effect on the Indians who traded with them. According to Lecompte, the arrival of white women transformed the trading posts into the towns of Pueblo, Hardscrabble, and Greenhorn.

Lecompte's discussion of women in the region provides readers with valuable information regarding the ways in which westering women

reveal a female perspective on the frontier experience which is organized by the need for home and stability. She examines intermarriage and the frontier's destabilization of the Eastern ideas of social and racial order. With the renewed interest in Western women's history, chapter seven is of particular significance because it is devoted to women's roles in the settlements, and the ways in which their responsibilities were determined by their ethnicity. The duties of Mexican, Indian, and Anglo women were markedly different from each other.

Using diaries and letters from settlers and reports from travelers like John Frémont and Francis Parkman, Lecompte presents a range of characters, reflecting the diversity of the area. George S. Simpson, Dick Wooton, the four Bent brothers, Ceran St. Vrain, James Beckwourth, and Bill Williams are just a few examples. Of particular interest is Lecompte's reconstruction of trading posts like Bent's Fort (chapter 2) and Pueblo (chapter 5).

The Mexican War, the California Gold Rush, and the massacre of Pueblo by the Utes in 1854 contributed to the demise of these three settlements. Thanks to Lecompte's accounts, however, readers have a permanent record of the history of this region.

*Pueblo, Hardscrabble, Greenhorn* received both the 1978 Westerners' International Award for best non-fiction book, and the 1978 Western Writers of America Golden Spur

Award for best non-fiction book. Containing information on the mountain men, the fur trade, explorers, Indians, Mormons, Mexicans, women and the buffalo trade, Lecompte's detailed and well researched book is a must read for anyone interested in the upper Arkansas Valley and its history. It is still in print and available at the museum in Pueblo, as well as through Amazon.com.

**Robert Youker**

***The Witches of Abiquiu: the Governor, the Priest, the Genízaro Indians, and the Devil***  
Malcolm Ebright and Rick Hendricks.  
Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2006.  
ISBN: 0826320317. 344 pages.  
Illustrations, photographs, appendices, bibliography.  
Hardcover, \$34.95.

The town of Abiquiu in northern New Mexico is well known for its association with artist Georgia O'Keeffe, not as the site of the last large outbreak of witchcraft in North America. In *The Witches of Abiquiu*, historians Malcolm Ebright and Rick Hendricks explore the witchcraft trial that took place at Abiquiu between 1756 and 1766, an event, they claim, of equal significance as the Salem witchcraft trials of 1692.

After the Pueblo Revolt in 1680, Spaniards returned in 1692 and attempted to re-establish themselves in New Mexico. However, they suffered relentless attacks by nomadic Indians. Setting the trial

in its historical context, Ebright and Hendricks explain how in 1754, in an attempt to provide a buffer from the raiding of the Comanches, Utes, and Apaches, Governor Tomas Velez Cachupin established the Abiquiu Genízaro land grant, the only land grant made solely for Genízaros, hispanicized Indians. Although they had lost their tribal identity, Genízaros did not belong to Spanish society. A mix of Plains Indians, Hopis, and Pueblos, they resisted Christianization. Their native ceremonies and rituals were viewed with suspicion by early New Mexican colonialists, especially Fray Juan Jose Toledo, the fanatical priest who had arrived in Abiquiu in 1755.

Unable to differentiate between curanderos and those who practiced withcraft, Father Toledo thought they were all in league with the Devil. Toledo filed a report with the Spanish governor against numerous Genízaros, which began an investigation of every suspected sorcerer and witch in the area and evolved into an outbreak of demonic possessions and exorcisms. Only with the governor's intervention, was peace achieved. The authors argue, and we think successfully, that Governor Velez Cachupin has been unfairly neglected by historians. They describe the governor's successful attempts to achieve peace among Hispanic settlers and the Genízaros.

The book's topic—witches, sorcery, spells, and exorcism—might give the impression that this multicultural history is non scholarly. This is not the case. *The Witches of Abiquiu* is

a sophisticated, well researched, academic study by two excellent historians. The director of the Center for Land Grant Studies in Guadalupita, New Mexico, Bright is the author of *Land Grants and Lawsuits in Northern New Mexico*. Hendricks is the author of *The Navajos in 1705* and editor of the six-volume Don Diego de Vargas journals project. While we enjoyed Glen Strock's whimsical illustrations that accompany the text, they contributed to the impression that the book might be nonacademic.

In the last chapter, Ebright and Hendricks mention the weakness of their research: The Spaniards wrote the record of the trial—the Genízaros' side of the story is only heard second hand. The authors conclude with a discussion of the history of the Abiquiu Genízaros' continuing influence. In the period from 1815 to 1830, the Genízaros were able to defend themselves against challenges to their land grant and water resources. In the early 1820s they developed one of the earliest Penitente practices. According to the authors, today's residents of Abiquiu retain their Hispano-Indian duality and, proud of their unique past, they continue to tell withcraft stories.

*The Witches of Abiquiu* is a lucidly written study, packed with insight, regional specificity, and exceptional personalities. No person interested in the history of the Southwest or in witchcraft in early America should be without this book.

**Deborah and Jon Lawrence**

***Zorro: A Novel.***

Isabel Allende.

New York: HarperCollins, 2005.

ISBN 0060778970. 390 pages.

Hardcover, \$29.95.

In *Zorro*, Isabel Allende details how Diego de la Vega becomes Zorro. According to the novel, Diego de la Vega is born in 1795 in Alta California to a Shoshone warrior mother and a Spanish landholder. Immersed as a child in both the Spanish and Indian cultures, Diego is later sent to Spain for his education, where he hones his hatred of injustice fighting the French occupation of Spain as part of a vigilante group. Along the way he learns the various tricks and techniques that will eventually combine with elements of his dual heritage to produce his alter ego, Zorro.

Allende's portraits of known historical figures such as Governor Pedro Fages and landmarks such as the presidio in Monterey are highly consistent with what is known of them, but puzzlingly, some of the details Allende employs, which could have been used to anchor the narrative in history, are sloppy or exaggerated. For example, Allende speaks of twenty-three missions in California, despite the fact that history (and the map that decorates the book's inside cover) identify twenty-one at the most, and fewer than that during the time span of the novel. In addition, the mission life portrayed stretches the bounds of credibility: Father Mendoza's San Gabriel mission is peaceful and successful, the Indians love living there and never wander off for long,

and the mission is not ravaged by European diseases because Father Mendoza cares about nutrition. In fact, people come from New Spain to visit his mission because it works so perfectly. Never mind that travel to Alta California at that time was harrowing at best, inspiring few colonists (let alone visitors) to make the journey. Never mind that poor nutrition was not the only reason the Indian population was decimated by disease.

If accurate, these mostly inconsequential details would have blended in seamlessly and strengthened the narrative; instead, the sloppiness and exaggeration undermine the narrator's believability from the outset. The oversimplifications are a strain to the novel's credibility until the revelation of the narrator's identity at the end of the book, which indicates that her information was obtained from personal experience or the testimony of those involved. In this light, it is easy to imagine the narrator listening to the characters' reflections on their distant past, and in turn to see how the narrator in her retelling subconsciously revises as she goes, beginning the process of the storytelling tradition by which legends are born. However, that this perspective is withheld until the novel's conclusion can make for a puzzling reading experience.

When it comes to depicting the complicated relationship between the Indian and Spanish cultures, Allende is spot on, if occasionally predictable. This is clearly seen through the story of the de la

Vega family. Diego's mother, Toypurnia, is representative of the many Indian women who struggled with the loss of their own ethnic identity because of intermarriage with a Spaniard; her husband, Alejandro, in turn struggles not to resent his wife's heritage and inability to assimilate into the traditional Spanish culture of which he is so proud. Diego, their offspring, unselfconsciously blends the two cultures together; there is a sort of romantic implication that, in his childish innocence, he has chosen the best elements of the two worlds, a possibility that the foolish adults around him are unable to see. Allende neatly avoids directly addressing the mistreatment of the Indians by the friars in making her only Franciscan character, Father Mendoza, the lone exceptional friar; references to the abuse of the Indians by the mission system come mainly from Mendoza's disapproving reflections on the differences between his mission and the others.

From a societal standpoint, the interactions between Indians and Spaniards are compatible with historical accounts. It is clear that the members of the community strongly disapprove of Toypurnia's Indian background, and throughout the novel, villain characters like Rafael de Moncada are seen treating the Indians as subhuman and seizing increasing amounts of their land. Allende's choice of an omniscient narrator allows the reader to hear the innermost thoughts of both Indians and

Spaniards, giving some depth to these otherwise conventional portrayals.

Through all this, Allende has been essentially true to the spirit of the Zorro legend, which was created by pulp author Johnston McCulley in 1919, a period when historians and fiction authors alike happily re-imagined the harsh, desperate colonial years in Alta California. They envisioned a time when young swains serenaded outside windows, every night held a fiesta, and life was peaceful, pastoral, and serene. Allende's novel is largely consistent with this history-bending and glossing over of the dark parts, but the novel is kept from sinking fully into this romanticized stereotype by its ironic sensibility, which occasionally distracts but overall provides a refreshingly modern edge.

The reader who can look through the areas of historical fuzziness will find an absorbing read crammed full of thrills: Indian rituals, gypsy circuses, perilous sea voyages, swashbuckling pirates, daring escapes, swordfights, and the dashing hero versus the singlemindedly evil villain. Don't ask too much from the characters, most of whose arcs are predictable from a great distance; instead, be pleasantly surprised by their flashes of great depth, as when the subtleties of Father Mendoza's inner monologue reveal his

subconscious condescension toward the natives he earnestly believes he loves.

Although the pacing of the novel is uneven and the narrative voice can be distracting with its frequent asides to the reader and the occasional comment dripping with sarcasm, for the most part, it is melodramatic and romantic, clever and engaging--everything an adventure novel should be. The reader may feel as if she has been let in at the ground floor of the towering cultural construction that is the legend of Zorro, and perhaps the biggest disappointment is that the novel ends as Zorro's career is just beginning.

**Sharone Williams**

## Rowland House Update

The Hacienda La Puente Unified School District has deeded the Rowland House property (see *Spanish Traces*, Fall 2005) to the La Puente Valley Historical Society. The house, which shares the site with the school district headquarters, is on the National Register of Historic Places. The school district also leased the adjacent Dibble Museum to the historical society along with an easement to prevent any access issues if the district sells its property.

Cecilia Wictor, the curator of the historical society, is the great-great-granddaughter of John Rowland, a founding father of the La Puente

community, who built the house in 1855. Wictor gave tours of the historic home to students until the 1987 Whittier Narrows earthquake made the building unsafe. No structural repairs have been made since then. The county has condemned the house as being structurally unsafe, until it is brought up to earthquake standards. The historical society estimates the repairs will cost more than \$3 million; they hope to raise the money from public and private grants. They feel that it should be easier for the society to get grant money to restore the house now that the title is in their name.

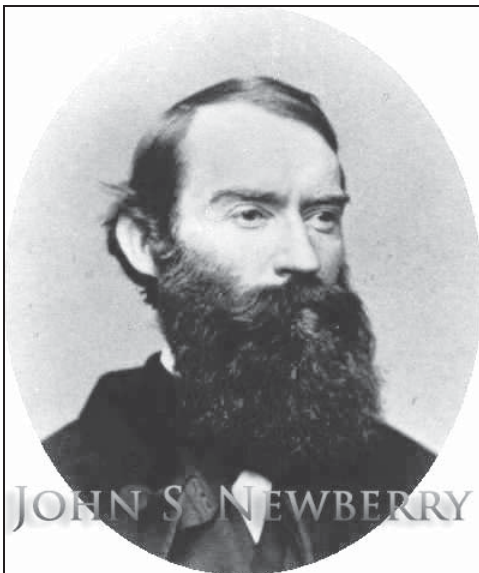
The home was initially intended for educational purposes when the last private owner, Lillian Hudson Dibble, willed the premises to the Hudson School District on Aug. 12, 1959. The society plans to maintain its use as a resource for local students.

The house carries with it many legends, for example the story of Tiburcio Vasquez, a notorious Spanish criminal who robbed the wealthy. Wictor's daughter, Carrie Gonzales, recounts the following story. When John Rowland married his second wife, Charlotte Gray, he sent a large sum of money home. When Vasquez knocked on the door, Gray invited him in. She served him a drink as he sat in the parlor. In the drawer, was a bag containing a significant amount of gold. But, since she treated him so well, he just drank and left.

*continued from page 1*

on the Great Surveys – those of Ferdinand V. Hayden, Clarence King, George M. Wheeler, and John Wesley Powell.

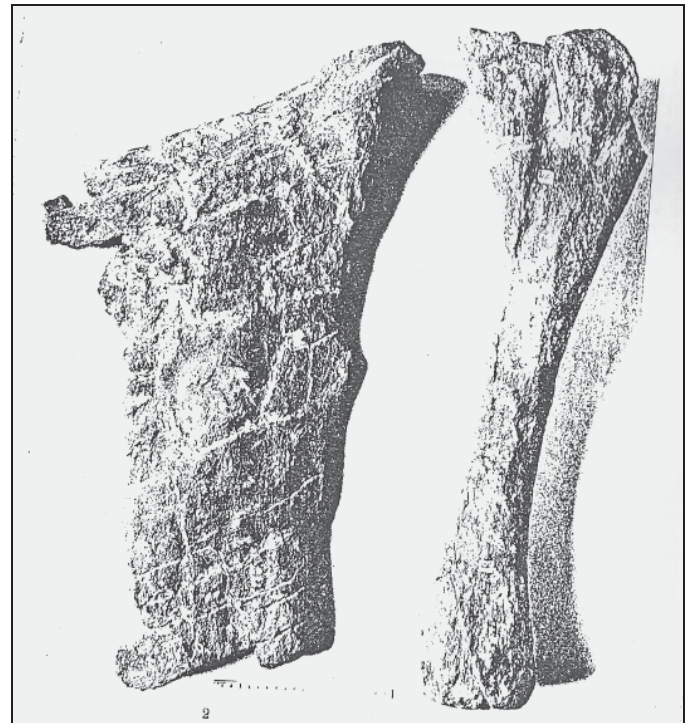
Nevertheless the contributions of the San Juan Exploring Expedition deserve our attention. The expedition's topographer and the geologist both were prone to adopt the nineteenth-century tendency to romanticize red rock erosion as Cyclopean cities and Gothic cathedrals. However, they yielded to a stronger and more modern impulse for fact gathering, attention to detail, and astute observations of geologic wonders. The keen and often poetic observations of the geologist, the expedition's key player, went beyond the typical topographical studies of the period to make "a significant contribution on erosion to world geology."<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, he would make a startling discovery while en route to the inner reaches of today's



*National Archives*

Canyonlands National Park. In 1987, following several years of investigative field work, Moab naturalists and writers Fran and Terby Barnes scaled a multicolored sandstone cliff in southeastern Utah's "Canyon Pintado" and rediscovered the long-lost site of the first sauropod dinosaur bones found in the western hemisphere. (This sauropod, a giant, long-necked, long-tailed, plant eater from the Jurassic Period, may be the ancestor of all North American sauropods.) Dr. John S. Newberry, geologist and physician with the 1859 San Juan Exploring Expedition, had originally located the bones and excavated several samples for the Smithsonian Institution. Newberry reported that the discovery was made directly on the Old Spanish Trail. He pulled from the site a femur, a humerus, portions of the ribs, and some toes of the "monster." But he complained that he had been compelled to stop the dig after excavating about 200 pounds of fossils.<sup>3</sup>

The find was an unexpected outcome of an expedition whose mission included the acquiring of "good results for the great



Sauropod bones.

*From the Report of the San Juan Exploring Expedition.*

map of our country."<sup>4</sup> At that time, large blank spaces and numerous representations of mythical natural features riddled frontier maps. For example, the widely circulated commercial map issued by J. H. Colton & Co. in 1855 charting Utah and New Mexico territories carried two glaring geographical fictions: The great Colorado and Green Rivers merged far below the confluence of the San Juan and Colorado Rivers. Both river junctions appeared incorrectly deep inside New Mexico Territory.<sup>5</sup>

Before 1858 the Grand Canyon region and the remote heartland of the Colorado Plateau (named by geologist Newberry), a highland region drained by the Colorado River and its affluents, remained largely unknown, an

immense mysterious land in America's interior West. This *terra incognita* appeared as a large blank on the "Map of the Utah Territory showing Routes connecting it with California and the East," issued in 1858 by the Corps of Topographical Engineers. Bold letters swept across the map's white space proclaiming it a "Region Unexplored Scientifically." (This same map showed a mythical, wild variant of the Old Spanish Trail, labeled as the "South Trail in Winter Season," crossing the Green and Colorado not far above their confluence. B.A.M. Froiseth copied this fiction on his "New Sectional and Mineral Map of Utah," published in 1878.)

The explorations of the U.S. Topographical Engineers and the Pacific Railroad Surveys filled many of the blanks on the map of the western United States and greatly increased the geographical and geological knowledge of the region. Miners, farmers, cattlemen, and lumbermen who studied the government publications and maps resulting from these surveys easily accessed the unexploited areas of the West along well-defined pathways.

Beyond plotting the easiest routes into the West, the publications helped debunk the geographical myths, including El Dorados and fictitious lakes, streams, and mountain ranges. But the challenge of completing the scientific explorations in the remaining unknown lands

of the West persisted. A new urgency to explore the enormous extent of uncharted ground was forthcoming.

During 1857-1858 the clashes between the United States and the Mormons, dubbed the Utah War, accelerated the exploration of the Mountain West by the Army's Topographical Engineers. The late Dr. C. Gregory Crampton wrote: "The success of the Mormon resistance to Johnston's Army in 1857 and the logistical isolation of the federal troops at Camp Floyd [some 40 miles from Salt Lake City] made it imperative that the War Department seek new supply routes into Utah."<sup>6</sup>

Prompted by the conflict, the War Department directed the U.S. Army Corps of Topographical Engineers during the years 1857-1859 to survey the Mormon territory and find new approaches to Utah. They launched a three-pronged effort: From the Gulf of California, Lt. Joseph C. Ives steamed up the Colorado River in the *U.S. Explorer*, a fifty-foot-long iron sternwheeler, to Black Canyon where Hoover Dam now stands. Before turning back, he continued overland with a small party of men to explore the Grand Canyon. From Camp Floyd, Captain J. H. Simpson marched westward across the Great Basin and over the Sierra Nevada to Placerville, near Sacramento. On the return march he followed yet another path several miles to the south across the great interior basin.

He thereby discovered a shorter route to California, which the Pony Express and mail and stage lines would later follow. From Santa Fe, Captain John N. Macomb plotted a course into Utah's canyon country and attempted to penetrate its intricate landscape near the confluence of the Green and Colorado Rivers.

There is a geographic unity to the natural wonderland that surrounds the legendary confluence of the two mighty rivers. Its immense corrugated landscape has been elaborately sculpted by rushing waters, creating a harmony of colors, erosive cuts, and formations. (The physical characteristics of the area played a role in the development of the Old Spanish Trail, since it was a great arch-shaped corridor, looping northward around the more deeply eroded interior of the Colorado Plateau. The rugged features and steep-walled gorges in the heart of the high plateau region formed an insurmountable obstacle to direct east-west travel.)

On April 6, 1859, by order of the Secretary of War, Capt. A. A. Humphreys, chief of the War Department's Office of Explorations and Surveys, sent instructions to Macomb, stationed in Santa Fe, to explore the San Juan River basin and the "lower courses of the head-tributaries of the Colorado of the West." In addition, he directed Macomb "to determine the most

direct and practicable route that may be through the region between the Rio Grande and the southern settlements of Utah.” Furthermore, Humphreys ordered Macomb “to examine *especially* the part of the region in question traversed by the ‘old Spanish Trail’ from Abiquiu N.M. to California, with a view to ascertain if there be a practicable route, in the neighborhood of the San Juan River, between New Mexico and Utah.” [Emphasis mine.]<sup>7</sup>

Prior to the reconnaissance, Humphreys furnished Macomb with a map and explanatory notes “summarizing the total knowledge of the War Department in 1859 of the topography of the region.”<sup>8</sup> In the explanatory notes to Macomb, we read: “The position of the “Old Spanish trail” is represented on the compiled map of Lt. Parke, Top. Eng., near the 37<sup>th</sup> parallel. By Captain Beckwith it was moved more than a degree further north, as the trail was believed to cross Green and Grand Rivers some distance above their junction. Both positions are laid down on the accompanying map under the supposition that Capt. Beckwith’s map is correct, it seems difficult to imagine why the early Spanish travelers from Santa Fe to Los Angeles should have taken so great a circuit to the north, instead of following the practicable line of country along the 35<sup>th</sup> parallel.”<sup>9</sup>

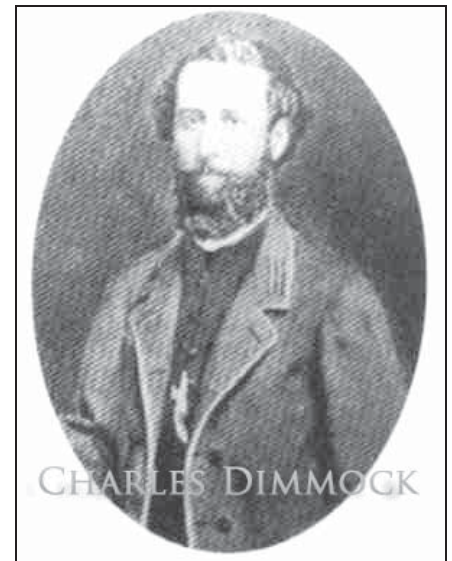
To aid Macomb in his exploratory survey of the region traversed by the OST, the War Department

authorized him to employ four assistants: one physician/naturalist, one topographer, one assistant astronomer and meteorologist, and one guide, plus the necessary number of packers, herders, and other laborers.

Without delay, Macomb sent a letter to the noted trapper Antoine Leroux of Taos, New Mexico, asking him to guide the expedition. But Leroux either declined the offer or was unavailable at the time.<sup>10</sup> Macomb immediately rushed another letter to the commander of the New Mexico Military Department asking for a military escort “to protect my party during the tour of duty,” he wrote. In determining the strength of the escort, Macomb asked the department to consider “the necessity of frequently sending all detachments to the right and left from the main party; and also the very unsettled state of affairs at this time in the Navajo country across the northern lands of which this expedition will pass.”<sup>11</sup>

Ultimately, an unknown number of Eighth Infantry soldiers supplied the military escort. Nevertheless, Macomb had asked for 300 men, for “safe escort through a wild and inhospitable tract of country, partly occupied by hostile and treacherous Indians.”<sup>12</sup>

Macomb began at once assembling an entourage of important people to carry



*National Archives*

out a scientific study of the southeastern approach to Utah Territory. Besides Newberry, his personnel included Charles H. Dimmock, cartographer and diarist; Lt. Milton M. Cogswell, commander of a detachment of the Eighth Regiment of U. S. Infantry; a Mr. Campeau, whose role was unspecified; a man named Armijo who may have functioned as Indian agent and interpreter; Albert H. Pfeiffer, “sub-agent for the Utah Indians” who facilitated Macomb’s passage through the country of the Capotes and other bands of Ute Indians; Neponocino Valdez, Ute interpreter; some unnamed Indian guides; a “Ute chief”; and three servants – Louis Wm. Dorsey, Francis P. Fisher, and James H. Vail. (Fisher assisted Macomb with astronomical observations, Dorsey and Vail carried barometers and thermometers and kept daily records of their readings. Dorsey also assisted Newberry in collecting natural history specimens.)<sup>13</sup>

In addition, several camp followers apparently joined the march as cooks and common laborers. Macomb hired a small group of men to establish a camp at a mountain pasture 12 miles east of Santa Fe as a recruiting place for the animals that would be used on the march.<sup>14</sup> To transport supplies, survey instruments,<sup>15</sup> and specimens, he purchased several pack animals from a nearby road construction team and from private individuals. Of the 77 mules Macomb acquired for the march, 32 mules and one bell mare came “from the *caballada* of Don V.S. St. Vrain.”<sup>16</sup>

Nevertheless, the challenge of finding enough pack animals to supply Macomb’s outfit caused him “unexpected delays.” The large number of animals that had been required to launch the Utah War effort had depleted local herds in New Mexico. He wrote: “There has been an unusual scarcity of mules in this section of the country for the last eighteen months; that is since the purchases were made for the use of the Army in Utah. This has greatly delayed me in that essential part of my outfit.”<sup>17</sup>

Total appropriations for the federally-funded survey amounted to twenty thousand dollars. Five hundred dollars could be spent to purchase, “for the purpose of trafficking with Indians, and compensating them for services, such articles of Indian goods as may be more desirable.” In outfitting his party, Macomb

complained that the scarcity of resources around Santa Fe drove up prices and rapidly exhausted many of the funds that had been appropriated for the expedition.<sup>18</sup>

Much of the money appropriated for the reconnaissance covered salaries. The War Department allocated a \$125 monthly salary for each of Macomb’s assistants. Newberry’s salary, however, amounted to \$150 per month. Along with the other assistants, he was entitled to travel expenses. And while on duty in the field, he could get one army ration per day.<sup>19</sup>

As a civilian geologist, Dr. Newberry’s duties involved collecting scientific specimens, including samples of zoology and botany, for the Smithsonian Institution and providing a full report on the geology and mineralogy of the region explored by the party. If necessary, he was required to supply medical and surgical attention to the men and to produce a report on the natural history of the region he examined.

On meeting Macomb, Newberry felt that the captain needed to do more homework before entering the field. Newberry wrote the assistant secretary of the Smithsonian: “Have seen Macomb, and like him very much, but as we expect he might be slightly improved. If you had him at the Smithsonian for a half day and could talk zoology into him all the time, I think he would be better prepared to go into the field than he now is.”<sup>20</sup>

The year before, Newberry had served with the Ives Expedition, which explored the Colorado River upstream some 430 miles to the head of navigation and beyond, into the Grand Canyon. Recognized as the first geologist to reach the foot of the Grand Canyon, his work was on the cutting edge of scientific study. His observations contributed to the emerging school of thought in American geology known as fluvialism.<sup>21</sup> (Fluvialism is the study of landform changes produced by the action of streams.) Exploring deep inside the lower gorge, Newberry saw firsthand the clear evidence of fluvial erosion over time. In his published report, he described the erosive power of the Colorado River.

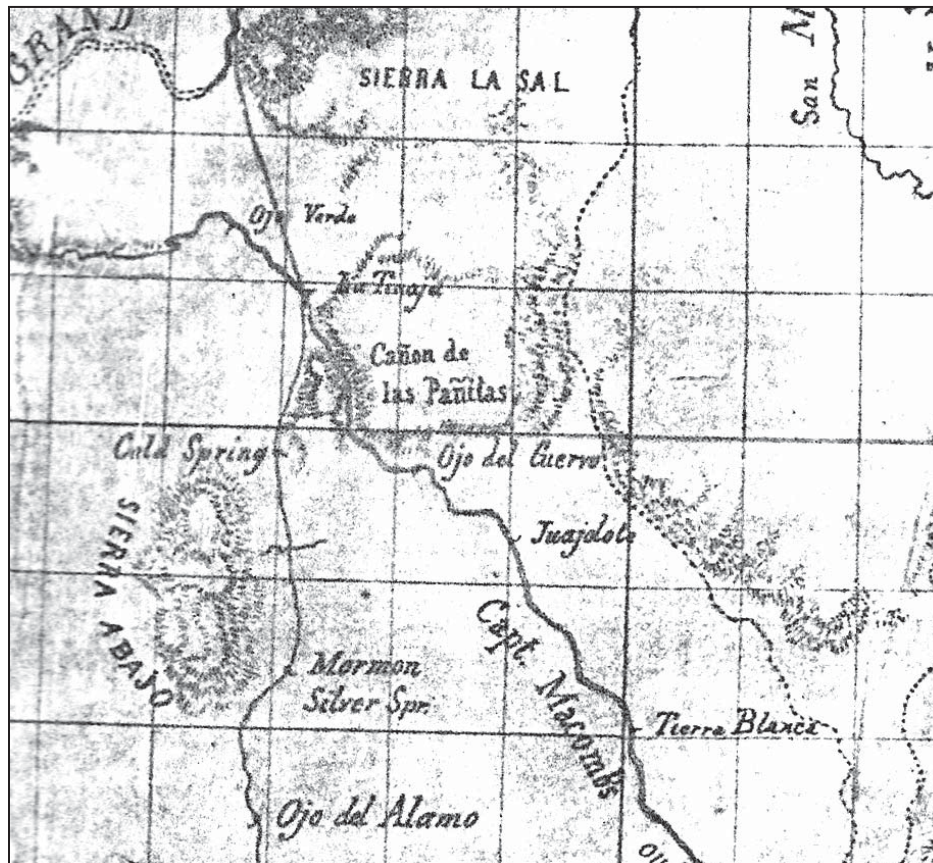
Historians James M. Aton and Robert S. McPherson have explained the significance of Newberry’s achievements. They wrote that Newberry’s landmark case study, in which he eloquently described the Colorado River and San Juan River systems as major agents of landscape change, ultimately drew international attention to the region, particularly among geologists. Aton and McPherson added that Newberry’s arguments for the fluvial theory of landform development strengthened the Darwinian view of earth’s antiquity. They further stated: Newberry’s “study of erosion helped geologists push back the age of the earth and rethink geomorphology.”<sup>22</sup>

Newberry's inquisitive, scholarly nature caused him to accept the appointment to join the Macomb expedition and explore the Colorado Plateau region close to the Grand Canyon area. For Newberry, the great unexplored region ahead offered a "repository of truth which we might gather and add to the sum total of human knowledge."<sup>23</sup>

Another member of the party, topographer Charles H. Dimmock, an experienced civil engineer, drew "an excellent sketch of the route...in one large map" at a scale of "half an inch to the mile." Moreover, as diarist of the expedition, he kept a topographical memoir of the route and mileages traveled by the pack train.<sup>24</sup> (A close examination of Dimmock's field map enables modern explorers to accurately locate the eastern leg of the OST.)

In the field the surveyors would carefully record the Hispanic and Native American names of physical features, locate prehistoric ruins, study and collect specimens of the geology,

botany, mineral resources, and fossil remains of the trail landscape. In addition, they sketched the wild and beautiful scenery along the OST, took barometer readings, made careful triangulations, and mapped their travel course.



Map of the region of exploration.  
From the *Report of the San Juan Exploring Expedition*.

Briefly, their journey beyond Santa Fe took them up the headwaters of the Rio Grande and across the Continental Divide into the upper drainage of the San Juan, a major tributary of the Colorado River. After they crossed the 37<sup>th</sup> parallel into present Colorado, they were in the eastern limits of Utah Territory, formed in

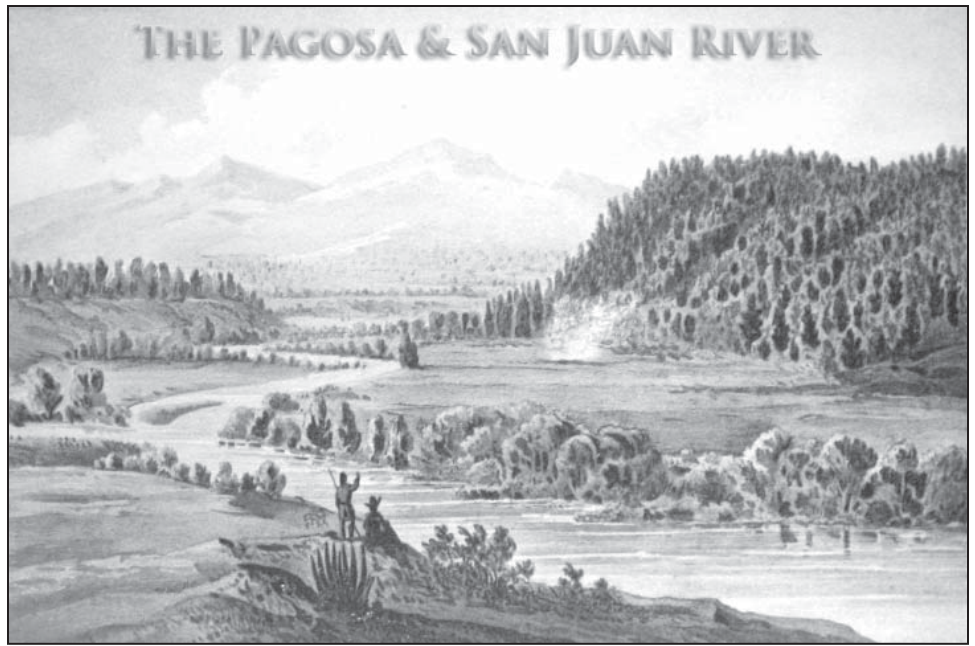
1850 and ceded to Colorado in 1861. They followed a west and northwest course across the headstreams of the San Juan and dropped into the sandstone wilderness of Utah's canyon lands, south of today's Moab to seek the legendary junction of the Colorado and Green Rivers. From the Colorado River, their homeward path ran southward to the San Juan, which drainage they followed back into New Mexico. They finally reached the upper Rio Grande Valley and returned to Santa Fe two and one-half months after the journey had begun.

Let's examine more fully the 800-mile circuitous path of the San Juan Exploring Expedition. En route to their

destination, they traced more than 200 miles of the Old Spanish Trail. The group set out from Santa Fe, presumably from nearby Fort Marcy, on July 12, 1859, for their short tour of duty. They ascended the upper Rio Grande Valley through Pojoaque to San Juan Pueblo and turned west along the Rio Chama to Abiquiu, some 50 miles north of Santa Fe.

Throughout the reconnaissance, Newberry made several side trips to explore the region's geologic wonders and gain a broader perspective of the region. Near Abiquiu, Newberry undertook his first exploratory journey away from the main party. With Indian agent Albert Pfeiffer, he trekked nine miles beyond the Rio Chama to the Cobre copper mines and gathered several fossil specimens to add to the Smithsonian collections.

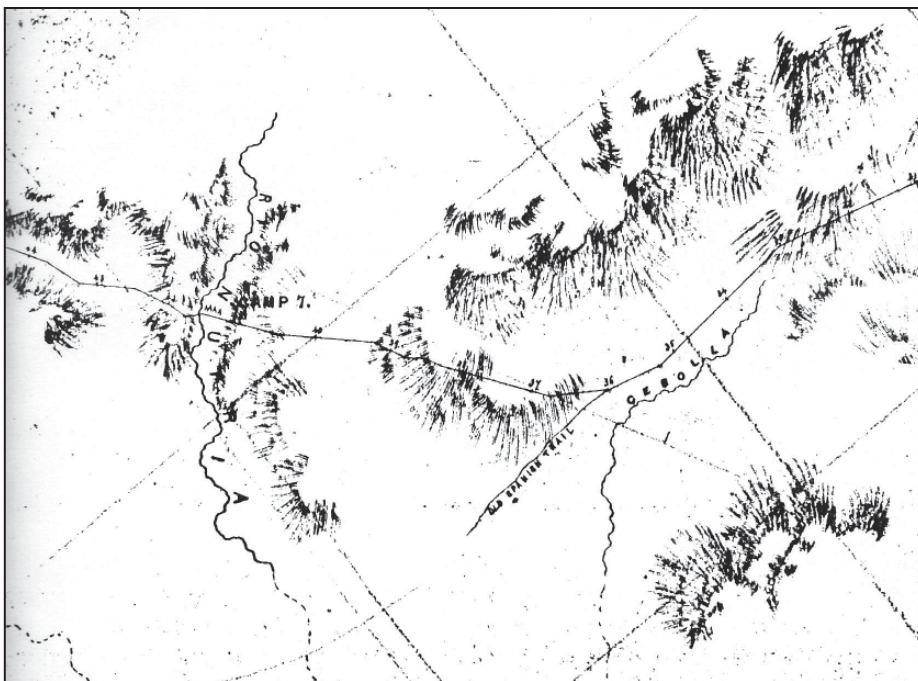
Another side trip took him to the Pedernal, or Abiquiu Peak. He wrote: "This we mostly accomplished on mule-back.... When we arrived within 500 feet of the summit, we left our mules and commenced the ascent on foot. This part of the mountain is very steep, and the upper 200 feet is a perpendicular wall of trap-



The Pagosa and San Juan River.  
From the *Report of the San Juan Exploring Expedition*.

rock. The summit we found to form a *cuchillo*, a narrow, knife-like ridge, bounded on every side by vertical precipices. Its height above sea is about 9,000 feet."<sup>25</sup>

Beyond Abiquiu the survey team pursued the OST pathway more than 30 miles to the Rio Cebolla. En route they stopped at the historic crossing of the Rio Chama. Along the Cebolla, the party left the OST. On their field map Dimmock carefully marked the parting of the ways.<sup>26</sup> Marching northward, they passed over the Continental Divide at Horse Lake, straddling the eastern edge of today's Jicarilla Apache Indian Reservation. Macomb's men then continued to Pagosa Hot Springs on the San Juan River. Newberry noted that the hot springs were "well known, even famous, among the Indian tribes, but up to the time of our visit never having been seen by the whites." He accurately predicted that in the future "it will become a celebrated resort."<sup>27</sup>



Dimmock's field map. From the *Report of the San Juan Exploring Expedition*.

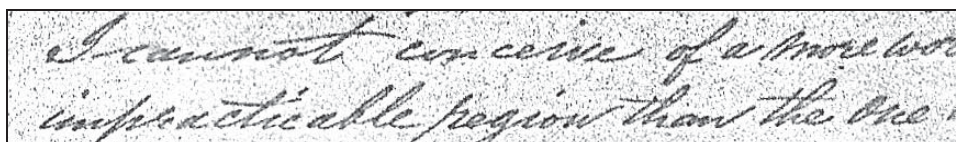
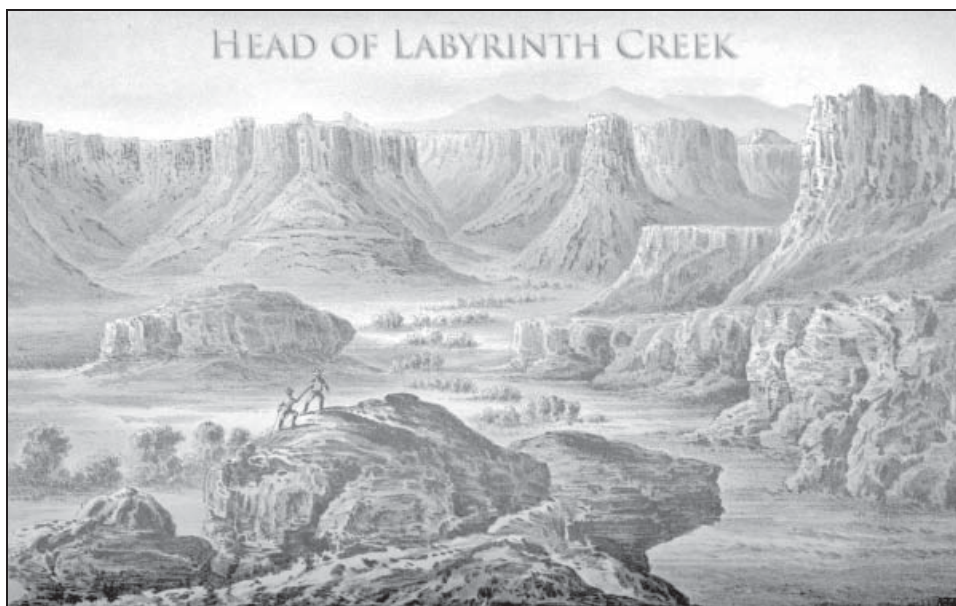
Tasting the water, Newberry wrote: “When cooled, the water has a strong mineral taste, though rather agreeable than otherwise. It was freely drank [sic] by all our party while in this vicinity with no unpleasant effects, but, on the contrary, a decided sharpening of the appetite.”<sup>28</sup>

From the hot springs, the party turned westward and passed the rock sentinel Piedra Parada. Beyond the monolith, they crossed the major tributaries of the San Juan to rejoin the OST near the Rio Florida in present southwestern Colorado, then Utah Territory. Once again, Dimmock carefully recorded the OST route on his field map.<sup>29</sup>

Frequent poor weather throughout the march had, however, slowed their pace to a crawl. Macomb muttered: “The progress of the march has been very considerably delayed by the necessity of waiting at some points for clear weather to get an opportunity to make the requisite astronomical observations. We have had more rain than I have seen during my whole residence at Santa Fe.”<sup>30</sup>

On the Rio Florida, the group encamped at the base of the La Plata Mountains; later the area of rich mineral operations. Ironically, the party found no metallic evidence to suggest that the nearby mountains merited the Spanish name *La Plata*, or Silver Mountains. Dimmock wrote: “...vainly the eye peers among naked, hopeless crags for some gleaming of that metal the name

course across the Great Sage Plain to the Colorado Plateau and Utah’s canyon country. Newberry, however, left the main party and hiked to the top of a rampart on the north face of Mesa Verde to investigate the surrounding countryside. Although he did not reach the celebrated ruins of the present park, he recorded its Hispanic name.



Labyrinth Creek.

From the *Report of the San Juan Exploring Expedition*.

Nevertheless, Newberry found important prehistoric sites throughout the San Juan River Basin. He noted that, “From the time we struck the San Juan we were never out of sight of ruins.”<sup>32</sup> He wrote the first scientific descriptions of the crumbling remains near the Rio Dolores and the Yellowjacket

Pueblo Ruins in Colorado, as well as the ancient ruins of Anasazi Ruins National Monument in New Mexico.

From the rim of the Great Sage Plain in southeastern Utah, the group descended into the wild, red rock region east of today’s Canyonlands National Park. The men were awed by the “intricate mass of irregular bluffs, detached

of the Sierra indicates, until heavy and wearied it sinks in the conviction that the steel-clad Hidalgo must have seen with an eye of faith, strengthened by avarice, the inaccessible hoard deep buried in the bowels of the grand old mountain.”<sup>31</sup>

Continuing along the OST, the expedition passed north of Mesa Verde, and traced a northwest

buttes & sinuous canyons” whittled by nature’s forces.<sup>33</sup> Camping near the base of the landmark rock, Casa Colorado, they drank from the waters carved into its sandstone base.

Ten miles west of Casa Colorado, near where they diverged from the OST, they set out on a historic quest to find the legendary intersection of the Green and Colorado Rivers. About the OST, Macomb wrote: “The greater part of our journey from Abiquiu to this point was by the old Spanish trail, which has not heretofore been accurately laid down upon any map. This trail is much talked of as having been the route of commerce between California and Mexico in the days of the old Spanish rule, but it seems to have been superseded by the routes to the north and south of it, which have been opened to modern enterprise.”<sup>34</sup>

Leaving the main body, including the military escort, in camp, nine armed men embarked on a scouting trip to the junction of the Green and Colorado Rivers. In the party were Macomb, Lt. Cogswell, Dimmock, Newberry, Mr. Campeau, three servants, and an Indian guide or “Ute chief” who, according to Dimmock, “blended with the lore of his native soil.” The route was so treacherous that Newberry wrote of their “horrible time generally.” Thickets and quicksand slowed their march. Along the way, Newberry found

a “canon formerly inhabited,” still possessing “several stone houses in cliffs.”<sup>35</sup>

Dimmock noted that the route to the confluence was “by a path the trembling mule hesitates to pursue.”<sup>36</sup> Macomb added: “...it is fortunate that no attempt was made to bring forward our pack train as we must have lost many mules by it, and moreover there was not sufficient pasture for the few animals that we had with us.”<sup>37</sup>

En route to the confluence, Newberry described the Labyrinth of the Colorado in the heart of today’s Canyonlands National Park: “...the surface was diversified by columns, spires, castles, and battlement towers of colossal but often beautiful proportions, closely resembling elaborate structures of art, but in effect far surpassing the most imposing monuments of human skill. In the southwest was a long line of spires of white stone, standing on red bases, thousands in number, but so slender as to recall the most delicate carving in ivory or the fairy architecture of some Gothic cathedral.... Their appearance was so strange and beautiful as to call out exclamation and delight from our party.”<sup>38</sup>

Macomb, however, took a contrary view. Repulsed by the wild landscape, apparently since it lacked exploitable resources, Macomb wrote: “I cannot conceive of a more worthless

and impracticable region than the one we now found ourselves in. I doubt not there are repetitions and *varieties* of it for hundreds of miles down the canon of the Great Colorado.”<sup>39</sup>

The scouting party pressed onward to an elevated point overlooking the region near the confluence of the Green and Colorado Rivers to make observations. The temperature reached 92 degrees Fahrenheit in the shade. “Stripping off nearly all our clothing,” wrote Newberry, the party climbed a butte “overhanging” the Colorado River. Newberry continued: “...After two hours of most arduous labor, we succeeded in reaching the summit.”<sup>40</sup> To the south they could see “The Loop” of the Colorado River some four miles distant.<sup>41</sup> Here Lt. Cogswell and Newberry suffered “from heat and over exertion.” At that moment Newberry was busy making a panoramic sketch of the area. He wrote: “...Before I completed the circle of the horizon I was seized with dreadful headache, giddiness, and nausea, and, alone as I then was, had the greatest difficulty in rejoining my companions.”<sup>42</sup>

At this point on August 23, 1859, the labyrinth of stone monuments, mesas, spires and needles in today’s Canyonlands National Park blocked the expedition’s path to their final destination – the confluence of the Green and Colorado rivers – by a mere eight miles. A



The Cabezon.  
From the *Report of the San Juan Exploring Expedition*.

disappointed Macomb would report that “no direct supply routes through to southern Utah suitable for military purposes” existed.<sup>43</sup> As Newberry put it, the deep river canyons were “impassable to everything but the winged bird.”<sup>44</sup>

(Today’s explorers, who wish to hike the expedition’s route firsthand, will find precise locations through this rugged and dangerous terrain in the late Fran Barnes’ publications, based largely on Terby Barnes’ yeoman research.)<sup>45</sup>

On their homeward march, Newberry spent two days “with several assistants” feverishly extricating fossils at the sauropod dinosaur site “in the face of the cliff, about 250 feet above its base.” Handicapped by tools that “were too light for such heavy

work,” he lamented that they “were compelled to leave [behind] many bones.”<sup>46</sup> The men packed the fossils on the backs of mules, which in turn hauled them back to Santa Fe.<sup>47</sup> From there, they were shipped by wagon to Washington, D.C., via Fort Leavenworth. Unfortunately, when the expedition’s report was published it lacked a report on the bone fossils and, with the exception of two brief studies issued several years later, the discovery faded in history. (The partial skeleton, dubbed *Dystrophaeus viaemalae*, is in the paleontology collections of the Smithsonian Institution. Since its rediscovery by Fran and Terby Barnes, Utah’s state paleontologist has recovered more of the dinosaur to study its scientific significance.)<sup>48</sup>

From the dinosaur quarry, the expedition’s return trip veered

from the OST. It ran through Peters Canyon along present U.S. Highway 191 to a point south of present Blanding where they swung eastward and descended Recapture Creek to the San Juan.

At the San Juan River, some 50 miles east of its junction with the Colorado, Newberry scoped out the striking scenery to the west and south. He wrote: There “are many castle-like buttes and slender towers, none of which can be less than 1,000 feet in height, their sides absolutely perpendicular, their forms wonderful imitations of the structures of human art. Illuminated by the setting sun, the outlines of these singular objects came out sharp and distinct, with such exact similitude of art, and contrast with nature as usually displayed, that we could hardly resist the conviction that we beheld the walls and towers of some Cyclopean city hitherto undiscovered in this far-off region.”<sup>49</sup>

From the vicinity of present Bluff, Utah, the expedition turned up the San Juan along its north bank, which they followed for 120 miles. Upstream, Newberry observed the Shiprock formation: He wrote: “On the south side of the river, now quite near to us, stand out in strong relief the picturesque basaltic pinnacles of ‘The Needles....’ This is a mass of erupted rock, rising with perpendicular sides from the middle of the valley. From all points, where seen

by us, it has the appearance of an immense cathedral, of rich umber-brown color, terminating in two spires. Its altitude is about 1,700 feet above its base.”<sup>50</sup>

Opposite the mouth of Largo Canyon, Newberry stated that the men forded the San Juan “with no little danger, the strong current and deep water sweeping down some of the mules, which we recovered with difficulty.” The group then ascended Largo Canyon for several miles and crossed overland to Jemez Pueblo. In the vicinity of Jemez, Newberry described the view of the Cabezón: “In the open valley of the Puerco stand many picturesque trap buttes, having a general resemblance to the Needles of the San Juan. Of these the most conspicuous, called by the Mexicans the Cabazon [sic], resembles in its outline a Spanish sombrero, but it is of gigantic dimensions, being at least 1,500 feet in height.”<sup>51</sup>

Beyond Jemez Pueblo, the expedition continued overland, eventually reaching Santa Fe in early October. On his arrival in Santa Fe, Macomb expedited a letter to the War Department reporting “the safe return of my party to this place, from the Exploration of the Rio San Juan &c.”<sup>52</sup> At Santa Fe, Macomb was directed “to reduce my party and come in to Washington to prepare my report.”<sup>53</sup>

Macomb began at once packing the expedition’s instruments and specimens for shipment

to Washington. To settle his accounts as fiscal agent, he sold at public auction and private sales “property belonging to the appropriations for ‘Surveys for Military Defences &c.’”<sup>54</sup> This included: burros (\$20 each), U.S. army trousers for mounted troops (\$4.92 pair), spurs (\$1.10 pair), lariat (\$1 each), saddle (\$6 each), rifles (\$5 each), screwdriver (46 cents), canteen (48 cents), bootees or army footwear (\$1.88 pair), screw top tin cans (50 cents each), and several apothecary items, including mercurial ointment, Epsom salts, adhesive plaster, citric acid, iodine, camphor, arsenic, and opium. (Opium was used to treat diarrhea and dysentery.) On December 8, 1859, en route to Washington, Macomb stopped at Fort Leavenworth and sold 23 mules, one bell mare, and harnesses to “Falkerson & Elliott” for \$1,185. Total sales of property “no longer required for the use of the Expn.” came to \$3684.39.<sup>55</sup>

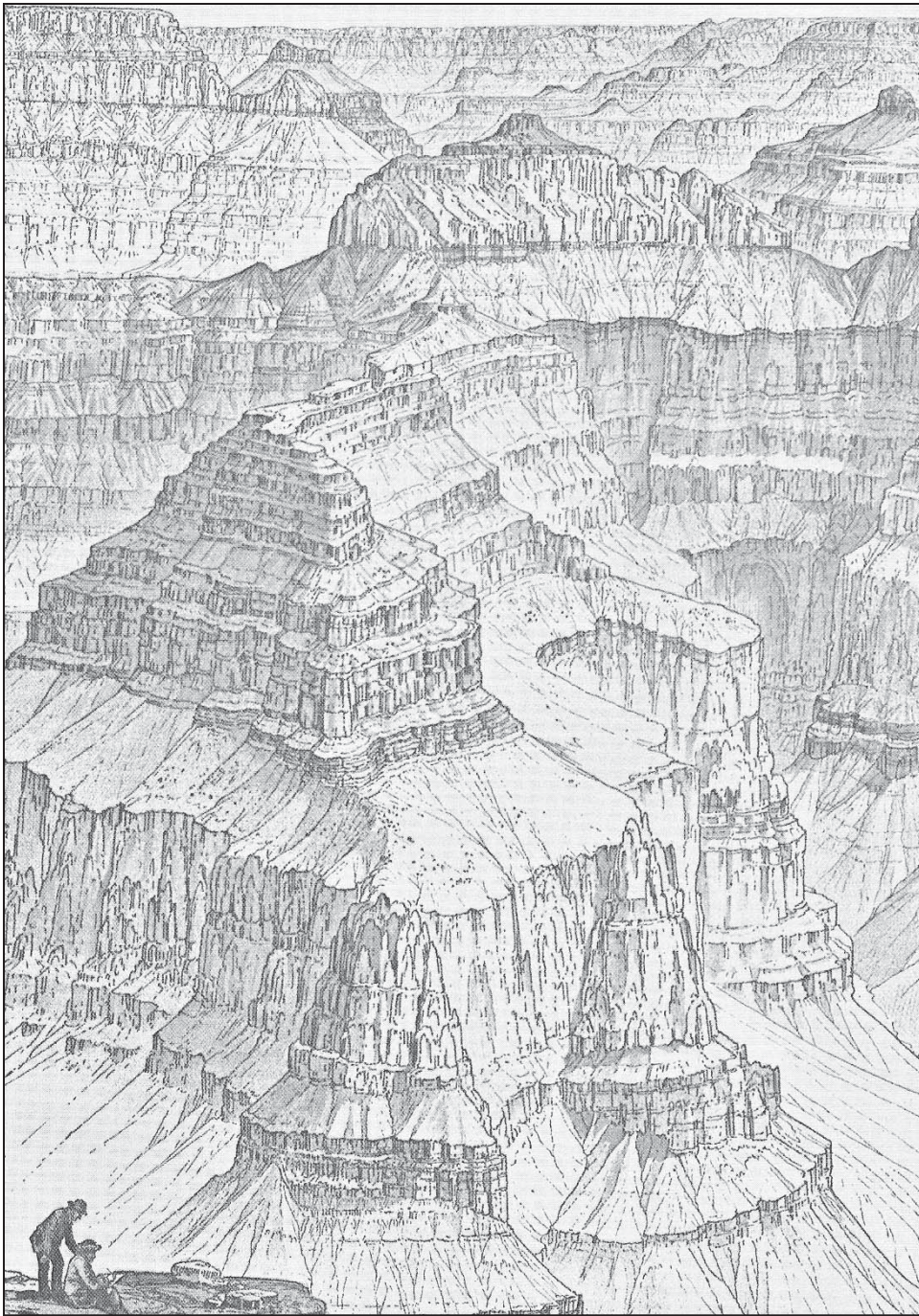
Macomb arrived in Washington in late December, where he stayed for more than a year to prepare his report of the expedition.

In February 1860, Newberry sent Dr. Joseph Leidy, Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, “three boxes of bones from the Jurassic rocks of southn Utah.” In his letters to Dr. Leidy, Newberry asked him to write an article on the fossils to include in the expedition’s published report.<sup>56</sup> For unexplained

reasons, Leidy failed to do so. The following year, Macomb asked the War Department for additional funds to make a chemical analysis of the mineral ores “now deposited at the Smithsonian Institution,” and to make illustrations of specimens gathered on the expedition which he hoped to include in his report. He reported the discovery of gold in the region: “A new interest has lately been given to the scene of our exploration from the fact that gold has been discovered, a short distance northward of it, in such quantities as to induce a considerable immigration thither, and already we hear of the establishing of a settlement at the ‘Pagosa’ near our upper crossing of the San Juan.”<sup>57</sup> Nothing came of Macomb’s petition.

Following their return to Washington, the explorers’ energies were diverted when the Civil War began and drew the attention away from the summations of the expedition. The three principal explorers left their homes to serve in the war.

When the publication of the expedition’s findings was delayed, Newberry lamented: “Much most valuable information in regard to the far West has been lost to the country and to the world.”<sup>58</sup> During the war, he served with the United States Sanitary Commission, a private relief agency, where his medical skills could be utilized.



Study of fluvial erosion.  
From the *Report of the San Juan Exploring Expedition*.

In the war, Macomb and Dimmock broadened the skills they had developed during the San Juan expedition. Macomb served as Aid-de-camp to General George McClellan. As the war progressed, the Union Army placed him in charge of

the Balloon Corps for aerial reconnaissance and he produced detailed maps of battle zones. At war's end, he was brevetted a colonel for meritorious service.<sup>59</sup>

Although a northerner by birth, Dimmock joined the

Confederate cause. His engineering background qualified him to design the "Dimmock Line," a 10-mile length of trenches, earthen walls and artillery batteries that zigzagged around Petersburg. (Slave labor and free black labor was used to build the line.) Dimmock died at Richmond in 1863 and in his honor a Southern composer dedicated a marching quick step.<sup>60</sup>

Following the war, Newberry became a professor at New York's Columbia School of Mines and continued his distinguished career in science. Macomb, on the other hand, remained a topographical engineer and retired from service in 1882. He died in 1889 and was buried in Arlington National Cemetery.<sup>61</sup>

Before the printing of the expedition report, Prussian-born cartographer F. W. von Egloffstein, who had been with Ives in the Grand Canyon, issued the official map of the expedition separately under his name in 1864 to capitalize on the mining activity in the San Juan Mountains of Colorado. The Macomb expedition map plotted the easiest routes into the region and helped debunk the geographical myths of that time.<sup>62</sup> In addition, the *Preliminary Map of the Surveys in Colorado...1873*, made under the command of Lieut. E. H. Ruffner, stated that "use is made of ...the topography given by...Macomb in 1859." When

published, the final report of the expedition provided valuable information for prospectors traveling to Colorado's mineral-rich Rockies and for cattlemen who supplied the miners with beef, which results were not part of the original goals of the expedition.

Newberry's "Geological Report" comprises the bulk of the final work. He contributed more than 100 pages to the report, while Macomb wrote less than 10. Moreover, Newberry submitted a 13-page report on the carboniferous and Triassic fossils he collected on the expedition. (The final edition also contained a 14-page report by F. B. Meek on cretaceous fossils gathered by Newberry's team and a map of the region compiled by F. W. von Egloffstein.)<sup>63</sup>

The Egloffstein map, issued in Macomb's report, is "one of the most beautiful maps ever published by the Army," wrote Carl Wheat. A modern map seller has noted that the map "demonstrates the culmination in the process developed by Egloffstein to convey the idea of altitude." In addition, it represents "a remarkable 3-dimensional realism unmatched in the period [and] it is... the first to correctly establish the relationship between the San Juan and Colorado Rivers."<sup>64</sup>

Adding to his contributions to the school of fluvialism – again, the study of landform

changes produced by the action of streams – and his studies of ancient ruins, Newberry laid the groundwork for more focused scientific studies of the mountain ranges in the Colorado Plateau province, according to geologist Bill Chenoweth. Newberry accurately noted that "the pre-carboniferous rocks he had observed in the Grand Canyon were not present in the Naciminto Mountains," wrote Chenoweth.<sup>65</sup>

While Newberry was attached to the San Juan Exploring Expedition he correctly observed that "the Rocky Mountains had undergone several periods of uplift and erosion, but the greatest period of uplift occurred between the close of the Cretaceous and the beginning of the Miocene," explained Chenoweth. Moreover, in his report Newberry keenly observed that the volcanic rocks in New Mexico's Mt. Taylor had indeed, as Chenoweth stated, "been deposited at various times beginning in the Middle Tertiary and continuing into the present epoch."<sup>66</sup>

Eventually, near the close of the Reconstruction Period, the Secretary of War approved the printing of 1500 copies of the expedition's report. Author Ann Zwinger has eloquently described the now-rare publication: "It is a handsome large-format volume an inch thick, corners and spine of leather, gold lettered, endpapers feather-patterned in maroon,

dark blue, cream, beige, and gold; twenty-two plates, eleven of which are colored, of landscape vistas and fossils, meticulously rendered. A book of quality and substance."<sup>67</sup>

For Old Spanish Trail researchers, the scientific observations and discoveries of the San Juan Exploring Expedition, as well as its cartographic contributions, give us new interpretations of the region surrounding the eastern leg of the Old Spanish Trail. Moreover, it sharpens our view of the trail itself and its grand legacy.

The expedition accomplished two important original goals: to explore the region traversed by the OST and to map the route of travel. Those goals left unrealized included: finding the exact point where the Green and Colorado Rivers merged and locating a suitable supply route through the region of the confluence to the southern settlements of Utah. It evolved from a political and military premise into a primarily scientific, geological study. It also made considerable contributions to the field of paleontology, and it set the stage for future archeological and geological studies of the region. Furthermore, according to Aton and McPherson, "It ultimately stimulated commercial activity and facilitated settlement."<sup>68</sup>



\* Much of the success of the archival research is owing to the contributions of Terby Barnes of Moab. The author also acknowledges the editing done by John L. Jackson of Salt Lake City.

1. Records of the War Department, Office, Chief of Engineers. Explorations and Surveys. Selected Documents Relating to Captain John N. Macomb, 1860. Capt. A.A. Humphreys to Capt. John N. Macomb, April 6, 1859, microfilm of ms, National Archives.
2. Newberry helped revise American geology with his scientific studies of the Colorado Plateau region. See James M. Aton and Robert S. McPherson. *River Flowing from the Sunrise: An Environmental History of the Lower San Juan*. Logan: Utah State University Press, 2000, p. 50.
3. Historical Collections, Library, College of Physicians of Philadelphia. John S. Newberry to Dr. Joseph Leidy, January 17, 1860; John S. Newberry to Dr. Joseph Leidy, February 8, 1860. See also Macomb, *Report of the San Juan Exploring Expedition*, p. 91.
4. Records of the War Department. Capt. John N. Macomb to Capt. A.A. Humphreys, War Department Office of Explorations and Surveys, July 7, 1859. "Monthly Report of June 1859."
5. J. H. Colton & Co. *Territories of New Mexico and Utah*. New York: J. H. Colton & Co., 1855.
6. C. Gregory Crampton. "Mormon Colonization in Southern Utah and in adjacent parts of Arizona and Nevada." unpublished ms, 1965, p.74.
7. Records of the War Department. Capt. A.A. Humphreys to Capt. John S. Newberry, April 6, 1859.
8. Raymond Wheeler to C. Gregory

Crampton, February 13, 1977.

The information included "a part of the results of the explorations of Lt. Ives...some portions of the surrounding country as obtained from other sources, and also a sketch made from a reconnaissance by Maj. [Henry] L. Kendrick of the San Juan River between the mouths of the Chaco and the Chelly...."

9. Records of the War Department. "Memorandum to accompany a map furnished to Captain J. N. Macomb, Topl. Engs., for his assistance in the exploration of the San Juan River &c.," [by Lt. Joseph C. Ives], p. 7.
10. Records of the War Department. Capt. John N. Macomb to Antoine Leroux, May 28, 1859.
11. Records of the War Department. Capt. John N. Macomb to Lieut. I. D. Wilkins, Military Department of New Mexico, May 28, 1859. Macomb took precautions to avoid the tragedies faced by John W. Gunnison and John C. Frémont on their overland expeditions. He set out on his expedition in the summer season to prevent being trapped by heavy snow. He also took along a military escort to keep from being attacked by indigenous tribes.
12. "The escort for passing through the region to the North and West of Fort Defiance should not be less than three hundred men. There should accompany the expedition an experienced 'mountain man' as a guide, in addition to the persons enumerated in the preliminary estimate." Records of the War Department. Capt. John N. Macomb to Capt. A.A. Humphreys, Corps of Topographical Engineers, U. S. Army, in charge of Bureau of Explorations and Surveys, War Department, Washington, D.C.

October 26, 1858. Microfilm of ms, National Archives. On June 4, 1859, Newberry wrote Spencer F. Baird, assistant secretary of the Smithsonian Institute: "Macomb has made application for 300 men as escort so we shall probably be safe, but will be restricted in our movements." F. A. Barnes, *The 1859 Macomb Expedition into Utah Territory*. Moab, Utah: Canyon Country Publications, 2003, p. 79.

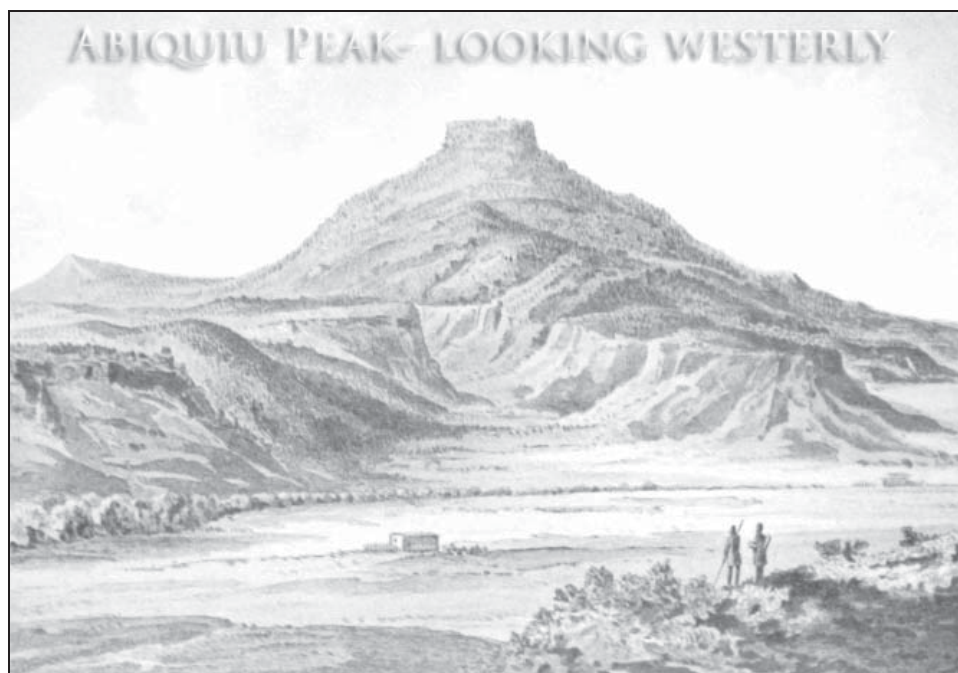
13. John N. Macomb. *Report of the Exploring Expedition, from Santa Fe, New Mexico, to the Junction of the Grand and Green Rivers of the Great Colorado River of the West, in 1859,...with Geological Report by Prof. J. S. Newberry*. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1876: pp. 5, 7, 97; Charles H. Dimmock, Dimmock Field Notes, Macomb Expedition of 1859, p. 12. Library of Congress, Manuscripts Division, Rodgers Family File, Series I, vol. 17 (Miscellany) folder entitled, "San Juan Exploring Expedition Topographical Memoir, ca. 1856-58." See also F.A. Barnes, *The 1859 Macomb Expedition in Utah Territory*, p. 85; F.A. Barnes, "Early Explorations of Utah," *Canyon Legacy* (Spring 1991), pp. 3-4. Note: Neponocino Valdez also served as guide on the E.H. Bergman reconnaissance of 1867.
14. Records of the War Department. See account of June 21, 1859.
15. Instruments sent by the "Topographical Bureau" in Washington D.C. to Capt Macomb included: portable transit, sextant, telescope, artificial [horizon], sidereal box chronometers, pocket chronometer, prismatic compasses, odometers, pocket compasses, reconnoitering glass, cistern

- barometers, syphon barometers. Records of the War Department. Capt. A.A. Humphreys to Secretary of War John B. Floyd, Washington, D.C. April 6, 1859.
16. Records of the War Department. "Mules or other Public Animals, Santa Fe, N.M., June 1859, San Juan Expedn."
17. Records of the War Department. Capt. John N. Macomb to Capt. A.A. Humphreys, July 7, 1859. "Monthly Report of June 1859."
18. Records of the War Department. Capt. A.A. Humphreys, Office of Explorations and Surveys, to Capt. John N. Macomb, April 6, 1859; Capt. John N. Macomb to Capt. A.A. Humphreys, July 7, 1859.
19. Records of the War Department. [Joseph C. Ives], Office of Explorations and Surveys, to John S. Newberry, April 28, 1859.
20. John S. Newberry to Spencer F. Baird, June 4, 1859, in F.A. Barnes, *Canyonlands National Park: Early History and First Descriptions*. Moab, Utah: Canyon Country Publications, 1988, p. 114.
21. Aton and McPherson, *River flowing from the Sunrise*, p. 50.
22. *Ibid*.
23. Macomb, *Report of the San Juan Exploring Expedition*, p. 84.
24. "In ten years experience, as a Civil Engineer, I have been enabled to become familiar with every department of that profession. What talent I may naturally have possessed has been cultivated by Map drawing & Topographical sketching. If credentials of proficiency are desired, they will be presented." Chas. H. Dimmock, Baltimore, Maryland, to Mr. R. Drinkard, Esq. April 25, 1859. A War Department regulation prevented Dimmock and his associates from publishing their findings or experiences in the field.
25. Macomb, *Report of the San Juan Exploring Expedition*, p. 70.
26. Charles H. Dimmock, "Map of Explorations and Surveys in New Mexico and Utah, made under the Direction of the Hon. John B. Floyd, Secretary of War by Capt. J. N. Macomb, Topographical Engineers." (1859) MS. National Archives, Record Group No. 77.
27. Macomb, *Report of the San Juan Exploring Expedition*, p. 74.
28. *Ibid*, p. 75.
29. Charles H. Dimmock, "Map of Explorations and Surveys in New Mexico and Utah."
30. Records of the War Department. Capt. John N. Macomb to Capt. A.A. Humphreys, August 5, 1859.
31. Charles H. Dimmock, Dimmock Field Notes, Macomb Expedition of 1859, p. 7.
32. Macomb, *Report of the San Juan Exploring Expedition*, p. 109.
33. Steven K. Madsen. "Retracing the Spanish Trail: Across the Colorado Plateau." *Spanish Traces*. Spring, 1998: p. 7.
34. Macomb, *Report of the San Juan Exploring Expedition*, pp. 5-6.
35. F.A. Barnes, *Canyonlands National Park*, p. 32.; Charles H. Dimmock, Dimmock Field Notes, Macomb Expedition of 1859, p. 11.
36. Charles H. Dimmock, Dimmock Field Notes, Macomb Expedition of 1859, p. 11.
37. Macomb, *Report of the San Juan Exploring Expedition*, p. 6.
38. *Ibid*, p. 94.
39. *Ibid*, p. 6.
40. *Ibid*, p. 96.
41. F.A. Barnes, *The 1859 Macomb Expedition in Utah Territory*, p. 93.
42. Macomb, *Report of the San Juan Exploring Expedition*, p. 97; F.A. Barnes, *Canyonlands National Park*, p. 40.
43. C. Gregory Crampton. *Standing Up Country: The Canyon Lands of Utah and Arizona*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1964, p. 64; F.A. Barnes, *Canyonlands National Park*, p. 130.
44. Macomb, *Report of the San Juan Exploring Expedition*, p. 97.
45. F.A. Barnes. *Hiking the Historic Route of the 1859 Macomb Expedition*. Moab, Utah: Canyon Country Publications, 1989; F. A. Barnes, *Canyonlands National Park*; F.A. Barnes, *The 1859 Macomb Expedition in Utah Territory*.
46. Macomb, *Report of the San Juan Exploring Expedition*, p. 91.
47. College of Physicians of Philadelphia. Letters to Dr. Joseph Leidy.
48. E.D. Cope. "On a Dinosaurian from the Trias of Utah." *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, 1877; F.V. Huene. "Dystrophaeus-viaemalae Cope in neur Beleuchtung." *Separat-Abdruck aus dem Neuen Jahrbuch fur Mineralogie, Geologie und Palaeontologie*. Stuttgart, Germany, 1904; F.A. Barnes. "Utah's Early Place in Paleontological History." *Canyon Legacy*, Summer 1990: p. 12.
49. Macomb, *Report of the San Juan Exploring Expedition*, p. 104.
50. *Ibid*, p. 107.
51. *Ibid*, p. 117.
52. Records of the War Department. Capt. John N. Macomb to Capt. A.A. Humphreys, October 3, 1859.
53. Macomb, *Report of the San Juan Exploring Expedition*, p. 7.
54. Capt. John N. Macomb to "Quartermaster General, U.S. Army, Washington, D.C.," December 22, 1859.

55. "The United States in ac. with J. N. M. for San Juan Exploration," [3<sup>rd</sup> quarter, 1859]. Microfilm "NNMO-309(25)," National Archives.
56. College of Physicians of Philadelphia. John S. Newberry to Dr. Joseph Leidy, February 8, 1860; July 15, 1861; and September 6, 1861.
57. Records of the War Department. Capt. John N. Macomb to Capt. A.A. Humphreys, February 15, 1861.
58. Macomb, *Report of the San Juan Exploring Expedition*, p. 13.
59. Wm. H. Powell, *List of Officers of the United States from 1779 to 1900...* Compiled from the Official Records. New York: L.R. Hamersly & Co., 1900, p. 448; Francis B. Heitman, *Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army from its organization, September 29, 1789, to March 2, 1903*. Vol. 1, reprint ed. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1965, p. 680.
60. Francis Buck, "Le Carnival de Venise, Quick Step. Composed and Arranged for Piano Forte and respectfully Dedicated to Capt. Charles Dimmock (of Richmond Va.)" Richmond, Virginia: Geo. Dunn & Company, n.d. <http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/sheetmusic/conf/conf00/conf0011/>. Accessed May 17, 2006; George W. Cullum, *Biographical Register of the Officers and Graduates of the U.S. Military Academy, from 1802 to 1867*.

- vol. I, revised ed., New York: James Miller, Publisher, 1879, pp.212-213.
61. Arlington National Cemetery Website: John Navarre Macomb, Jr., Colonel, United States Army. <http://www.arlingtoncemetery.net/jnmacomb.htm>. Accessed August 14, 2003.
62. F. W. von Egloffstein, *Map of Explorations and Surveys, in New Mexico and Utah made under the direction of the Secretary of War by*

of Capt. Macomb. Newberry wrote a separate report on carboniferous and Triassic fossils. Teeth, ferns, leaves, and fruit are among the fossils illustrated and described by Newberry. At the "Cobre," the old copper-mine nine miles north of Abiquiu, Newberry discovered "great numbers of fossil plants," including trunks and branches of trees. Newberry also named a fossil, "Otozamites Macombii," after Macomb.



Cerro Pedernal. From the *Report of the San Juan Exploring Expedition*.

- Capt. J. N. Macomb, Topographical Engineers, assisted by C. H. Dimmock, C. Engineer, 1860*. Washington, D.C., 1864.
63. F. B. Meek wrote his report in 1860, which he updated in November 1875, just prior to the publication of the full report. His material included "descriptions and illustrations of eleven new species of Cretaceous fossils." He described silicified trunks of trees, leaves, vegetable remains, mollusks, oysters. Meek named one fossil, "Prionocyclus Macombi," in honor

64. Old World Auctions. "Lot #165 – Map of Explorations and Surveys in New Mexico and Utah..." [http://www.oldworldauctions.com/auction106/detail.asp?owa\\_id=2145212957](http://www.oldworldauctions.com/auction106/detail.asp?owa_id=2145212957). Accessed April 13, 2005. See also: Wheat, *Mapping the Trans-Mississippi West*, #983; William H. Goetzmann, *Army Exploration in the American West, 1803-1863*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1979, p. 396.
65. William L. Chenoweth. "John Strong Newberry: Pioneer Colorado Plateau Geologist." *Canyon Legacy*, no. 24, Summer 1995: p. 3.
66. *Ibid*.
67. Ann Zwinger, "a worthless and impracticable region..." *Plateau*, vol. 52, no. 2, 1980: p. 25.
68. Aton and McPherson, *River Flowing from the Sunrise*, p. 50.

## The Actual Objectives of the Domínguez and Escalante Expedition

by Edward Leo Lyman

The Domínguez-Escalante expedition of 1776 was the first known Hispanic exploration to the Green River and into present day Utah. Because trade was not among their purposes, the heroic venture essentially falls outside the parameters established by Congress for present official recognition and study of their contributions to the historic Old Spanish Trail routes. Despite this, in a very real sense the expedition opened the eastern segment of two variants of that important trail, and thus the party members deserve more recognition than has been offered by this organization (OSTA), Congress, and the government agency officials and volunteers who are currently working to authenticate and publicize the historic routes.

On the other hand, it is the primary purpose of this paper to argue that it was probably never the expedition leaders' major objective to discover and follow a new overland route from New Mexico to the recently-established Franciscan mission at Monterey, California.<sup>1</sup> That was certainly the intention of the sponsoring officials of New Spain, but the missionary friars were far more committed to goals of seeking new and promising peoples among whom they could establish Roman Catholic missions. Domínguez and

Escalante certainly accomplished this major purpose. But for a number of reasons, perhaps including the failure to establish the desired communication route, New Mexican and other officials never seriously supported efforts to establish missions so far from those already flourishing in present New Mexico, Arizona, and California.

Francisco Silvestre Velez Escalante was born in 1749 in Treceno, Santander, Spain. He became a Franciscan in his late teens in Mexico City and arrived in New Mexico sometime in the early 1770's. Silvestre, who almost never used his first name, would have been but 27 years old during his most notable exploration venture. This was preceded in 1775 by an investigative journey due west to the Hopi pueblos, including Oraibe. He found these otherwise impressive Native Americans to be rather sullen and unreceptive to his religious message. While there, he also met a young Havasupai Indian who helped him draw a map of the route to his people's homeland west of the main section of the Grand Canyon.<sup>2</sup>

At approximately the same time, another Franciscan with similar wanderlust, Francisco Hermenegildo Garcés, left his base at San Xavier del Bac—the mission near Tuscon, Arizona, that was founded by another great missionary explorer, Eusebio Kino. Garcés visited members of the Hualapai nation residing

near present Kingman, Arizona. He noticed they used Hopi shirts and Castilian awls, doubtless obtained in New Mexico. He also visited Havasupai Canyon, and eventually ventured on to Oraibe, linking his penetrations with those of Escalante from the opposite direction. In July 1776, prior to Escalante's embarkation northward, Garcés wrote to him to describe his own explorations.<sup>3</sup> Thus the two like-minded Franciscans did much to make known the route across New Mexico and Arizona, later famous as U. S. Route 66. [See Byrkit, *Spanish Traces*, Spring 2005]

Partly through the reports of Escalante and Garcés, officials of the Spanish government became much more interested in opening communications between Santa Fe and California. Escalante's proposals reflected his belief that such an expedition to Monterey would be easier through the land of the Yutas than south of the Grand Canyon, a region occupied by more troublesome Native Americans, including Apache and Hopi. And, as Escalante stated, since Monterey was more than a full degree of latitude north of Santa Fe, their expedition would have to march considerably northward at some point anyway.<sup>4</sup>

The real leader of the important journey of discovery was the older (around 36 in 1776) and much respected Francisco Atanasio Domínguez, who had been sent in 1775 to New Mexico as the *visitador* (inspector). When the exploration expedition became



official, he assumed the burden of responsibility for planning and certainly the final critical decisions on the trail became his to make. But he and Escalante had quickly become close, and there are no instances known of their being in serious disagreement with each other. While Escalante was designated as the *amanuensis* of the venture, both men collaborated in writing the diary. It is thus an irony of history that the man

who actually attached his name to the record received most of the ultimate recognition for the expedition.<sup>5</sup>

A very revealing statement in the Escalante record was entered late in the journey, after depleted food supplies, cold winds and snowy mud had convinced many of the 10 party members that they should not continue to strive to reach California that season.

There had been some opposition from several men who somehow thought there might be pecuniary rewards for completing their journey westward. Escalante, who correctly believed them to be still far from the Pacific coast, recorded: "Many times before leaving the village of Santa Fe, we had told each and every one of our companions that in this journey we have no other destination than the one which God might give us

and that we were not inspired by any temporal aim whatsoever.” This was an eloquent confession that the assignment from the Spanish government, which had equipped the expedition, was not even close to the principle aim of the company leaders. The diarist continued to warn that any of their fellows who sought to “follow their personal desires instead of devoting themselves to *the one purpose of this enterprise* [italics mine], which had been and is the greater honor of God and the spread of the Faith, had better not go with us.” Escalante then claimed that similar admonitions had been offered by him and his fellow padre throughout their journey.<sup>6</sup>

Good corroborating evidence that this attitude had prevailed between Escalante and Domínguez from the inception of the venture is a letter the senior missionary leader wrote, apparently to his main New Mexico patron, Governor Fermín de Mendinueta, just prior to their embarking on the journey of discovery. Domínguez conceded: “For even though we may not achieve our purpose, which is to explore a road from this kingdom to Monterey, such advance will be made by the knowledge we can acquire of the lands through which we shall travel, and it will be very useful in subsequent attempts.” This is hardly a statement of someone fully committed to travel all the way to California at that time. He did add that on the return journey, they intended to visit the Haluapais and Havasupais in an attempt to bolster those Indians’

commitment “to be Christianized, and to separate [themselves] entirely (if God so favors us) from the Moquinos [Hopi], who are opposed to the conversion of themselves and of others.” This would appear to have been a worthy missionary goal,<sup>7</sup> yet it also was not accomplished. The route to those peoples’ lands, however, *was* established by the expedition’s actual travel route homeward.

Another argument helping to establish that Domínguez and Escalante had little intention of going all the way to central California is that they barely had sufficient provisions to reach Utah Lake. This was only slightly more than half way to Monterey, California. Even before they arrived at that much-cherished destination, there had been an instance where several party members followed a buffalo bull 10 miles to obtain much-needed meat (they had herded cattle with them on the first part of the trip, but this meat source must have already been depleted). On another occasion, several men were glad to eat a porcupine.<sup>8</sup> As it turned out, the group was able to subsist on horse meat and some supplies obtained from Native Americans on both sides of the Crossing of the Fathers ford of the Colorado River (at present Lake Powell). But to get to California they would have to cross up to a half-dozen Nevada mountain passes, each around 6,500 feet in elevation, after snow had already appeared in all such locations. It is extremely doubtful that resident Paiute and

Shoshone Indians would have had either the resources or the inclination to support the men for a duration of some four months before they could cross through the formidable Sierra Nevada Mountains in April or May of 1777. Such a journey would have needed to commence early the preceding year, with far more pack animals and provisions to be at all practicable. And there would need to be less inclination for side trips to interesting Indian villages in search of people to preach and minister among.

Their camp at Agua Escondida<sup>9</sup> was virtually on the eastern border of present-day Colorado, near Egnar. If reaching California by the most feasible route had been the real priority, then—given the experience of unauthorized trappers and traders, who had previously traveled in that direction—Domínguez and Escalante would have continued on their original route northwestward. The important present-day Utah fords of the Grand-Colorado at Moab and of the Green at Green River were directly on that course, as was the future most often-utilized Old Spanish Trail variant mountain pass through Salina Canyon. That way would have been a considerably shorter route to what appears to have been their primary goal, Utah Lake and the Timpanogos Indians, as well.

However, it is clear that the padres were interested in finding other Native Americans who were more receptive to their message

of conversion and salvation. The guides who had been in the area previously with Juan Maria Antonio Rivera were inclined to turn eastward at that juncture in order to travel in the direction of their former journey. And Escalante and Domínguez had heard interesting reports about the Sabuagana Utes in that vicinity and desired to visit them. This took the group away from their supposed ultimate goal. By the time they reached a latitude near the best Green River crossing, they had veered some 70 miles eastward. While on that course, Domínguez preached a sermon through an interpreter. But although good attention was noted, these Native Americans expressed no desire for the missionaries to return to minister among them.<sup>10</sup>

At that point it would have been possible to head through where Delta and Grand Junction are today, but instead the group headed farther north, eventually passing through the present Rangely area. The route chosen into present-day Utah and on to the Provo-Utah Lake area was a good one, if more round-about than it needed to be. But the missionaries clearly had other intervening priorities.<sup>11</sup>

The visit among the *Timpanogos* (fish eating) Utes proved to be all the padres could have hoped for, at least so far as receptivity to their Roman Catholic message was concerned. The fellow tribesman, Silvestre, who had recently served as their guide, exhorted his fellows to believe all his associates had to say. The Native Americans

not only indicated willingness to be instructed and baptized, but demonstrated much interest in having secular Spaniards come to reside among them to teach crop cultivation and cattle raising. The padres promised that they would expedite the planting of such a mission as soon as practicable. Chartographer Miera lavishly considered Utah Valley to be the “most pleasing and fertile site in New Spain” and expressed confidence it could support a population similar to that of Mexico City. Though perhaps such expectations could not have been met, there might well have been a series of missions—if this had ever been attempted.<sup>12</sup>

Although the friendly Utes confessed that none of them knew much about the route to California, the leaders of the expedition of discovery indicated continued commitment to reach Monterey. However, for a hundred miles, their subsequent route was far more southward than westward. Then after a 20-mile jog west from Scipio Pass to Pahvant Butte, they traveled mostly south for more than another hundred miles.

One of the great mysteries of the entire journey is the leaders’ apparent lack of interest in examining the Great Salt Lake, less than 50 miles away. Although any information on such a water course would have stemmed entirely from the Native Americans they had interviewed, Miera subsequently created a map of the region, which featured a large river running from the

west side of the huge lake toward California and presumably the Pacific Ocean. If the ultimate goal of the Domínguez -Escalante expedition had indeed been to reach Monterey, then following this water course, or at least establishing its existence, should have been a major priority. This was clearly not the case.

Even from Utah Lake there was a reasonably good route westward which avoided many of the most formidable Nevada mountain ridges. This was the route that later was followed by the famous Pony Express. Similarly, in the vicinity of the Sevier River crossing, the party encountered an old bearded Indian who could have informed them that that river flowed in precisely the proper southwestern direction to take them some 70 miles closer to their California objective. This would have placed them near Sevier Lake, from where they could follow a reasonably optimum route westward, approximately where U. S. Highway 6-50 would later lead toward San Francisco. It is reasonably clear at that point that Miera and Escalante both assumed the Sevier to be the Green River they had crossed previously, and thus it seems they should have had additional interest in following that course, but they did not.

The last segment of the Domínguez-Escalante journey, during which they searched to locate a way across the Colorado River, featured a struggle to procure sufficient nourishment for the men and the few mounts remaining.

They finally chiseled steps in the slick rock for the horses or mules to use at the so-called Crossing of the Fathers. Fortunately, the group encountered no hostile Indians on their last leg across the New Mexican frontier as they continued homeward. Thereafter, there would be great disappointment for any of the party members seeking to follow through on promises to establish missions near Utah Lake.

Practicality doubtless dictated that similar northern missions would first need to be established in promising areas considerably closer to Santa Fe. And after this expedition the government was far more preoccupied with militarily subjugating hostile Native Americans on the plains farther east and north. Besides this, the urgency of establishing an overland communication and supply route to Monterey, California had been largely resolved by the success of Juan Bautista de Anza who blazed a trail that same year from Sonora, Mexico to San Francisco just north of Monterey. Spanish and Roman Catholic officials apparently never returned to considering the Utah mission so fervently promised on the first visit by their emissaries to that area.

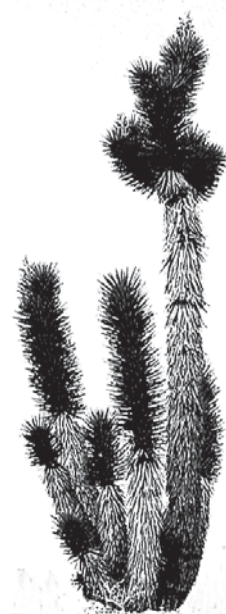
#### Endnotes

1. In this opinion, I am joined by the eminent scholar of the Old Spanish Trail, Dr. Joseph P. Sanchez, who expressed similar views during the mapping workshop at Phoenix, Arizona, on March 30, 2006, sponsored by the National Parks

Service and Bureau of Land Management.

2. Herbert E[ugene] Bolton. "Pageant in the Wilderness: The Story of the Escalante Expedition to the Interior Basin, 1776." *Utah Historical Quarterly* 28 (January, April, July, October, 1950): 2-3.
3. Joseph P. Sanchez. *Explorers, Traders, and Slavers: Forging the Old Spanish Trail, 1678-1850*. Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1996: 50-51.
4. Sanchez, *Old Spanish Trail*, 58.
5. There have been three separate translation-publications of the diary. The first was Herbert S. Auerbach's "Father Escalante's Journal, 1776-1777: Newly Translated with Related Documents and Original Maps." *Utah Historical Quarterly* 9 (July-October, 1941): 1-142. The second was Herbert Eugene Bolton's *Pageant in the Wilderness: The Story of the Escalante Expedition to the Interior Basin, 1776*. Salt Lake City: Utah State Historical Society, 1950. This was simultaneously published in the *Utah Historical Quarterly* 18 (January, April, July, October, 1950). Because this fine scholar of Hispanic North America traveled over virtually all of the trail himself, this is the version I prefer. The third, published to commemorate the United States bicentennial, was the translation by Ted J. Warner and Fray Angelico Chavez of *The Dominguez-Escalante Journal: Their Expedition through Colorado, Utah, Arizona, and New Mexico in 1776*. Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1977.
6. Bolton, *Pageant in the Wilderness*, 88.
7. Bolton, *Pageant in the Wilderness*, 10.
8. Bolton, *Pageant in the Wilderness*, 14, 56.

9. Bolton, *Pageant in the Wilderness*, 31. Bolton stated that this camp was "a pivotal point in the entire Escalante expedition and on it hinged momentous consequences. Ever since leaving Santa Fe the route had led steadily northwest for some three hundred miles. The wayfarers were bound for Monterey in California. It seems reasonable to assume that from what he had learned through the Santa Fe trappers who had preceded him, Escalante might have planned to swing westward here or at a point farther south, cross the mountain divide to the Colorado River, or even descend to it by the McElmo and San Juan Rivers, and then head for Monterey by way of the Havasupai settlements which Garces had visited." Bolton clearly wondered herein if the missionary priorities were actually as they had been stated.
10. Bolton, *Pageant in the Wilderness*, 46.
11. Bolton, *Pageant in the Wilderness*, 65-66.
12. Bolton, *Pageant in the Wilderness*, 66-68, 72.



## Issues Concerning the North Branch of the Old Spanish National Historic Trail

by *Patricia Joy Richmond*

[**Editors' Note:** Pat Richmond prepared these notes, representing concerns of OSTA's Vereda del Norte Chapter about the current official designation of the site and time period of the OSNHT, for the public scoping meeting last spring. We believe that both the information and the analysis contained in these notes will be of interest to the broader OSTA membership.]

### *Reconsideration of the San Luis Valley's West Fork of the North Branch as part of the National Historic Trails system as set forth under Public Law 107-325 Section 2-F i & ii.*

The Old Spanish Trail Association originated in 1994 in response to a planned county road that would have destroyed traces of a historic trail that had been identified as an alternate route for the Old Spanish Trail through the research and field work of San Luis Valley historian Ruth Marie Colville. In the mid-1970s, on behalf of the San Luis Valley Council of Governments, Colville prepared an inventory of historic sites within the San Luis Valley. This was incorporated into Colorado House Bill 1041. Colville received special recognition from the Colorado State Historical Society for this work.

Colorado State Historian Leroy R. Hafen also included the North

Branch in his published work, the *Old Spanish Trail*, 1954.

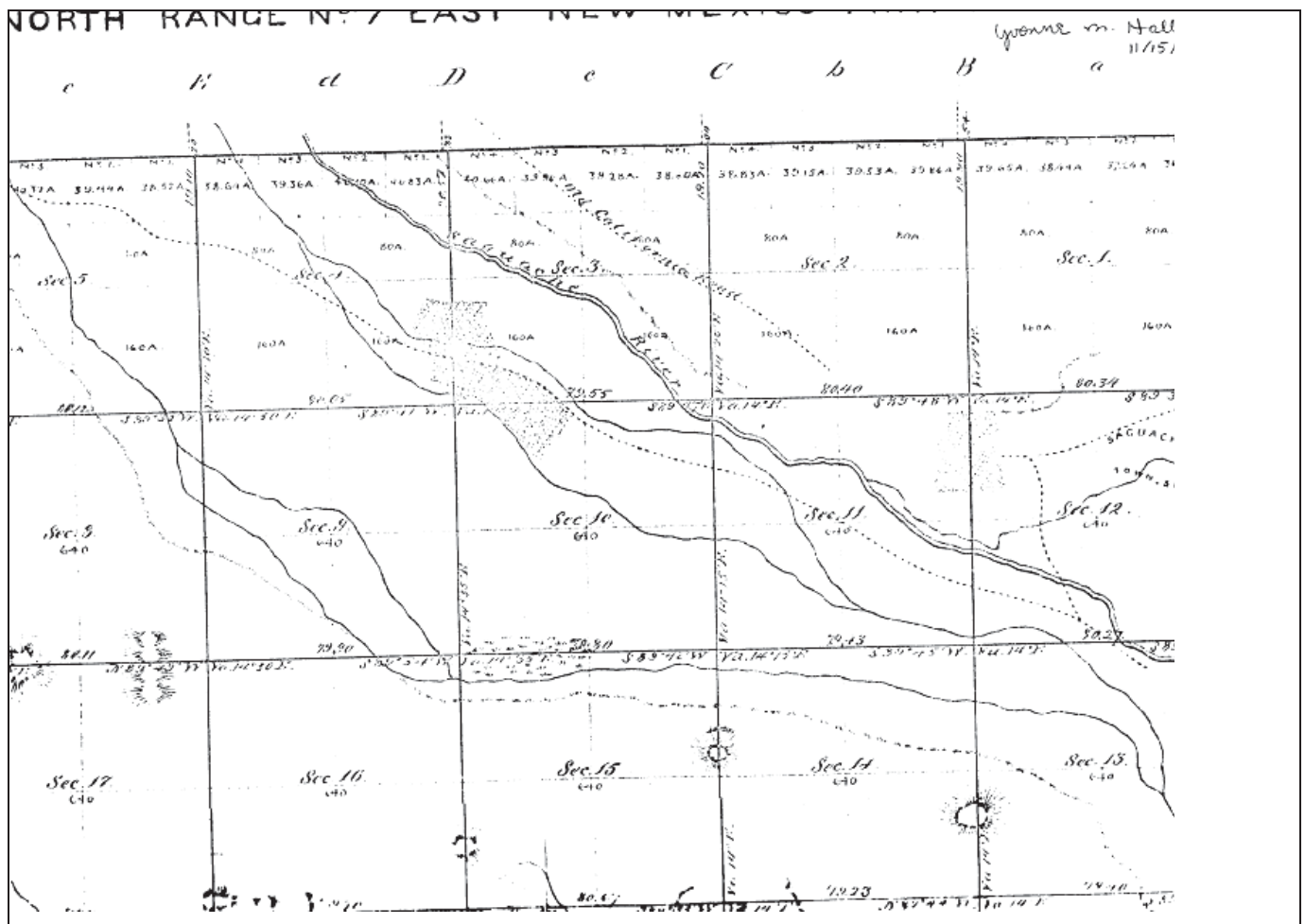
In the minds of most people familiar with the San Luis Valley's geography and history, as well as to the minds of those who founded the Old Spanish Trail Association, what has become known as the San Luis Valley's West Fork of the North Branch has credentials establishing that route as an important link within the network of trails designated as the Old Spanish Trail. Interest in preserving that route initiated the movement toward seeking National Historic Trail designation for the Old Spanish Trail.

Although documented use of the West Fork trail for local, regional and national travel by persons of historic significance dates from the late 17<sup>th</sup> century into the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, a presumption has emerged that only the East Fork of the San Luis Valley's North Branch would have been traveled during the period of relevance because it led directly north from Taos. Examination of known documents, maps, historic references, and other resources suggests that the West Fork was more viable than the East Fork as a route for certain types of travel; that some travelers from Taos may have utilized the East Fork as far north as the Culebra or Trinchera Rivers before crossing over to the West Fork; that the West Fork provided an important alternative for travelers connecting with Santa Fe, the Española Valley, or Ojo Caliente, especially during the 1830's when travel along the Chama Valley route above Abiquiú was curtailed by Navajo warfare (*The Greater*

*Southwest*, p.364; *Los Primeros Pobladores*, p.62).

The West Fork was a well-defined trail when Governor General Juan Bautista de Anza passed over it by moonlight in 1779. Zebulon Pike was taken from his little fortress on the Conejos River to Santa Fe via a "Spanish road" along the west side of the San Luis Valley. In 1822, Major Jacob Fowler followed a Spanish road along the west side of the San Luis Valley in traveling between Taos and the beaver fields of the San Juan Mountains. A map published by Herbert Auerbach, *Approximate Course of the Old Spanish Trail from Santa Fe, New Mexico, to Los Angeles California*, ©1940, charts the North Branch leaving Taos, fording the Rio Grande below the mouth of the Rio Colorado (probably at the Arroyo Hondo ford), proceeding around the west side of San Antonio Mountain to the Conejos River, and thence northward to the west of the Rio Grande.

Sheep became the primary trade export from New Mexico into California even into the gold rush period. In describing his 1852 sheep drive to California, Dick Wooten stated that he had been over the greater part of the route several times. Antoine Leroux stated that he and others had driven thousands of head of sheep through the San Luis Valley to California and Salt Lake. (Leroux also indicated that the East Fork trail, which connected with the Colorado Plains via Robidoux Pass through the Sangre de Cristo Mountains, was used to transport flour from Taos to the



Survey of Township 40, 1869, by Edwin Kellogg.

Plains tribes to exchange for trade goods carried westward toward Robidoux's trading outposts and the California settlements.) The established sheep route between northern New Mexico settlements and the San Luis Valley, even into the period of summer grazing on public lands, was the West Fork trail (*The Greater Southwest*, p. 365; Conrad, p. 252; *The San Luis Valley Historian*, Vol. II Time-Event Chart).

The notion that a trail as well known and clearly defined as the West Fork was ignored by travelers from Taos and other northern New Mexican

settlements during the two-decade period assigned for significance to the Old Spanish Trail National Historic Trail, begs logic and ignores rationale presented in the *Feasibility Study*, p.19:

Because of the limited and vague nature of the diaries, insofar as geographic details are concerned, it is difficult or impossible to determine the precise routes taken by many individual groups of travelers, especially the New Mexican pack caravans. Assumptions must be made that later travelers (after 1848) were traveling the same routes that were established during the Old Spanish Trail period of significance.

It is clear from travelers' accounts that the route(s) were dictated by several factors, including water sources, forage, ease of travel (terrain and climate), presence of tribes they thought of as "friendly" (often for trading purpose), and absence of those they felt to be "hostile."

This rationale of utilization of the most suitable route based upon resources and terrain is especially applicable to determining the 1837 route of Slover and Pope in their exodus from New Mexico to California via the North Branch. Fearful of being arrested by Mexican officials, the men and their families departed from Taos in the

middle of the night and traveled through the San Luis Valley laden with household goods. The West Fork offered alternative routes if pursued as well as hiding places, regular and dependable access to water and forage, solid footing for animals, wagons, and foot travelers, and a path so well distinguished, as demonstrated by Anza, that it could be followed at night.

Documentation of travel over the North Branch outside the specified time period of 1829-1848 should be used to identify common routes and their exact locations. Such application of pertinent data falls within the guidelines set forth in the Feasibility Study and opens the West Fork of the North Branch for inclusion into the National Historic Trails system.

***Determination of accuracy in mapping and marking for the route, and in particular the East Fork through the San Luis Valley, as shown through historic documentation.***

Accuracy in determining the location of the Old Spanish Trail is important for several reasons. Historic integrity should be primary. Recording the trail on National Historic Trails maps as well as on local, regional and state maps requires accuracy and authenticity to allow the public to discern between trail segments that lie within public lands and those that traverse private property. Interpretive site locations, public use options, and the impact of the trail within the National Historic Trail system cannot be ascertained until the authenticity of the route locations have been confirmed.

While it would seem simple to define the East Fork of the North Branch within the San Luis Valley, several parallel north-south trails lie between the Rio Grande and that segment of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains known as the Culebra Range. Two trails trace through the wooded slopes of the Culebra foothills. One, known as the Kiowa Trail, is still used by modern Pueblo Indians for ceremonial travels between northern New Mexico and the San Luis Valley (Lantis, p. 113). Nearby, but not along the same path, lies the Taos or Trappers Trail that connected Taos and Turley's Mill at Arroyo Hondo with fur trader outposts on the Arkansas River via Sangre de Cristo Pass. Early maps show this route as passing through the graben area east of San Pedro Mesa. This route was used by Charles Autobees, Tom Tobin, Kit Carson [it is sometimes identified as Kit Carson's Trail], Jacob Fowler, George Ruxton, the Mormon Battalion, and a host of early 19<sup>th</sup>-century travelers enroute to Bent's or St. Vrain's forts.

The road that came to be known as the "New Mexico-California Trail" (Harlan, p. 166) was first documented by Don Diego de Vargas in 1694. This route crossed the Rio Costilla and angled along the west edge of San Pedro Mesa toward a ford across the Culebra River. According to Gwinn Harris Heap, this fording place was eight miles above the mouth of the river. In 1853, Col. Joseph King Mansfield, in describing the road north from Taos into the San Luis Valley, wrote: "The road throughout the whole distance is from 3 to

10 miles from the Rio Grande del Norte...." Mansfield continued: "My impressions are that the post (Ft. Massachusetts) would have been better located on the Culebra River, the most northern settlement of New Mexico." Mansfield's observation of the proximity of the road to the Rio Grande conforms with Zebulon Pike's reference to encountering a Spanish road a short distance east of his fortress when he went hunting one day.

Early maps show this route proceeding north across Trinchera Creek. By 1852, the time of the establishment of Ft. Massachusetts, an east-west fork off this trail connected with the fort while another proceeded along the north bank of the Rio Grande to connect with the West Fork trail. (This north river road was used by Beale and Heap in their travels in 1853.) From the air, the East Fork is visible passing along the edge of the town of Blanca and the western edge of the Zapata Ranch. This coincides with Lantis' statement (p. 113) that the trail followed the channel of the ancient Rio Grande through the Dry Lakes country. (This channel is known to geologists and geographers. It is visible from an aerial view and marks an area along US Hwy 160 that experiences serious automobile accidents due to misperceptions in visibility along the seemingly straight stretch of road.)

The north-south trail, which Taos historian Helen Blumenschein identified as being used frequently by Taos trappers headed to the beaver fields of Bayou Salado

(South Park), passed Indian (Medano) Springs to the west of the sand dunes and then stayed close to the foot of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains to avoid the marshlands or *ciénega* created by the “Closed Basin” sump-like drainage system of the Saguache and San Luis rivers. At the landmark timber line of Rito Alto (Leroux) Creek, a westing loop across the sage prairie followed north of the Saguache River to the “lower ford” at Rock Cliff. To this point, the trail stayed high along the hillside rather than dropping into the Saguache Canyon. (Heap noted that the Saguache Valley had two entrances from the West Fork trail. The one used by Beale and Heap, known as “El Rincon,” was a shortcut. The other West Fork entrance was a few miles farther north (Heap, p. 36). The East and West trails converged along the south side of the Saguache Valley between Rock Cliff and the “upper ford” at today’s Sheep Creek.

Although much of the route passed through sand country, the East Fork trail is still visible from the air in some locations. Expeditionary and survey maps, dating from the 1850s to the mid-1870s, indicate the location of the East Fork trail as well as random roads that developed as a result of military forays and travel by early settlers. (John Lawrence’s diary records frequent trips throughout the San Luis Valley and shows extensive travel along the Conejos to Saguache Road prior to the official wagon road survey of 1869-1874.) These maps combined with aerial photographs and GPS readings should be used to verify authenticity in mapping the East Fork through the San Luis Valley.

The passage of the East Fork through federal public lands provides excellent locations for interpretive sites, public access for recreational uses, incentives for trail preservation, and opportunities for marking and identifying actual traces.

***Determination of the North Branch route through that region between the San Luis Valley’s Upper Saguache Valley and the Lake Fork of the Gunnison River known geographically and historically as the Cochetopa country.***

First and foremost should be the understanding that the term *Cochetopa* or “*Coochatope*” refers to a geographic region. The primary stream that heads in this geographic area also carries the name Cochetopa. The Cochetopa region marks a low, distinctive landscape lying between the summits of the La Garita Mountains and the Sawatch Range. The Cochetopa country spans the Continental Divide and extends westward toward the Lake Fork of the Gunnison River.

Sidney Jocknick claimed the word *cochetopa* meant “pearl” in reference to the smooth, rounded, dome-shaped hills that characterize the Cochetopa country. Heap, however, claimed the word meant “gateway” in reference to the rock outcroppings that marked the canyons of streams that led travelers over the Divide. Many historians associate the term with buffalo as this was prime buffalo country and thereby extensively traversed by native peoples.

A complex of passes at the head of the Saguache drainages connects the Upper Saguache Valley with the Western Slope drainages of the Cochetopa country. Two of these passes are open to regular vehicular travel today. One, re-named North Pass upon completion of modernization of SH 114, was originally called Cochetopa, *Coochumpa* or Buffalo Pass. Heap wrote: “Coochatope Pass is traveled at all seasons, and some of our men had repeatedly gone through it in the middle of winter without meeting any serious obstruction from snow” (Heap, p. 138). The other regularly used pass, now labeled Old Cochetopa Pass on forest service maps, was known originally as *Carnero* (Sheep) or Old Agency Pass. Heap used that route in returning to New Mexico from the Lake Fork (Heap, p. 167).

Modern highways, the result of engineering, dynamite, and bulldozers, do not necessarily coincide with original trails which tended to follow routes of least resistance. Before surveyed roads, travelers using the “North Pass” route had several choices of trails on either side of the summit. On the east side of the pass, Sheep Creek was the primary drainage. Heap noted that his party ascended the “west fork” after entering the canyon of the Coochumpah, today’s Sheep Creek (Heap, p. 138).

In 1853, Frémont’s expedition documented a landmark rock outcropping along East Pass Creek just before reaching the summit of the Divide. A short forest service road to the west of SH 114,

remnant of the original road over the pass, accesses this rock which was rediscovered by Robert Schler in researching his *Sights Once Seen*.

West of the Divide, one trail connected with the headwaters of Tomichi (*Tumichi*) Creek via Razor Creek. Survey maps of the 19<sup>th</sup> century show this route, as well as a road that followed the east rim of the canyon of West Pass Creek. Schler's research places Frémont on the Razor Creek trail. Frémont supposedly followed Gunnison's wagons ruts and blaze marks. In the 1980s, Dr. Richard Biedelmann, Pat Richmond, and Colorado College students encountered and walked the rim road during a field trip to confirm Gunnison's route. A 1913 map of the "Cochetopa National Forest" shows both the rim road and the Razor Creek road. The map indicates there was no road through the Cochetopa Creek Canyon at that time.

In an affidavit, Antoine Leroux stated that Gunnison did not follow the usual route through the Cochetopa country. According to Dr. Duane Vandenbusche (Western State College), Dr. Lois Borland, who focused her research on the Gunnison expedition, believed that the explorer crossed North Pass and descended to the Tomichi via Razor Creek (Vandenbusche, p. 16). Although Gunnison at first believed his route to be the perfect choice for a railroad, he soon discovered he had made the wrong decision. Gorges, narrow canyons, treacherous crossings of tributaries entering into the Gunnison

(Grand), and eventually the climb out of the canyon over Blue Mesa to avoid the Black Canyon demonstrated that the route was filled with obstacles. Gunnison's geologist, Jacob Scheil, wrote that "the valley route was only rarely usable. This was a kind of travel in which great difficulties had to be overcome" (Scheil, p. 45).

A few months prior to Gunnison's expedition, the Beale-Heap party crossed today's North Pass and proceeded through the Cochetopa country along a route that most likely was the North Branch Trail. Heap wrote that they chose to take "the shortest route, to go by the trail which takes the most direct course to Grande River, though there was a more circuitous route to the right, leading over a level country, but which would have lengthened the journey by two days." (This would have been the trail to the Tomichi.)

Heap and Beale gave specific descriptions of the terrain, mileages, locations of stream crossings, and campsites. They crossed both forks of Willow Creek. Heap wrote of finding a line of elk horns that had been placed across the trail by the Utes earlier in the spring as a warning to a party of men driving sheep to California. This account of the elk horn barrier coincides with Dick Wooten's recollections and would seem to confirm that Beale and Heap were following the North Branch.

Heap's journal entries, map, and lithographs make it possible to

determine the location of the North Branch through the Cochetopa country. Descriptive passages relating Heap's return trip to the San Luis Valley for supplies after the party's disastrous experience in attempting to cross the Gunnison at its confluence with the Uncompahgre, demonstrate that "Old Cochetopa Pass" was a viable alternative for crossing the Divide. Whether a traveler used the North or Old Cochetopa pass route to mount the summit, the trail proceeding across the Cochetopa hills into the Powderhorn Valley avoided a steep climb out of the Gunnison Canyon via Nine-mile or "Son-of-a bitch" Hill.

Heap's lithograph of the party fording the Lake Fork coincides with the landscape between the Gate and Gateview, two landmark points on the Lake Fork featured on survey and travel maps that mark a mid 19<sup>th</sup>-century road coinciding with the route followed by Beale and Heap. Beale and Heap's route from the Lake Fork over Blue Mesa also can be traced through their journal entries and would coincide with Gunnison's route after his expedition fought its way out of the Gunnison Canyon.

Of special significance in comparing Gunnison's route to that of Beale and Heap is the amount of time spent in passing between the summit of Cochetopa Pass and reaching the road across Blue Mesa. Gunnison's party, which traveled through the area in autumn, spent two weeks making its way to the Tomichi and thence down river toward

the Lake Fork. Beale and Heap, traveling in the spring with high water run-off, crossed the Divide on June 19 and reached the Lake Fork on June 21. They were at the mouth of the Uncompahgre by June 23. The trail followed by Beale and Heap is traceable and can be accessed through forest service roads and trails. In near proximity to this historic trail is a good forest service road that can be accessed from either North Pass of Old Cochetopa Pass. That road links the Old Indian Agency with the Powderhorn Valley. In examining Heap's map, it appears that a stretch of SH 149, the Silver Thread Scenic and Historic Byway, follows the same line between the Powderhorn and the Gateview where Miller's Flats provides easy access for fording the Lake Fork between its upper and lower canyons. A Hinsdale County road leads from the Lake Fork across Blue Mesa to descend onto US Hwy 50 east of Montrose.

While it might be convenient to map the Old Spanish Trail's North Branch along SH 114 and US Hwy 50 through the Gunnison Valley for the comfort of modern travelers, to do so would not hold true to OSTA's mission of identifying, interpreting, preserving and protecting the trail. The old trails through the Cochetopa country and across the Blue Mesa can be visualized and accessed through passable county and forest service roads. Mapping and interpretation of the North Branch through this region should draw upon journals, memoirs, and early maps for accuracy and authenticity.

***Reconsideration of the time period currently ascribed to use of the Old Spanish Trail for the purposes of commerce and trade, as well as reconsideration of parameters being implied for commerce and trade between California and New Mexico.***

The notion that travel over the Old Spanish Trail only had national significance between 1829, the year of the Armijo expedition, and 1848, the year of Stephen Watts Kearney's edict officially ending use of this route for trade between New Mexico and California, should be reexamined.

The time period assigned to the Old Spanish Trail as a National Historic Trail ignores rationale for the route being cited by Frémont as the "Spanish" trail. The 1829 date presumes that either there was no travel or there was insufficient travel over the trail prior to that date to have enough impact to qualify for national historic significance. Ruth Marie Colville's research notes indicate that according to La Harpe, trade between Los Angeles and Santa Fe commenced as early as 1724. In 1821, a party of 100 New Mexicans with a trade caravan bound for California was overtaken in the San Luis Valley and ordered to turn back due to the revolution in Mexico (Colville, notes). According to San Luis Valley author and historian George Cory Franklin, Upper Rio Grande Valley pioneer M.V.B. Wason, a freighter on the Santa Fe Trail, decided to drive horses from California via the Cochetopa and Spring Creek Pass to establish a horse ranch in

the meadows above Wagon Wheel Gap (Franklin, 1951). William H. Jackson's diary also referred to a Sam McGannigan buying small herds of horses and assembling them for a "Bronco Drive."

The "lost trappers," Workman and Spencer, met a caravan headed to California near the Green River in 1809. They joined the party instead of continuing toward their original destination, the headwaters of the Del Norte. Some of the men in the caravan lived in California and were returning after accompanying a spring caravan that had driven horses and mules to Santa Fe. Regular expeditions of Spaniards already were traveling through the western regions so the Spanish were familiar with locations that had water and grass available. Thousands of horses and mules had already been driven over the route. In places, the ground was littered with bones of animals that had succumbed to "foot evil." (Frémont also noted the landscape in some areas littered with bones.) After wintering in California, Workman and Spencer traveled to Santa Fe in the spring of 1810 (Coyner, 166-169).

Mountain man Denis Julien reportedly started traveling the Old Spanish Trail in the early 1820s. He was at Ft. Robidoux, below Ft. Atkinson, in 1823. In 1824, he and three other "Americans" joined Antoine Robidoux's expedition that "opened access to the Uintah Basin via the Old Spanish Trail." In 1827, Manuel Martinez identified Julien as an employee of Francisco Robidoux. He left Taos that year to retrieve caches from the

land of the Utes. His inscription, dated 1836, appears at the juncture of the Whiterocks and Uintah rivers. (Chittenden & Missouri Historic Society, *Glimpses of the Past*).

In a letter dated March 23, 1853, Kit Carson stated that he preferred the route from New Mexico through Utah over the route through South Pass, which he considered impracticable for easy passage into California (Hafen, *Central Route*, ft note). Carson traveled the Old Spanish Trail many times. In his personal narrative he related a trip with Stephen Luis Lee. Having left Taos in October, they wintered at Ft. Robidoux (Grant, 1926).

Historians and historic annals often cite the historic significance of the contributions of the mountain men, fur trappers and traders toward developing an awareness of western North America and opening the West to subsequent acquisition, migration, and settlement. Frederic E. Voelker noted that official and semi-official expeditions left exploration of a terrain of about one million three hundred thousand square miles to these frontiersmen. "The point made here is that the exploration of wide and connected segments of the West, incident to the ever-widening search for untrapped beaver streams, and the resultant steady accumulation of precise knowledge of the country was the work of the mountain men, who, by 1840, had accomplished it in hunting, and trading" (Voelker, 3/28/47).

The word overlooked in reference to the mountain men trappers and their relationship to the Old Spanish Trail is "trade." These frontiersmen were involved in a lucrative commercial activity. Therefore, it seems logical that the travels of various mountain men and trappers over the Old Spanish Trail in pursuit of their own form of commerce should be considered as having historic national significance. In 1891, *Spanish Institutions* [John Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science] reported:

With overland immigration of trappers and traders in the early 1830s, the first important expedition to California was outfitted in 1830. The prior four years several persons had made the trip across the continent. In 1826, Jedediah S. Smith made the first overland trip into California. There was little trade or profit from the early expeditions. They represent the opening of the territory from the east via an overland route and prepared the way for emigration after 1849. The fur traders were integral to opening the West to civilization and carrying descriptions of undeveloped country to established settlements.

The study goes on to state that the fur trade was "signature to international trade." Furs were exchanged for livestock from the Sandwich Islands (Hawaii) which in turn established local and national prosperity (p. 306).

General Kearny may have sent orders with Kit Carson and Lt. Brewerton to Santa Fe headquarters to put a stop to commercial travel between Santa Fe and California via the Old Spanish Trail, but as

shown by statements from northern New Mexico residents like Leroux and Wooten, neither travel nor commerce ceased after 1848. In fact, the sheep trade between New Mexico and California increased as a result of the gold rush of 1849. (*The Greater Southwest*, p. 370-371). Gunnison may have described the trail at Green River as being seldom used, but Beckwith noted that it was about 50 feet wide consisting of numerous paths and still clearly visible.

If the trail ceased to have significance as a route for commerce and trade after the 1850s, the reason lies not in its having been abandoned but in its evolution from a trail into clearly defined and mapped roads that served thousands of migrants moving into the West's get-rich-quick mineral belts with mining becoming the commercial impetus of the West. That transformation bolsters the earlier trail's legacy of national historic significance as a route for commerce and trade.

A question relevant to exclusion of pre-1829 and post-1848 use of the trail for commerce and trade is what constitutes "national significance"? For too many decades, and even into this century, the Southwest has failed to receive full credit as having historic significance or relevance to America's heritage. Extension of the dates of use of the Old Spanish Trail to include the Spanish Period and to extend into the early years of the American occupation would set deeper roots for the Southwest's historic significance within the scope of United States history.

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## National Historic and Scenic Trails Accomplishments 2001-2005

This new brochure, under the auspices of the National Trails System Partners (including the Bureau of Land Management, the National Park Service, the USDA Forest Service, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Federal Highway Administration), outlines activities performed during the five-year period following the Memorandum of Agreement signed in 2001. One or two pages are devoted to each National Historic and Scenic Trail. The brochure includes color photographs, a map of the trails system, and charts outlining progress. A pdf version can be downloaded from the NTS website at

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SLV portion of Nell's topographical and township map of Colorado, 1885.



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