

SPANISH TRACES



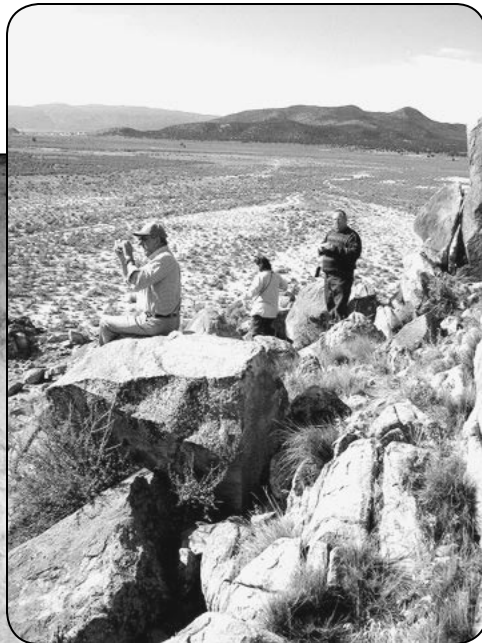
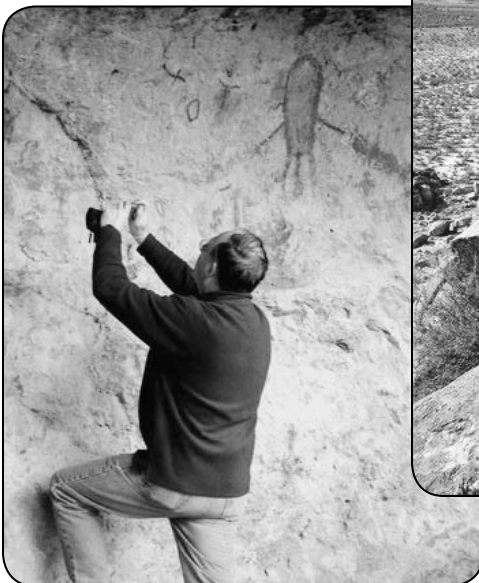
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Cedar City Symposium

The National Spanish Trails Symposium was held at Southern Utah University on October 12, 2007. Papers on a variety of topics concerning western Spanish trails were given throughout the day. [While the proceedings will be available to the public in the future, we will include some of the talks in this and future issues of *Spanish Traces*.] After the banquet, there was a performance of the "Old Spanish Trail Suite," with the composers in attendance. The following day, field trips took attendees to sites on the Old Spanish Trail and the Domínguez-Escalante Trail.



Scenes from the Cedar City Symposium field trips.
courtesy Paul Ostapuk

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THE OLD SPANISH TRAIL ASSOCIATION

The Old Spanish Trail (OST), one of America's long distance pioneer trade routes, is our country's fifteenth National Historic Trail. From 1829 to 1848, traders and pack mules took the OST on a six-week trek from northern New Mexico to Southern California, where woolen goods from New Mexico 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 OSTA Website

<http://www.oldspanishtrail.org>

The OSTA website is the place to go for both general background and recent news on the OST and OSTA. The site contains a set of maps; an overview history of the OST, including a bibliography; a listing of relevant books, with links to sites where they can be purchased; and a regularly-updated news page, containing links to government reports, activities of the OSTA membership, and other news relevant to the trail. 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 the Comprehensive Management Plan) and to 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 April 15, 2008.

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

Deborah and Jon Lawrence
44 Harvey Court
Irvine, CA 92617
E-mail: dlawrence@fullerton.edu
Telephone: 949-509-1714

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Mail your check to: OSTA
PO Box 1187
Redlands, CA 92373

Governing Board of Officers and Directors 2007

PRESIDENT:

Douglas Knudson
89 Fir Drive
South Fork, CO 81154
719-873-5239
rosejems@fone.net

VICE-PRESIDENT:

Mark Henderson
861 Binbrook Drive
Henderson, NV 89052
702-250-6512
markscotthenderson@netzero.net

SECRETARY:

Judy Knudson
89 Fir Drive
South Fork, CO 81154
719-873-5239
ponchapass@fone.net

TREASURER:

Mark Franklin
2914 Junction Street
Durango, CO 81301
970-375-7992
id@animas.net

DIRECTORS:

Paul Ostapuk – AZ
PO Box 3532
Page, AZ 86040
928-645-2558
postapuk@cableone.net

Cliff Walker – CA
1204 Gen Court
Barstow, CA 92311
760-256-5570
cjwalker@mindspring.com

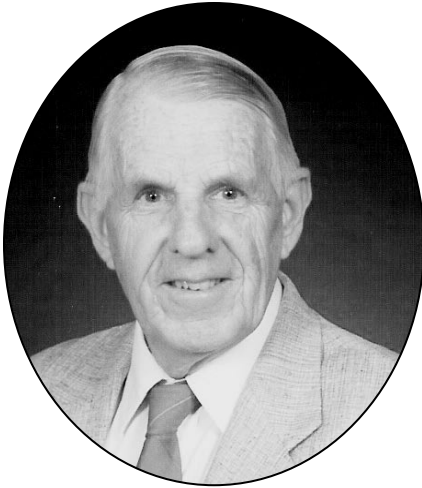
Pat Kuhlhoff – NM
14 Duende Rd.
Santa Fe, NM 87508
505-466-4877
PGLK@cybermesa.com

Nick Saines – NV
1587 Figueroa Drive
Las Vegas, NV 89123
702-896-4049
greatunc@aol.com

Al Matheson – UT
8847 West 2200 South
Cedar City, UT 84720
435-586-9762
citabriair@yahoo.com

James Jefferson – Director-at-Large
3258 Highway 172
Durango, CO 81303
970-259-1038
jjefferson@southern-ute.nsn.us





President's Corner

The OSTA board has chosen Donald W. Davidson as our new association manager. Davidson's work for OSTA will focus on progress in the four components of our mission: research, preservation and protection, interpretation/education, and promotion of appropriate use of the Old Spanish National Historic Trail. As association manager, he will seek more funding and stimulate active progress in achieving our long-term mission. Over the next few months, Mr. Davidson and I plan to visit several chapters and directors to get your ideas and your help.

Mr. Davidson is a talented nature artist, lecturer, field leader, and grant writer. He and his wife have been summer inhabitants of the Southwest. They are currently in Washington, D.C., plotting their move to somewhere nearer to the Old Spanish Trail.

I would like to extend my thanks to Lorraine Carpenter for her recent work as temporary manager. Lorraine and her husband Kenn plan to move to North Carolina soon. The recipients of the Crampton Award for outstanding service to OSTA, Kenn and Lorraine have provided much of the fuel and fire that keeps OSTA functioning. We hope that they will never forget the Old Spanish Trail.

OSTA also owes thanks to many others:

- Mark Henderson, Mark Franklin, and Judy Knudson – for spending many days carefully reviewing the applications for association manager.
- Cliff Walker and friends – for providing an enjoyable and informative 2007 annual symposium with interesting field trips. A special thanks to David Rivera and the young Walkers.
- The Mathesons, Rob Dotson, and Southern Utah University – for a fine symposium that

drew people to study the trail in that beautiful corner of Utah.

- Dr. James Jefferson – for meeting with several tribal and national leaders, encouraging their support of OSTA.
- Pat Richmond and the LVN Chapter – for a new map and guide to the OST in the San Luis Valley, sponsored by the Temple Buell Foundation.
- Mark Franklin and Jeanne Brako – for toiling with others to mount a huge OSNHT exhibit at Fort Lewis College, to open formally in late January 2008.
- Ann Deegan – for offering to take over Lorraine's volunteer duties as Membership Chair.
- Pat Kuhlhoff and Therese Janowski – for planning what promises to be an interesting 2008 convention near Española, New Mexico, June 5-8, 2008.

Don't miss the 2008 convention!

Douglas M. Knudson



Field trip participants at Impassible Pass, Barstow, CA, June 2007.

photo by Dan Dugan

From the Editors

We want to express our appreciation and gratitude to **Kenn and Lorraine Carpenter** for their many contributions to the Old Spanish Trail Association. The Carpenters have biked the trail from one end to the other (see *Spanish Traces*, Winter 2000). Past editors and publishers of *Spanish Traces*, they were a tremendous help to us as we took over the editorship three years ago. The recipients of the Crampton Award, they not only served as treasurer and membership secretary, but they have played a key role in the mapping of the trail. The Carpenters worked tirelessly to increase public knowledge about the trail and bolstered our organization with their energy, ideas, and expertise. We wish the Carpenters the best in their new life in North Carolina.

Donald Davidson is the new association manager of OSTA. In our experience with the Oregon-California Trail Association, the association manager is a consistent figure for both members and the general public because his term doesn't expire after a few years. We feel certain that Mr. Davidson will bring energy and focus to the major tasks of the organization. Mr. Davidson was the first official Artist-in-the-Park of the Mojave National Preserve. He founded the Chihuahuan Desert Native Plant Initiative at Carlsbad Caverns National Park. He has illustrated a series of native plant texts for the Sweeney Granite Mountain Research Center, and he instructs classes in botanical illustration. Welcome, Donald!

We also welcome to these pages **Eric Nelson**, past president of the Los Angeles Corral of Westerners. An attorney by profession, he is an avid collector of Western Americana, of which the letter whose history he reports in this issue is an example. **Lloyd Pierson** is an OSTA member from Utah, whose last contribution to *Spanish Traces* was in Winter 2000. We give an excerpt of a recent article that he has written, which is relevant to the issue of why travelers chose the Old Spanish Trail rather than more direct routes to California. **Ramon Vasconcellos** is an instructor at Barstow Community College. In this issue we present a shortened version of the talk he gave at the Bartsow conference in June 2007. Readers interested in the longer version, which contains material on banking practices in the U.S. in the 19th century, should contact the author. **Doug Peterman** is a docent at *El Rancho de Las Golondrinas*, a living history museum located on 200 acres just south of Santa Fe, New Mexico. **Froylán Tiscareño** is currently the deputy sheriff of the Los Angeles Corral of Westerners. **Walter Hill** is an artist and retired engineer living in Sacramento, California. **Steve Heath** is past president of OSTA and a frequent contributor to these pages. **Jeff Axel** is an Arizona park ranger for the NPS. Heath's and Axel's talks were given at the Cedar City National Spanish Trails Symposium.

Deborah and Jon Lawrence

Chapter Contacts

Armijo Chapter (AZ)

Jim Page
Page, AZ
435-675-9112
leavenotrace2003@yahoo.com

La Vereda del Norte Chapter (CO)

Pat Richmond
Creede, CO
719-658-2377
patsjoy@netzero.net

Nevada Chapter (NV)

Liz Warren
Jean, NV
702-874-1410
mizlizzard@aol.com

North Branch Chapter (CO)

Bill Chenoweth
Grand Junction, CO
970-242-9062
cheno@bresnan.net

Rancho Chapter (CA)

Rick Whitaker
Garden Grove, CA
714-534-5710
rwhitake@ci.ontario.ca.us

Salida del Sol Chapter (NM)

Pat Kuhlhoff
Santa Fe, NM
505-466-4877
PGLK@cybermesa.com

Southern Utah Chapter (UT)

Rob Dotson
Enoch, UT
435-586-6746
rgdotson@hotmail.com

Tecopa Chapter (CA)

Cynthia Kienitz
Tecopa, CA
760-852-4358
ranchhouseinn@earthlink.net

William Workman Chapter (UK)

William Ramsay
Cumbria, England
c/o david.fallowfield@btinternet.com

News from the Trail

Armijo's Route Through Three Valleys: Nevada Chapter Field Trip

On November 10, 2007, the Nevada Chapter sponsored a field trip to explore the possible route taken by Antonio Armijo on his 1829-1830 pioneering caravan expedition from Abiquiú, NM, to San Gabriel, CA. Sixteen people met and traveled south of Las Vegas on the old Los Angeles Highway to Jean Dry Lake. Liz Warren, Nevada Chapter president and field trip leader, passed out copies of Armijo's journal and a map of the region.

We turned off to explore Hidden Valley, a dry lake just north of Jean Dry Lake, but not visible from the highway. To achieve

our objectives, we compared Armijo's 1830 diary with the terrain in southern Nevada. Hidden Valley turned out to be eminently eligible for a stop-over site on Armijo's route, with its small dry lake and its extensive bunch grass cover, which would have been mule forage "made in heaven."

Our group was sharing the valley with an off-road race that generated a tremendous amount of dust and haze. BLM archaeologist Mark Boatwright finagled our way into the area, which was closed to the public because of the race. We had to pass muster with the BLM rangers who guarded the portals to the dry lake, and Mark's presence made it all possible. We returned the favor by assisting a couple of racers who were off course.

assorted hotels in Jean and Primm. Despite these intrusions, the view was spectacular, with Ivanpah Dry Lake, the New York Mountains, Clark Mountain and Devil's Peak all visible. We traveled up SR 161 to Goodsprings, where we visited the site of the springs, as well as of the Fayle Hotel. One of our members, Dave Lowe, told the group about living in the hotel, which his parents owned in the 1940's.

We ate our sack lunches at the Goodsprings Community Center, where Dave Beisecker of the Goodsprings Historical Society told the group about Goodsprings' plans to build a trail on the rail bed of the Yellow Pine Railroad. This narrow-gauge railroad was used between 1911 and 1929 to carry ore from the mine to the mill site in Goodsprings, then down to the Union Pacific track, seven miles east at present-day Jean, NV. The railroad berm will be developed for non-motorized travel as part of a Rails to Trails project. A feasibility study for this project will begin in 2008. Because this project parallels a portion of the Armijo Route of the Old Spanish Trail, there will be opportunities for interpretation of the OSNHT as part of the project.

From Goodsprings we headed west on Wilson Pass Road to the crest of the mountains between Goodsprings and Sandy Valley. We stopped here in order to discuss the relative merits of this



Nevada field trip group at Wilson's Pass. The surrounding countryside was burned by wildfires in 2005.

courtesy Carol Corbett

The tour then crossed under I-15, heading west to the Bird Spring Range, where we stopped to admire the view that Armijo's caravan had enjoyed – minus the paved State Route 161, I-15, and the

pass versus Columbia Pass, a few miles south, as the probable Armijo route. Armijo found no water on the pass he took; Wilson's Pass has two springs that would have been found by his scouts.

We then continued down Wilson's Pass to Sandy Valley, where we stopped again to consider possible localities for the alkaline spring Armijo noted as his next campsite. Here we also took in the vista of the valley as Armijo might have seen it. Again, despite historic and modern development in Sandy Valley, the view across to the Kingston Range and north to Black Butte is still astoundingly evocative of Spanish Trail caravan days.

Our final stop was at the home of Dave and Barbara Lowe in Sandy Valley where we were shown two original oil paintings. One painting was done by Buster Wilson, a notable historical figure at the Spring Mountain Ranch (the state park in Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area). It was made in the 1940's and depicts a southern Nevada desert scene. The other painting, also done in the 1940's, was of the Fayle Hotel in Goodsprings.

From Sandy Valley, the group returned to Goodsprings via the paved Columbia Pass route and from there to Las Vegas.

Carol Corbett and Liz Warren

Old Spanish Trail Brochure for the San Luis Valley

The La Vereda del Norte Chapter of the Old Spanish Trail Association (OSTA) is pleased to announce publication of a full-color brochure that describes this historic trail through the San Luis Valley. Made possible through a grant from the Temple Buell Foundation, the brochure features an 18" by 24" color map on one side with reverse-side text panels describing groups of people and individuals who used the trail.

While the main branch of the Old Spanish Trail traveled through northwest New Mexico and southwest Colorado into Utah, alternative routes served equally well for many travelers. The North Branch, or Mountain Trail, between Santa Fe and Green River, Utah, via Cochetopa Pass, allowed travelers to avoid desert heat, as well as confrontations within territory dominated by the then hostile Navajo. North Branch travelers passing through the San Luis Valley had several options. A route known today as the East Fork Trail, tenuously skirting through sand country at the base of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains, offered a short route between the Cochetopa country and Taos. The West Fork Trail covered drier, hard-surface terrain between Ojo Caliente and the Saguache Valley by following along the base of the San Juan Mountains. Fording places on the Rio Grande allowed for convenient passage between the East Fork and West Fork Trails.

The text side of the new brochure relates information about uses and users of the two trails. The first documented use of portions of both the East and West Fork Trails dates back to the 1694 *entrada* of Spanish Governor General Don Diego de Vargas. Other historic names associated with one or both trail segments within the San Luis Valley include Juan Bautista de Anza, Antoine Robidoux, Jacob Fowler, the Slover-Pope party, Antoine Leroux, Dick Wooten, Kit Carson, the Beale-Heap expedition, John C. Frémont, Marcus Whitman, Capt. John Gunnison, William Gilpin, and John Lawrence. Pioneering families from New Mexico followed the West Fork Trail in their migrations into the area.

Mule icons mark locations on the map where both the East and West Fork Trails intersect with today's public roads. Conejos County has already granted permission to place specially marked carsonite posts at points of intersection between the West Fork Trail and county public roads. The Del Norte public lands office has offered to provide the carsonite posts, which will be set by volunteers. Each post will bear a medallion showing a mule icon that matches the map brochure icon.

Persons interested in receiving a copy may send a self-addressed envelope bearing 58 cents in postage to Suzanne Off, 10585 US Hwy 160, Del Norte, CO 81132. The brochure will also be available to the general public at local museums, visitor centers, public land offices, and chambers of commerce.

Pat Richmond

Impact of Proposed Airport on the OSNHT

Mesquite, Nevada, is planning a new airport on the northeast edge of Mormon Mesa. OSTA was contacted by the Federal Aviation Administration to provide input in preparation of the Environmental Impact Statement. On October 7, 2007, a contingent of members – Hal Steiner, Liz Warren, Mark Henderson, Yolanda Vigil, and Carol Corbett – spent the day examining the airport site and the nearby trail.

Using GPS coordinates for the proposed runway, we determined that the northern end of the proposed runway is about five miles, as the crow flies, from a segment of the Old Spanish Trail/Mormon Road that is listed on the National Register. The southern end of the proposed runway is even closer. This segment ascends Virgin Hill from Halfway Wash up onto the mesa top and continues west.

Currently, Halfway Wash and Mormon Mesa are relatively remote and pristine. There are a few dirt roads and a power line corridor, no evidence of dumping, and very little off-road travel. People can still get a sense of what the area was like

during the period of trail use. With the development of the airport and surrounding property, we are concerned that people will “discover” Mormon Mesa and Halfway Wash, which will increase travel into the area, and bring in trash and illegal dumping. People with off-road vehicles will begin using the trail segment from the wash up to the mesa top, and damage it severely. We questioned whether there were any plans for restricting

request a study that would show the visual impact of the airport, as observed from the listed segments of the trail. Such a study might lead us to suggest various design features that could be incorporated into the design of the airport buildings and facilities in the surrounding area.

We prepared a letter to the FAA stating the above concerns and pointing out that because the Old Spanish Trail is a National Historic

Trail, it is entitled to a high measure of protection under federal law. Additionally, this section of the trail has been given particular attention in the draft OST Comprehensive Management Plan as a trail segment deserving of special protection.

We will continue to monitor the airport project, making sure that OSTA's concerns are heard.

Carol Corbett



Mark Henderson at the base of trail segment as it ascends Mormon Mesa.
courtesy Carol Corbett

travel in this area, such as marking approved routes and restricting OHV travel.

The noise from several planes, mostly propeller driven, led us to speculate whether the routes taken by departing and landing aircraft could be routed in such a way that the planes do not fly directly over the listed segment when landing and taking off. We also decided to

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

Authentication of the “*Paso por Aquí*” Inscription

The recently discovered “*Paso por aquí 1776*” inscription [see *Spanish Traces*, Spring 2007] is believed to have been made by members of the Domínguez- Escalante expedition in 1776. Seeking a new trade route between New Mexico and California, the Spanish missionaries passed through the Glen Canyon region in an area now known as Padre Bay. They wrote in their diaries about a severe storm on November 6, 1776, which occurred as they looked for a place to cross the Colorado River. On November 7, they crossed the river at a place now called the Crossing of the Fathers. The phrase “*paso por aquí*” is Spanish for “passed by here” and was commonly used by Spanish explorers and missionaries of the period. This is the only known inscription remaining from the Domínguez-Escalante expedition.

Studies conducted over the summer suggest that the inscription is authentic. A study by Dr. Ronald Dorn of Arizona State University used two independent scientific methods to examine the inscription: examination of the lead deposition on the inscription and a study of the layers of desert varnish. Based on both of these methods, Dorn determined that the inscription dates prior to the 20th century and is likely to be 200 to 300 years old.

The authentication studies were made possible by the Glen Canyon Natural History Association and the Armijo Chapter of the Old Spanish Trail Association. Since the available evidence indicates the inscription is genuine, Glen Canyon National Recreation Area will pursue listing it on the National Register of Historic Places.

from a press release by the Glen Canyon National Recreation Area

Workman Chapter Video

At the 2007 OSTA conference in Barstow, Workman Chapter secretary, David Fallowfield, made a 65-minute DVD film titled “The Old Spanish Trail and The Mojave Desert Experience 2007.” The film stars the Workman Chapter members, as well as many other OSTA members, who attended the conference. It traces the English party’s movements over five days, including visits to Afton Canyon and Fort Irwin, as well as attendance at the Paradise Springs barbeque, the symposium sessions, the Main Street Mural dedication, and the Sunday field trip. The film concludes with a visit to Tecopa and China Ranch, and a journey through Death Valley. A showing of the film is planned for Saturday, January 26, 2008, in Penrith, Cumbria, with proceeds going to charity.

David Fallowfield

Trails Preservation Workshop

A two-day preservation training workshop will be held at the BLM National Training Center in Phoenix, Arizona, on March 14-15, 2008. The event is sponsored by the Arizona State Committee on Trails (ASCOT) and led by Dave Welch, National Preservation Officer for the Oregon-California Trail Association (OCTA), and Leslie Fryman, Preservation Officer for the California-Nevada Chapter of OCTA. The workshop will focus on three components of trail preservation: mapping, marking, and monitoring trails.

On the first day, Friday, March 14, there will be a classroom session, which will be limited to 48 people. It will be held at the Bureau of Land Management National Training Center. To reinforce the concepts taught in class, the second day will be a field session to Maricopa Pass. Part of the Sonoran Desert National Monument, this area has identifiable historic routes, in particular the Anza and Butterfield Trails. It also faces the current realities of urban encroachment and OHV use. While this workshop is designed for historic trails, many of the methods can pertain to other trails striving for preservation.

For more information or questions, contact Annie McVay, Arizona State Parks, at 602-542-7116; Bill Gibson, Bureau of Land Management, at 602-417-9425; or trails@azstateparks.gov.

Reba Grandrud

New Film Enhances the *Spanish Trail Suite*

A stunning video of storms, moon rises, and sunsets, as well as re-creations of trail scenes, will enhance the music of the *Spanish Trail Suite*. Created by Marshall McDonald and Steven Sharp Nelson, this composition celebrates the three cultures that settled the West along the route of trails stretching from Santa Fe to Los Angeles. [See *Spanish Traces*, Spring 2006.] The new video will focus on more than 100 miles of the trail in southwest Utah.

Video Ideas Productions from Chattanooga, Tennessee, spent several days last year shooting high-definition scenes to create an interactive visual presentation that will be cued to a live performance of the music, thereby adding a visual dimension to the concert. Historical recreations with Native Americans, Hispanic traders, and pioneers coupled with the spectacular scenery of southern Utah will

offer a unique concert experience.

The *Spanish Trail Suite* consists of four movements. The *Sunrise* movement celebrates the Native Americans of the West. For this movement, the video shows Native Americans dancing around a campfire and involved in daily activities. The *Rainstorm* movement recognizes the



From the video. *courtesy Sara Penny*

hardships of the trail. To have the film illustrate the power of these storms, the producers recorded fabulous time-lapse footage of black clouds rolling into the Cedar Valley with the craggy cliffs of Three Peaks in the background. *Marcha* symbolizes the long trek by foot on the trail. The plodding character of the music is enhanced visually by a lone Hispanic leading a pack horse. Close-ups of the dusty, unforgiving

trail illustrate its difficulty and harshness. In the final movement, *Celebration*, which heralds the arrival of the pioneers and their indomitable will and spirit, the video includes an authentic pioneer dance around the campfire.

Through this combination of music and video, a symphony orchestra has an opportunity to bring the

real West to its audience in an unforgettable way. The premiere performance by the Orchestra of southern Utah (OSU) with the video enhancement will be on April 10, 2008. The program also will be available for rental.

For more information on the music and video, visit the news link on the website www.videoideas.com or www.orchestraofsouthernutah.org. For rental information, contact Jerry Waddell at jerryw@videoideas.com or call 423-894-2677.

Sara Penny, OSU

Juan Bautista de Anza Trail

by Jeff Axel, NPS

In the middle of the 18th century, the northern part of the Spanish territory of California was under threat by the Russians and the British. Knowing that its hold on the territory was tenuous, Spain needed to get people into the region – both soldiers and families – and the people needed to be supplied. Getting supplies by ship up the coast, however, was proving impossible. Any land route would be long, crossing through dry, hostile desert where the indigenous people could be kind or could be fatally cruel.

A Spanish military man of Basque origin, Juan Bautista de Anza dreamed of tackling the desert and connecting the Spanish territory of the *Pimeria Alta* (today's southern Arizona) with the Spanish lands along the Pacific Ocean. Killed by Apaches in 1740, Anza didn't see this dream out. His son, also named Juan Bautista de Anza, picked up his father's cause as his own. On a reconnaissance mission, he determined a route that could be traveled from Tubac, Arizona, to the San Francisco Bay. He knew he would have hundreds of people with him, including children, as well as a thousand head of livestock. Getting them nearly 2,000 miles to San Francisco would require a massive logistical plan. His purpose was to establish a colony to protect Spanish holdings from Russian and British incursions into Spain's California territory.

By early summer 1776, and after six months of adventurous travel, Anza succeeded in getting all but one person alive to San Francisco. He returned triumphant to Mexico City, where he was given the governorship of New Mexico as his reward. But after New Spain fell to Mexico, and then the U.S. took northern Mexico into the Union, Anza, the man who created San Francisco, was almost forgotten as Spain lost its hold on North America.

Two hundred years after Anza's expedition, a group of dedicated equestrians, who happened to be Anza aficionados, got on their horses and rode from Hermosillo, Mexico, to San Francisco. They wanted to retrace Anza's courageous journey. This bicentennial trail ride set the wheels in motion for the eventual creation of the Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail in 1992. The historic corridor, as set aside by Congress, runs 1,200 miles from Nogales, Arizona, to San Francisco, California. As of today, over 200 miles of recreation trail have been built for people to follow on foot, bicycle, or horse. The National Park Service (NPS) is working with the *Instituto Nacional de Antropología y Historia* (INAH) to promote the 640 miles of trail found in Mexico.

The NPS oversees the Anza Trail, restricting itself to a supportive role in trail management. The intent of Congress, when establishing the trail, was for it to

be something local communities could create for themselves. Only a small percentage of the trail crosses federal land. Most of the trail crosses private property, towns, cities, military bases, flood plains, state land, and tribal reservations. The trail's location provided many obstacles for those who wanted to create Anza recreation trails in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. While many national trails have wild terrain challenges that limit their ability to grow, the Anza Trail is different. Human-created challenges and property laws are the biggest obstacles to trail development. These challenges must be navigated with care and attention so that all 1,200 miles of the trail can become a reality.

Trail creation has taken many forms. For example, the citizens of Pima County (where Tucson is located) passed bond initiatives, allowing the county to buy outright the land upon which to build the Anza Trail. In Santa Cruz County, Arizona, a group of volunteers from the Anza Trail Coalition have worked for the better part of a decade to establish trail easements on private land, with the blessing of the various landowners. Research into how trails reduce crime, provide an enhanced quality of life, and increase property values illustrates how national trails are a benefit to landowners. In addition, Arizona has a tort claim law on the books that protects landowners from lawsuits by recreation users who might get injured on the trail.

Government agencies have also established segments of the trail on their land. For example, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) set aside 12 miles of the Anza Trail in the Sonoran Desert National Monument as part of their trails plan. A military base in California allows people to visit one of the old missions, located on the base, that Anza himself had visited.

A developer near Phoenix plans to build an 80 foot wide, six mile long segment of the Anza Trail through their master planned city. Kids will one day walk to school on this part of the Anza Trail. Other groups, both private and public, are taking similar steps in their own communities to make the trail a reality. Although it will be many decades before the recreation trail will be finished, progress is being steadily made.

The NPS uses diplomacy to forge relationships with those who establish trail segments. However, there are many other facets of trail management that must be attended to. Two of the most important of these are interpretation and research.

Managing the park's interpretive program is as much about creating interpretive products as it is coordinating with a variety of Anza experts. Researchers provide knowledge about the history of the man for whom the trail was set aside, as well as the people he led. This is a challenge because the only people keeping

journals were the trip's leaders. Working together, the NPS and their partners create interpretive wayside panels, write site bulletins and newsletters, maintain websites, guide hikes, and work with school children. Our partners are doing a variety of projects and research to support interpretation. Park Ranger/Historian Don Garate, from Tumacácori National Historical Park, is writing a series of books on Anza's life and journey. Volunteer Joe Myers is using journals and land features, as well as a bit of math, to calculate the most likely spots for Anza's campsites. Anza Trail Coalition members Vince Murray, Mary Aguirre, and Reba Grandrud keep track of community governance issues related to the trail and bring them to the attention of the NPS. Trail volunteer and Anza researcher Greg Smestad created a guide book that people can reference and download from the official Anza Trail website. Several artists have provided their skill, rendering onto paper historically accurate artwork that showcases key events of the trip. Wade Cox makes dramatic sketches, Bill Singleton creates colorful computer-based illustrations, and David Rickman has just finished a series of twelve richly detailed paintings. This is but a few of the people who are working on the interpretive products. Most of the 27 million people living along the Anza Trail are not aware of Anza's contribution to U.S. history, which makes interpretation critical to the trail's success.

As Anza isn't very well known, correcting common misperceptions is important. Take, for example, Anza's name. His name is pronounced "Ansssa." It is always said without the "de," unless using all four words of his name. No one called him "de Anza" when he was alive. Those with any doubts are encouraged to read historic documents, such as Father Font's journal, at anza.uoregon.edu. There are almost 500 entries in historical accounts where he is referred to as "Anza." Only once was he called "de Anza," and this was by a German priest who knew almost no Spanish.

The other common misperception is that existing Anza Trail recreation segments follow Anza's actual footsteps. Unlike the situation on the Oregon Trail, there are no physical imprints from Anza's time pressed in the earth for people to see and follow. Anza was riding a horse, not walking the trail. He only took this route once, and it was over 231 years ago. Obviously, no remnants of his horse's hoof prints exist. Only where the path is very narrow through mountain passes can one be assured of being within a few feet of where he rode. That is the reason that the NPS established a historic corridor of varying width, not a specific path. In addition, Anza followed Indian guides, who took him along transportation routes which were thousands of years old. It is no coincidence that some of these trails are now paved interstate freeways. People naturally gravitate to the

most convenient transportation corridors, and Anza was just following those who came before him.

The National Park Service will continue its work with communities and individuals along the route to promote the trail. We will support continued research on Anza, Father Font, and the various participants in the Anza expedition, and the modern significance of this trip. Understanding the role of Native Americans to the success of the expedition and the consequences to their culture created by Spanish colonization is an important goal of our program as well. We will offer programs to the public on the variety of interpretive themes to be found within the Anza story. For those who are interested, we are available to answer questions about challenges we have faced and ways in which we have been able to succeed in working through the obstacles inherent in establishing a national historic trail where almost 30 million people live. For more information, please see our website www.nps.gov/juba.



Visit Fort Uncompahgre

In 1828, a year before the first official trade caravans pushed westward from Santa Fe towards California on what came to be known as the Old Spanish Trail, a trading post was built next to the Gunnison River in western Colorado. The proprietor was Antoine Robidoux, a French-American who held Mexican citizenship and who had already made a name for himself in Santa Fe by marrying the Mexican governor's daughter. With his political future in good hands, he began what came to be a very lucrative trade with the Ute people who lived in western Colorado. By 1830 his trading post had become a welcome respite for traders and travelers who were using the northern branch of the Old Spanish Trail. Although this mountain trail was more difficult to negotiate than the main route, it provided adequate water and forage for pack animals. A little more than a hundred miles northwest of Fort Uncompahgre, the north branch linked up with the main trail near the Green River in Utah.

In September 1844, Ute raiders from outside the region attacked the trading post, killing most of its occupants. Robidoux, probably in Wyoming at the time, never returned. Captain John Gunnison's survey party reported camping by the burned out remains of

the fort when they passed through in 1853. Area homesteaders also left accounts of ruins in the 1880's, but time and high waters from the Gunnison River eventually washed the site clean and the old fort was almost forgotten.

In the late 1980's, the Fort Uncompahgre was reconstructed. It was opened to the public in 1991. Today, visitors to the fort can set their own pace with a self-guided tour, viewing rooms outfitted and furnished much as they would have been in Robidoux's day. Goats and a small flock of Churro sheep graze on a nearby creek-side. Packs of beaver, deer, and elk skins await shipment in the hide room. A heritage garden is also available for visitors to walk through. With the exception of interpretive signs, displays are presented to give a feeling that the original inhabitants might return at any time.

Additional information can be obtained from the web site at www.delta-co.org or by calling 970-874-1718.

***Ken Reyher, Director
Fort Uncompahgre***



Fort Uncompahgre.

photo by Dianne Sales

Book Reviews

Three Plays: The Indolent Boys, Children of the Sun, and The Moon in Two Windows

By N. Scott Momaday
Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2007
ISBN: 978-0-8061-3828-2
224 pages, 4 b&w illus.
Cloth: \$24.95

In *Three Plays*, Kiowa author N. Scott Momaday interweaves oral and literary traditions, recorded histories, and archival records. One play is a retelling of a Kiowa myth, and the other two plays dramatize historical events. Each work involves questions of identity and assimilation.

Children of the Sun is a short children's play that is based on an ancient Kiowa narrative about twin heroes. The twins are the children of an earthly mother and the god who is the Sun. The boys are called *Talyi-dai*, or "half-boys," and they continue on today as the Kiowa tribe's medicine bundles. Although there is a dimension of timelessness in his telling of this sacred story, Momaday also includes anachronistic details such as dirty socks and bottles of juice.

Set in Anadarko, Oklahoma Territory, *The Indolent Boys* recounts the 1891 tragedy of three Native American boys, one of whom, having been disciplined, had run away from the Kiowa Boarding School. The boys, ages 8 to 15, were attempting

to return to their family's camp, about forty miles away. They were traveling on foot. Overtaken by a winter storm, they froze to death. In *Indolent Boys*, Momaday examines this incident, as well as federal Indian education policy, by exploring the consequences of the boys' deaths from the perspectives of the boarding school staff and the boys' families.

The play consists of a prologue, two acts divided into eight scenes, and an epilogue. Old Mother Goodeye introduces the story. Although frail, she is wise, and she acquaints her readers with the runaways and the whipping of Seta that prompted their leaving. Next, the school superintendent, G. P. Gregory, and the teacher, Barton Wheritt, take center stage. While they seek to find excuses for the disappearance of the children and blame Seta for leading the other boys into the blizzard that caused their deaths, Mother Goodeye creates a warrior past for Seta and describes how he died trying to protect the two other children from the cold. A student, John Pai, is caught between the point of view of the schoolteachers who are training him to be a missionary and his Kiowa heritage.

A screenplay set in the early 1900s, *The Moon in Two Windows* focuses on Indian children who are forced into assimilation at the first off-reservation boarding school. Located in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, the school was founded by Richard Henry Pratt, a career

soldier whose motto was "Kill the Indian and save the Man." Although it deals with many of the same issues as *The Indolent Boys*, this play is more ambiguous because on the surface it tells of a triumph: the 1912 football game between Army (led by future president Dwight Eisenhower) and Carlisle (led by Oklahoma native Jim Thorpe). Carlisle wins the game, which might appear to be a victory for Pratt's ideas about assimilation: Indians are now able to channel their aggression onto the football field. However, Luther Standing Bear, the play's main character, reflects on what the children's conformity has cost them. He realizes that the school was actually "a kind of laboratory in which our hearts were tested. Some of us were destroyed and some were made stronger." Luther's understanding provides an effective critique of federal American Indian education programs.

Perhaps best known for his Pulitzer Prize winning novel, *House Made of Dawn*, N. Scott Momaday is an internationally acclaimed poet, novelist, playwright, storyteller, artist, and teacher. His *Three Plays: The Indolent Boys, Children of the Sun, and The Moon in Two Windows* will resonate with anyone who has an interest in issues of cultural identity and who values a connectedness to landscape, both mythological and literal.

Deborah and Jon Lawrence

Chicanos in a Changing Society: From Mexican Pueblos to American Barrios in Santa Barbara and Southern California

by Albert Camarillo, forward by John Chavez.

Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 2005.

ISBN-13: 9780870744976

368 pages. Hardcover, \$22.50.

Originally published in 1979, *Chicanos in a Changing Society* documents the decline in the status of the Spanish-speaking population of Southern California from the end of the Mexican-American War into the 1900's. Camarillo, a professor of history at Stanford University since 1975, is considered to be one of the founding scholars of Mexican-American history and Chicano studies. This book, his groundbreaking treatment of race and ethnic relations in the historical development of the Southwest, is the result of research he did for his dissertation at UCLA.

According to the introduction by John Chavez, work on this topic prior to *Chicanos in a Changing Society* tended to be "superficial and polemical." Several serious studies reached similar conclusions as Camarillo's but lacked case studies to validate their sweeping and sometimes conflicting claims. Camarillo not only provides case studies but lays the groundwork for his conclusions with hard data,

incorporated into tables with titles such as the following: "Relative worth of the Spanish-surnamed and non-Spanish property-owning populations in Santa Barbara, 1853"; "Occupational structure for the total Spanish-surnamed male head-of-household population of Santa Barbara, 1860"; "Total Chicano, white, and non-white populations in selected Southern California cities, 1860-1890." The author uses these tables to anchor his arguments regarding the shrinking role of the Hispanic population in practically all aspects of life in Santa Barbara and other locations in Southern California. The numbers reflect the cultural pressures that the Spanish-surnamed population experienced and the often-strained reaction that occurred as they adapted to the "foreign" ways of the *yanqui* conquerors.

The number of Hispanics in the selected occupational categories was stagnant from the 1860's to the early 1900's. Spanish-surnamed residents almost invariably occupied the lowest levels of employment. Even the land-owning ranchers saw their economic position collapse due to natural disasters (particularly drought), but also because of the predatory practices of *yanqui* real-estate attorneys. The farmers' political clout also shrank as the *yanquis* gerrymandered districts and elected officials who favored their causes.

This bleak picture is mitigated to some extent by the spiritual comfort the Hispanic population derived from their Catholic faith. Camarillo points to the persistence of colorful fiesta and holy day celebrations, which the *yanqui* newcomers sometimes viewed with disdain. Unfortunately, the Catholic church could do little to improve their flock's temporal condition. Having been despoiled of most of its lands during the Mexican secularization of the missions, the church had yet to recover to a level that afforded it a modicum of dignity.

Chicanos in a Changing Society is recommended to anyone who is interested in learning about the declining position of the Spanish-surnamed residents of Southern California in almost all aspects of social life from 1850 to 1930.

Froylán Tiscareño

Corrections for the Fall 2007 issue of Spanish Traces:

In the article by John Robinson, Antonio Maria's death, cited on page 16, should be April 10, 1850, and end note 5, on page 18, should read "reprint of the 1876 edition."

In the article by Michael González, the author's name was mis-spelled.

Inlandia: A Literary Journey through California's Inland Empire

Edited by Gayle Wattawa.
Berkeley, CA: Heyday Books,
2005.

ISBN: 9781597140379

464 pages, cloth \$18.95.

Funded by the James Irvine Foundation and the National Endowment for the Humanities, *Inlandia* is a literary collection of more than 80 authors, representing the Southern California counties of Riverside and San Bernardino. The anthology includes works by celebrated writers such as Joan Didion, Norman Mailer, Raymond Chandler, John Steinbeck, Calvin Trillin, M.F.K. Fisher, and Mary Austin, as well as lesser known voices from the Inland Empire. Each work is accompanied by an explanatory head note, placing it in its wider historical context.

Edited by Gayle Wattawa, the anthology's selections run an impressive gamut from traditional to experimental works, from older to recent items, from stories and poems to essays. *Inlandia* even includes diary entries, for example George Fujimoto's diary entries describing the evacuation and interment of the Japanese in the Riverside area during WW II.

The excerpt from Harry Lawton's novel *Willie Boy: A Desert Manhunt*, a fictional rendering of the 1909

kidnapping of a Chemehuevi girl by Willie Boy, is certain to interest readers. This is followed by a dramatically different version of the story, which is taken from *The Hunt for Willie Boy*. Published in 1994, this reinterpretation was written by Larry Burgess, the director of the A. K. Smiley Public Library in Redlands, and James Sandos, a history professor at the University of Redlands and the author of *Converting California* [reviewed in *Spanish Traces*, Fall 2007]. There is even a poetical rendering of the events: Dick Barnes' "Willy Boy."

Readers of *Spanish Traces* will especially enjoy the anthology's earlier pieces. These include excerpts from Juan Bautista de Anza's diary, which describe the San Jacinto Valley and the "unfordable" Santa Ana River, and an excerpt from Marc Reisner's *Cadillac Desert* that details the founding of San Bernardino by Mormons. The book contains a selection from Horace Bell's memoir that describes the tense relations between the Lugo family, who owned the wealthy San Bernardino rancho, and the local law;

this account is followed by José del Carmen Lugo's description of the same events.

For those readers who have been to the Ramona pageant in Hemet, there is not only an excerpt from Helen Hunt Jackson's novel *Ramona*, but also one from Gordon Johnson's "In the Stands for Improved Ramona Pageant," which describes recent changes made to the annual pageant.

Inlandia can be enjoyed by all persons interested in the literature and history of Southern California. For the readers unfamiliar with the authors and topics, this anthology is a useful introduction. For those already familiar with the well-known authors in the collection, it offers some delightful new voices.

Walter Drew Hill



Field trip at the Forks of the Road, near Barstow, CA, June 2007.

photo by Dan Dugan

California Bound: Early Routes from New Mexico to California

by Lloyd M. Pierson

The Old Spanish Trail was neither the first nor the only trail from Santa Fe to California. This article will give an overview of other trails that were used during the late 1700's and early 1800's.

While California was the last of the Spanish frontier borderlands to be settled, interest in developing routes between New Mexico and California and between Sonora and California had developed earlier. Padres Domínguez and Escalante tried to get to California from Santa Fe in 1776-1777, partially over what later became the Old Spanish Trail. Winter stymied the expedition, and they got only as far west as the southwest corner of Utah before turning back toward New Mexico.

In 1774 Captain Juan Batista de Anza, with the help of an Indian guide and Father Garcés, pioneered a route from the Sonoran frontier to Southern California. He went by way of Altar, Sonora, and Yuma to Mission San Gabriel. The next year Anza traveled the same route, extending it to the San Francisco area where he established a presidio.¹

The first successful direct contact between California and New Mexico was made by Father Garcés early in 1776. He traveled up the Colorado River from the

Yuma crossing to the area of the Needles. He then went west to San Gabriel and returned to the Needles. From here he proceeded eastward south of the Grand Canyon to the Hopi villages.²

While he did not continue to New Mexico, there was a well-traveled route between the Hopi towns via Zuni to Santa Fe. Apparently, this potential route to California wasn't used until the mid 19th century.

When Anza became governor of New Mexico in 1788, he proceeded from Tubac to Santa Fe on a route that served a string of settlements and presidios that had been established in northern Sonora and northern Vizcaya. The route went by way of Fronteras and Janos and joined the Camino Real at El Paso. This was the principal way to get from Sonora to Santa Fe; several other routes had been pioneered but used only once.³ The route that Anza took provided, in principle, a way to get from New Mexican to California, but it was long and rarely used. In 1781 it was closed at the Yuma crossing of the Colorado River by the Yuma Indians.⁴

The first quarter of the 19th century saw little interest by the Sonorans and New Mexicans in developing or exploring new roads, but after 1821, American trappers managed in a few short years to visit and trap most of the New Mexican and Sonoran frontier. The trappers first concentrated on the area north and northwest of Santa Fe and Taos. Later, as beaver in these

areas became scarce, *entradas* were made into the Sonoran frontier of western New Mexico and Arizona. The Spaniards had gained extensive knowledge of the Southwest during 200 years of exploration; the American trappers undoubtedly took advantage of this knowledge.

While the *Californios* themselves seem to have had little interest in contact with New Mexico, the trappers became interested in making the link during the 1820's. Jedediah Smith was the first American trapper to seek out California. Perhaps he heard about California at the 1826 rendezvous from Canadians, who were familiar with the sea captains' tales of California's riches in fur-bearing animals.⁵

In August 1826, Smith and 15 other trappers set out from the Cache Valley rendezvous site, heading southwest to the Great Salt Lake, and then south to Utah Lake. From there he went to the Sevier River, on to the Virgin River, and then down the Colorado to the Mojave villages. Here he picked up Mojave guides and took the old Indian trail via the Mojave River to the San Bernardino Valley in California. He arrived on November 26, 1826. He left lower California by way of the San Joaquin Valley, trapping as he went. When the snow finally was off the passes in May 1827, Smith left some of his men in California and headed for the rendezvous of 1827. He arrived at Bear Lake on July 3, 1827.

The rendezvous was over on July 13, and Smith prepared to return to California. Taking 18 men with him, he went south, via Utah Lake and the Santa Clara and Virgin Rivers, to the Mojave villages on the Colorado. After a skirmish with the Mojave, he headed west over the same route as the previous year and wound up in the San Bernardino Valley on August 28. He then went north to find the men he had left the year before on the Stanislaus River. After arrangements were made for the trapping season, he left for Mission San Jose, where he was confined by the Spanish.

While confined, Smith was informed that another party of Americans was in the Tulare country further south. Dale L. Morgan argues that this must have been the party of Richard Campbell, the next group to get to California after Smith.⁶ Alice B. Maloney cites a report by a French sea captain, who told of a party of 16 men from New Orleans who were trapping beaver and buying horses in October of 1827. Given the timing, this report may serve as evidence for Campbell's presence in California. Other evidence for Campbell's presence comes from a report by Carlos Antonio Carrillo, who wrote that 60 men passed through the country in 1827, made plans with the commandante, but were not detained.⁷ Smith *was* detained so it is probable that this was the Campbell party, though

the numbers appear to be exaggerated. In 1826, Campbell had applied for Mexican naturalization as "Jose Ricardo Campbell" in New Mexico.⁸ His citizenship may account for his lack of harassment by the California government in 1827 – Jedediah Smith, who wasn't a Mexican citizen, was detained.

During the previous winter of 1826-1827, Campbell had been part of a party of trappers under Ewing Young that included Peg Leg Smith, F. Z. Branch, and George Yount. The group had gone to the lower Salt River to retrieve some traps. While looking for the traps, they rescued Michel Roubidoux and James O. Pattie. In an engagement with Indians, Campbell shot at an Indian who was wrestling with Peg Leg, barely missing Peg Leg, much to the latter's anger. The party later split up, and it may have been at this time that Campbell got to San Diego with his mule pack train, but if not, he at least had learned how to get there.⁹

Richard Campbell's trip, the first known trading trip between New Mexico and California, was detailed in later years by Lt. James H. Simpson in his report regarding a wagon route from Santa Fe to California in 1849:

Mr. Richard Campbell, of Santa Fe, since my return has informed me that, in 1827, with a party of thirty-five men and a number of pack animals, he traveled from New Mexico to

San Diego by way of Zuni and the valley of the Rio de Zuni, and found no difficulty throughout the whole distance. He further states there is no question that a good wagon route, furnishing the proper quantum of wood, water, and grass, can be found in this direction, both to San Diego and the Pueblo de los Angeles. He informs me, however, that in order to reach the Rio Colorado, the Rio de Zuni would have to be diverged from at the falls [Falls of Little Colorado], within a few miles of its confluence with the Colorado and a valley running southwardly followed down to its junction with the valley of that river.

He has further informed me that above the mouth of the Rio de Zuni there is a ford, called El Vado de los Padres [the ford of the Fathers], to which a route leads from Zuni by way of the pueblos of the Moquis. This route, which he represents as much shorter than the other, is, however, on account of the difficulty crossing the canon of the river at the ford, only practicable for pack animals. The Colorado, when he crossed it near the mouth of the Rio de Zuni, was fordable, but he is of the opinion that it might not always be found so.¹⁰

The next group to get to California after Smith and Campbell was led by James Ohio Pattie and his father Sylvester. Starting out from Santa Fe with 30 men, trapping as they went, they went by way of the Gila, arriving at its mouth in December 1827. The party then split, with Isaac Slover, Nathaniel Pryor, Jesse Ferguson, William Pope, Richard Laughlin,

and Edmund Russell going with the Patties. After Indians took their horses, they made canoes and trapped down the Colorado River to tidewater. From there they walked overland, arriving at Mission Santa Catarina in Baja California in March 1828. There they were incarcerated. The senior Pattie died while in prison, and the others weren't set free until the middle of 1830. Slover and Pope were in a group of six who were allowed to go back to the Colorado River to collect furs. They did not go back to California but returned to New Mexico.¹¹

In the summer of 1828, Peg Leg Smith traveled from New Mexico to the rendezvous at Bear Lake. He then joined a group of trappers who worked the Virgin and Santa Clara Rivers in southwestern Utah. During the first part of 1829, he and a companion went to Los Angeles to sell the furs they had garnered. It is a reasonable guess that he used the western section of the Old Spanish Trail – the section pioneered by Jedediah Smith – on his way to Los Angeles. While there, Smith got drunk and the *alcalde* kicked him out of town. Smith took revenge by stealing a herd of three or four hundred horses, which he drove to Taos.¹² He possibly used the entire length of the trail back to Taos, which would make him the original pioneer of the Old Spanish Trail.

In August 1829, Ewing Young set out for California with approximately 40 trappers. Avoiding legal problems, he

went northwest from Santa Fe on the Old Spanish Trail to the continental divide, where he turned south to Zuni and on to the Salt River. They trapped down the Salt until they reached the mouth of the Verde. They went up the Verde to its headwaters, where the party split. Eighteen men accompanied Young, including young Kit Carson. Turning west, they crossed the Colorado near El Dorado Ferry and soon picked up the Mojave River. They arrived at San Gabriel early in 1830.¹³

Three months later, in November 1829, Antonio Armijo set out from Abiquiu with 60 men to trade for mules in California. Literate in Spanish, he evidently had read the Domínguez and Escalante journal and decided to go by way of the Grand Canyon. According to his diary, his route took him south of the Old Spanish Trail and the Colorado River to the Crossing of the Fathers. West of there, he joined the general route of the Old Spanish Trail and continued on to the San Gabriel Mission. LeRoy Hafen asserts that they broke up into three groups on the way back. One group went by way of Sonora. A second group returned by the same route they had followed west, but they made it back in only 40 days – half the time it took them to get to California. According to his signed diary, Armijo also returned by the original route, taking 56 days, arriving on April 25, 1830.¹⁴

Recent research indicates that Armijo, together with his father, Jose Francisco, and his mother, Lolita Maria, returned to settle in California in the fall of 1830. The route taken on this trip is not known, but his mother's presence suggests they would have taken a route, such as the main branch of the Old Spanish Trail, that was safer than his original route. She may even have been pregnant as she gave birth to Armijo's little brother the year of 1830.¹⁵

The Wolfskill-Yount party was also on the way from Abiquiu to California that winter, traveling the main branch of the Old Spanish Trail. While that party has been given credit for being the first to traverse the entire length of the trail, it is quite likely that Armijo led the first east-to-west traverse of the Old Spanish Trail from New Mexico to California *before* Wolfskill and Yount and their companions. The Wolfskill-Yount party took from the end of September 1830 until the first part of February 1831 to make the trip, over 120 days. They must have trapped along the way. If Armijo's baby brother was born in California in 1830, Armijo made better time than Wolfskill-Yount and must have been ahead of him.

It is apparent from this brief history that there were several ways to get to California from New Mexico. One route was the Sonora trail that led across the present states of Chihuahua and Sonora just below the present international boundary. Another,

the Salt-Gila route, was further north, joining the Sonora route at the Yuma crossing. A third trail, pioneered by Garcés (often called the 35th parallel route), led west from Zuni on either side of the San Francisco Mountains, crossing the Colorado near Needles and joining the Old Spanish Trail further west. The Armijo route was north of the 35th parallel, climbing in and out of the Grand Canyon.

The Old Spanish Trail had an advantage over these other trails: there were no Apaches, Navajos, Pima, Papago, Yuma, or Mojaves along the route. On the Old Spanish Trail, travelers only had to contend with the Utes, who had established friendly relations with the Spanish, and the Paiutes, who were usually friendly. While all of the trails mentioned above were used, it is probably for this reason that the Old Spanish Trail was the most popular.

End Notes

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View from Paradise Springs, Barstow, June 2007.
photo by Dan Dugan

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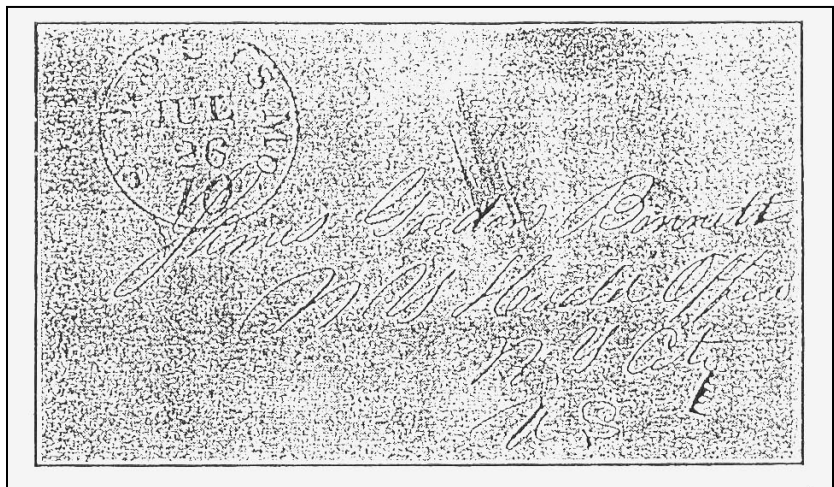


A Trip to the Post Office in 1848: The Story of the First Overland Mail from California

by *Eric A. Nelson*

In 1848, neither governmental nor private express mail service to or from California existed. For the most part, correspondents were forced to send their correspondence to the eastern United States by sea, entrusting ship's officers or ship passengers to carry it for them for delivery to a post office at the eastern port of entry. Delivery of official dispatches to the United States suffered similar shortcomings. However, Kit Carson provided one notable exception when, between March and October 1847, he carried official dispatches from Los Angeles to Washington D.C. and back again.

On March 15, 1848, a new and singular development occurred. On that date, *The California Star* announced that, in addition to official dispatches, a military courier would carry ordinary letters, free of charge, from Los Angeles to St. Louis. The journey was to commence in early May. Colonel Richard B. Mason, military governor of California, chose Kit Carson to perform this task. This was to be the very first government delivery of mail ever carried overland from California to the States.



Envelope of the letter to the New York *Herald*.
courtesy Eric Nelson

That Carson carried ordinary mail on this trip is corroborated by Lieutenant George Douglas Brewerton, who accompanied Carson on the trip as far as Santa Fe, New Mexico. In addition, William Tecumseh Sherman, then a lieutenant and an adjutant under Colonel Mason, alluded to Carson's carrying ordinary mail when he wrote from Monterey on April 10 that "the time is rapidly approaching when Lieutenant Carson.... will start for home. He goes from Los Angeles to Santa Fe and thence to St. Louis where he will put his mail in the Post-Office."

Among the ordinary mail carried in Carson's mail bags was a folded letter, addressed to the editor of the New York *Herald*. That letter, datelined "Pueblo de Los Angeles, May 1, 1848," reads as follows (punctuation has been added where necessary to aid in understanding the text):

To James Gordon Bennett Esqr.

Friend – Editor. An Affair of honour came off at this place this morning which may be well termed--Virginia pride vs. Yankee pluck. The parties were J.C.B. 1st Lieut of our N Y Vols and a Yanka Supercargo stopping in town a few days. Weapons used Rifles - distance forty paces - The seconds having been chosen and all the preliminary arrangements previously completed. The parties repaired at early dawn to the chosen field of action attended only by their seconds. After arriving at the spot, taking distance &c - the words one and two was given when the Brave Virginian fired, but only to waste his charge. (B)ut the Yanka retained his charge untill the word three. When he cooly fired, the ball passed well along the Gallant Virginian Liet's rifle, cutting the fourth finger from his left hand & entering the right one passed into his wrist and lodged. (H)ad the piece been properly loded the ball would have entered his head & killed him on the spot, but the charge was to light - to which fact he is truly indebted for his

life. We understand from the Surgeon that Liet. B. looses one finger but the wound on the right hand not likely to prove very severe. The affair created some excitement among the Vols, but having no good feelings for NY's B there appears to be no sympathy for him

--- I understand the difficulty was respecting a spanish Lady living alone in the place. (H)er husband (a mexican officer) was obliged to flee to Mexico at the time of Gen. Kearny's entering the country.

Yours very Respectfully

/s/ A. Valentine

P S This was written in haste as the mail bags close this day for the states. (Y)ou will please correct mistakes & publish it.

Yours

/s/A.V.

If only a letter could talk, what tales it could tell about its journey to its destination. Although it is not common that the details of a letter's journey can be traced, Mr. Valentine's letter to Mr. Bennett is an exception.

Carson left Los Angeles on May 4, 1848. His party included Lieutenant Brewerton and twenty hired men, some of whom were experienced mountain men who had known Carson for years. The party also included three citizens and three Mexican servants. Carson's animal of choice, both for riding and packing, was the mule.

As far as Santa Fe, Carson's route generally followed the Old Spanish Trail, which was seldom

used and stretched nearly 1,200 miles. From Los Angeles, he proceeded through the San Gabriel Valley and the Cajon Pass into the Mojave Desert. In the desert, the party covered between fifteen and fifty miles per day, depending upon the distance between water holes. At times, after a long ride, they remained camped for twenty-four hours, grass and water permitting, to allow the animals to recover.

They were almost never free of Indians. Shortly after they left the desert, they encountered Digger Indians. At first the Indians were not considered hostile, as they merely sought handouts of food and then departed. However, they continued to follow the party's progress for several days. When they reappeared, Carson considered their actions suspicious and ordered the taking of one of their tribe as a hostage for the tribe's good behavior during the night. He was released the following day, unharmed and without incident.

Crossing into what is now southern Nevada, Carson camped for a day and a night at the Archillette, a camping ground in the desert used by the few travelers who passed this way. Here in 1844, Indians murdered two members of a party headed by John C. Frémont. On that occasion, Carson and another man immediately left Frémont's party and searched out and killed the culprits.

Signal fires and other signs of Indians became more plentiful at

the Virgin River. One of the horse guard reported having discovered fresh Indian tracks near the animals. Carson, Brewerton, and two others investigated and found a Digger Indian who had been reconnoitering near their camp. They gave chase and eventually shot him, but he managed to escape. From that point forward, however, the party never had a problem with the Digger Indians.

In what is now Utah, they left the desert and arrived at Las Vegas de Santa Clara, later to be renamed Mountain Meadows, site of the 1857 massacre.

Outside Little Salt Lake, they first encountered the Ute Indians, although no incidents occurred. Leaving Little Salt Lake, they entered the mountains of southern Utah, through which they traveled for several days until they reached several feet of snow. They camped near a lake and were again visited by Ute Indians. With provisions becoming scanty, Carson managed to purchase food from the Indians. He asked for fish, whereupon an Indian departed and returned in a few minutes with a trout. They learned that the fish had been killed by an arrow wound in the back, and before long two of Carson's men came back with as many fish as they could carry. A small tributary to the lake contained so many fish that they were able to kill them with sticks. Brewerton reported having caught five dozen fish with an old bayonet fastened to a stick. He named the lake "Trout Lake." Whether or not

this is just another “fish story,” the fact remains that historians have not been able to determine where this lake is located.

Leaving the mountains but still in Utah, the party crossed the Green River and arrived at the Grand (Colorado) River, near present-day Moab, where they experienced a near catastrophe. It was now June and the river was swollen by melting snows, posing the first serious danger to the mail bags. Carson proposed to build rafts to ferry their gear and packs across the river. They cut and notched logs, rolled them into the water, and then tied them together.

Brewerton states: “Having freighted it [the raft] as heavily as we dared with our packs and riding saddles, and placed the bags containing the California mails upon the securest portion, we next proceeded to determine who of our party should be the first to swim the stream.” Brewerton was one of the swimmers and was placed in charge. Non-swimmers were to hold on to the corners of the raft, but were ordered by Carson not to get onto the raft itself. The swimmers were to tow the raft across. Carson’s instructions ended with the statement: “Keep a good lookout for rocks and floating timber; and whatever you do, don’t lose the mail bags.” Carson, with approximately half of the party, remained on shore for the next launching.

Unfortunately, Brewerton’s party did not get across. The rapids carried and deposited them a mile downstream, on the same side of the river from which they had started. They could not take the raft upstream against the rapids, so they had no choice but to shoulder the baggage, including the mail bags, and travel by foot back to the starting point. The task was made that much more difficult by the fact that the only articles of clothing they were wearing were their hats; their clothing had been left behind to be carried on another raft.

Back at the starting point, and after four more hours consumed while building another raft, Brewerton’s party made a successful crossing. Exhausted, they could scarcely unload the raft. A band of Ute Indians, who had been watching the proceedings, unloaded the mail bags and other baggage. The California mail was saved.

The animals and remaining baggage were next to cross. The animals swam across successfully, as did Carson with a small amount of baggage. However, a large raft, carrying the greater share of their provisions, ran into an obstruction and broke apart. The men saved themselves, but they lost six rifles, three saddles, much of the ammunition, and almost all of their provisions. Fortunately, the raft which hit the obstruction was not carrying the mail bags.

They entered into what is now Colorado and began climbing the Rocky Mountains. Brewerton found this part of the journey the most pleasant, not only for the majestic scenery, with its cliffs, mountain passes, and rocky barriers, but also because they were able to find game to eat.

Leaving the Rocky Mountains, they descended toward the Taos Valley of New Mexico. They camped that night near a stream, which turned out to be infested by an incredible number of mosquitos. However, apparently a more serious danger was lurking. Carson noticed “Indian sign,” which he concluded meant that a war party was nearby. They came upon the “Indian” encampment and decided to make a charge since they appeared to be evenly matched in numbers. They charged, but came up short when they discovered that the “enemy” was actually a group of Mexican traders which had come that far in order to trade with the Indians. However, they did learn from this group that a war party of Indians was nearby. Rather than be caught in their camp that night, Carson decided they should continue traveling in order to cover the one hundred miles to the first settlements in New Mexico.

When they came to within eighteen miles of these settlements, they nearly stumbled into the very Indian village they were trying to avoid. There was no way to prevent being detected. The Indians, in war paint, rode

up to their party. Carson tried to converse with the chief, but to no avail. He gave orders to his men to drive the animals together about two hundred yards further from the village. Having done this, they turned to see what the Indians were doing and discovered about one hundred fifty Indians, in war paint, charging down on them, brandishing spears and lances. Ever mindful of the mail, Carson barked out his orders: dismount, tie up the riding mules; those without guns hold onto the mules; those with guns look out for the Indians; and "shoot down the mule with the mail bags on her pack, if they try to stampede the animals."

What happened next was strange. Carson harangued the Indians; the Indians brandished their weapons; the chiefs dashed among the Indians, commanding and directing them. Although Carson's party had practically no ammunition (in fact, they had only three rounds per man), Carson let the Indians know that if they came any farther they would be shot. Just as it seemed that all would be lost, an Indian came riding fast toward the warriors. The chief consulted with the rider and the warriors fell back. In the confusion, Carson ordered his men to jump into their saddles and make a running fight of it if it came to a fight. But the Indians disappeared, returning to their village.

Carson's party rode hard to the Mexican settlement, where they learned the secret of their escape from the fight with the Indians: a

party of two hundred American volunteers was on its way to punish the perpetrators of recent Indian outrages in the vicinity. Obviously, the Indian messenger had come to warn the chiefs of this superior force. The California mail was saved again.

The following day, June 14, they arrived in Taos without further incident. While Carson remained in Taos where he and his wife had their home, Brewerton continued on to Santa Fe, three days distant. Three more days followed, after which Carson arrived in Santa Fe to outfit for the trip to the States. Carson and Brewerton parted in Santa Fe, as Brewerton was to travel to a new post in Mississippi.

Carson left Santa Fe on June 26. At Taos, Carson was warned that the Comanches were causing troubles on the Santa Fe Trail. He also received first-hand accounts of attacks by Utes and mountain Apaches, possibly members of the same band of Indians which he had encountered just before entering Taos. Carson decided to enlist a smaller party, possibly no more than four men, in addition to himself, to enable him to get past the Indians more easily. Carson's own memoirs contribute very little to this portion of the trip. Most information available has come to us from Jesse Nelson, one of the four recruits.

Carson decided that it would be better to travel the mountains than the plains, since they would stand a better chance against Indian attack.

They traveled by day and night from Taos to a pueblo settlement on the upper Arkansas River, seventy-five miles north of Bent's Fort. From there, they proceeded northerly and northeasterly along the foothills, aiming for the Platte River trail to the Missouri frontier.

While Carson was camped on the Bijou River, seven Kiowas rode in. Although Carson's exploits were well known to the plains tribes, Carson had not had contact with them for six years. Apparently, his face was not familiar to these seven young Kiowas, and unknown to them, Carson knew enough of their language to understand what they were saying. Their plan was for Carson and his party to sit, eat, and smoke a pipe, but when the pipe started to make the rounds for the third time, the Indians would kill Carson and his men. Without changing his attitude, Carson told his men to tend the animals, while he finished the smoke, and that if he raised his hand they should shoot. As Carson took the pipe for the third time, he signaled his men who, in turn, pulled their guns on the Indians. Carson then berated the Indians in Kiowa and English, telling them that he was Kit Carson and that they should take a good look at him before they die. The Kiowas wilted, whereupon Carson told them that they were cowards, that they should tell their chiefs that they had seen Kit Carson and that he had given them their lives, but that they could use their bows to kill a few rabbits. Carson's party then left. The mail was saved again.

Carson continued to the South Platte. To avoid being discovered, he made evening campfires to cook supper and then abandoned them and traveled six or eight more miles to rest without a fire.

At the juncture of the South and North Platte Rivers, Carson and his group met a trading party from Fort Laramie. Carson's men turned back to Taos with one of the traders who was heading in that direction. Carson joined the trading party down the South Platte to Grand Island, then south along the Republican and Kansas Rivers, through more Indian territory, and into Fort Leavenworth. He arrived at St. Louis on July 25, 1848, a month after he had left Santa Fe.

At St. Louis, Carson delivered the private mail to the post office, where the mail received a postal marking dated July 26, 1848. From that point, the mail was routed by the United States Post Office Department.

Today, our letters enter the mail system when we deposit them in a mail box around the corner. Mr. Valentine's letter to Mr. Bennett rode in Kit Carson's mailbag for eighty-three days before reaching a post office, enduring dangers almost impossible to imagine and surviving to this day because of the extraordinary exploits of the most famous of western adventurers: Kit Carson.

Postlude

Kit Carson left St. Louis on July 30, 1848, arriving at the War Department in Washington D.C. on approximately August 7, whereupon he delivered the governmental dispatches which had been handed to him by Colonel Mason.

George Douglas Brewerton had joined the Army as a volunteer in the First New York Infantry Volunteers, coming to California as a member of Stevenson's Regiment. After leaving the service, he worked as a newspaper correspondent, practiced law, entered the service again during the Civil War, was a pastor of a Baptist church, and wrote several books. However, he found his niche in painting and maintained a studio in Brooklyn. He died in New York in 1901.

James Gordon Bennett was the founder and editor of the New York *Herald*, as well as a founder of the Associated Press. The New York *Herald* was possibly the most influential newspaper in the United States in 1848. Bennett's son, James Gordon Bennett, Jr., became owner of the paper in 1867. It was he who sent the Stanley expedition to Africa to search for David Livingstone.

The author has examined New York *Herald* daily issues for a three-month period beginning with the issue of July 27, 1848, in an attempt to find an article reporting the news contained in

the Valentine letter, but to no avail. There is no reason to believe that the letter was not delivered to Mr. Bennett (see note no. 7 below), nor is there any reason to believe that Mr. Bennett would have refused to accept delivery of the letter. Much of the news printed in the New York *Herald* at that time came from correspondence from outside sources, for which the *Herald* paid if such correspondence was used for an article. Instead, the author is of the opinion that Mr. Bennett rejected the story and refused to print it. On reading the New York *Herald* of that period, it becomes obvious that the New York Volunteers were heroes, at least in the eyes of Mr. Bennett and his newspaper. In the three months of papers reviewed, there were many articles about the Volunteers, all positive. This theory is given additional weight by Guy J. Giffen in his book, *California Expedition: Stevenson's Regiment of First New York Volunteers*, in which he describes the *Herald's* insistence on the compatibility among the Volunteers, notwithstanding scores of instances of fighting, insubordination and general bad behavior among themselves. The Valentine correspondence is derogatory toward a Volunteer First Lieutenant and surely would have been rejected by Mr. Bennett.

The lieutenant, shown in the letter by the initials J.C.B., was most likely Lt. John C. Bonnycastle, who was assigned to Company G of Stevenson's Regiment, serving in Los Angeles. Company G was mustered out at Los Angeles on

September 18, 1848. Bonnycastle died in Kentucky on October 29, 1884.

The letter writer, A. Valentine, is more of a mystery. The author has not been able to locate anyone by that name, although the possibilities are intriguing. Obviously, the person writing knew the lieutenant well enough to know his middle initial. This would seem to point to a member of either Company E or G, both of which were stationed at Los Angeles. If that were the case, the writer would not divulge his identity, for obvious reasons, but perhaps he would have had a sufficient grudge against the lieutenant to write the letter. Maybe Mr. Bennett saw through this as well. This all points to a *nom de plume*, the subject of the letter being a lovers' triangle and the writer being "A Valentine." Incidentally, there was a soldier in Company G, the same company in which Lieutenant Bonnycastle served, by the name of Valentine Miller, though it is improbable that he would take the risk of using his given name.

Finally, it is to be pointed out that there were other significant letters sharing space with Valentine's letter in Kit Carson's mail bag. It is generally believed that one of those letters was written by a member of the New York Volunteers in San Francisco, addressed to James Gordon Bennett, advising of the discovery of gold in California. On August 19, 1848, the New

York *Herald* published the letter, dated April 1, 1848, in which the writer states: "I am credibly informed that a quantity of gold, worth in value, \$30, was picked up lately in the bed of a stream of the Sacramento.... The gold mine discovered in December last, on the south branch of the American fork, in a range of low hills forming the base of the Sierra Nevada, distant thirty miles from New Helvetia, is only three feet below the surface, in a strata of soft sand rock. From explorations south twelve miles, and north five miles, the continuance of this strata is reported, and the mineral said to be equally abundant, and from twelve to eighteen feet in thickness; so that, without allowing any golden hopes to puzzle my prophetic vision of the future, I would predict for California, a Peruvian harvest of the precious metals, as soon as a sufficiency of miners, etc., can be obtained."

That this letter was the first published account of the California gold discovery in the East is most likely. Major Beale arrived in September with a report which may have mentioned the gold discovery. The official report from Colonel Mason, which included a container of gold, did not leave Monterey until August 28, and did not reach Washington D.C. until December. It was Colonel Mason's report which President Polk relied on in his December 1848 message to Congress.... "and the world rushed in."

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Furs, Hides, California “Dollars,” and Hard Currency: Commerce along the Santa Fe and Old Spanish Trails, 1829-1846

by Ramon Vasconcellos

The purpose of this article is to provide the reader with an overview of merchant enterprises and their methodologies of financing commercial trade along the Santa Fe and Old Spanish Trails. Although banking institutions in the Spanish and Mexican territories of the Southwest were non-existent, mercantile establishments participated in commerce and provided credit services.

During the Antebellum period of United States' history, state chartered and private banks comprised most of the nation's credit granting institutions. Those directly engaged in banking often circulated paper money backed by gold and silver coin (known as “specie”) which was held on deposit in their banks. In addition, “factors” – merchant creditors acting as intermediaries between borrowers, merchants, and sometimes banking concerns – supplied capital for trade. These factors functioned similarly to banks along the Atlantic seaboard and in the Southeast: they issued notes backed by the amount of hard currency held on deposit, or generated bills of exchange usable for payment of debt and collection of receipts. The bills of

exchange, or “drafts,” instructed one party to pay a specified sum to another and hence functioned as money, i.e. as a generally accepted medium of exchange acceptable throughout local and regional economies for payment of private debts and for exchange of goods and services.

Such methods of financing trade found an audience in the West as merchants along the Santa Fe and Old Spanish Trails employed these practices in their business dealings. Merchant-based lending enterprises, mostly small-scale, provided loans to migrants and traders, thereby facilitating trade in livestock and consumer goods.

Zebulon Pike's first-hand accounts of his explorations of the Southwest in 1806-07 described the political and economic mosaic of the northern Mexican provinces. As Anglo expansion moved southward¹ descriptions of the new “El Dorado” spread throughout the United States.² As a result, an interest grew in Southwest trade between St. Louis, Santa Fe, and Chihuahua which would subsequently require the financing of traders and merchants conducting business along the trail. However, political turmoil brought on by Mexican independence frustrated early commercial pursuits. Not until 1821 when Captain William Becknell, himself en route to Santa Fe, learned that separation from Spain allowed Mexico to liberalize her trading policies with the United States, did Anglo-

Americans pursue the trade with great interest.

The lack of attention paid to the northern Mexican frontier by the government in Mexico City made those living in the border regions of the Southwest eager to trade for notions, mules, and other goods. Mexico also maintained restrictive mercantilist trading practices, held over from the Spanish era. Tariffs remained high and restrictions existed on the import of some foreign commerce with taxes and assessments imposed on personal property. In spite of Mexican independence, trade did not improve for some time. One historian claimed the dearth in trade resulted from the lack of exchangeable goods.³ Those imports gaining access to Mexican markets thus came from merchant smugglers bribing local Mexican officials, particularly for goods acquired through the illegal maritime trade.⁴

Federal exclusions on trade also impacted *Californios*. Enrique Virmond, a German born trader who had operations out of Acapulco, wrote the following account of his observations on the Anglo trade with Alta Californians to a Mexican official: “Up to now, English, Anglo-American, and Russian ships, as well as some Mexican ones, have been the only traders in the country.... The Anglo-Americans sail out of Boston with perfectly supplied storehouse on board, and they take away hide, tallow, and whatever money the country has.”

He continued, “The retail sales they make in their one-and-half to two-year treks from port to port along coast of both Alta and Baja California hinder the criollo [Creole] merchant who wants to purchase these items. As a result, he cannot prosper.”⁵

After returning from his initial trip to Santa Fe and aware of the suspicions harbored by some frontier Mexicans regarding foreign commerce, Captain Becknell noted: “An idea prevails among the people here...that goods hitherto imported into their country were the remains of an old stock and sometimes damaged.”⁶ Recognizing that Mexican consumers had an eye for value, Becknell advised American traders to “take goods of excellent quality and un-faded colors.”⁷ History credits Captain William Becknell for “having made the first regular trading expedition from the Missouri [River] to Santa Fe” in 1824; his trading company returned to the United States with \$180,000 in gold and silver and \$10,000 in furs.⁸

Missouri served as a major embarking point for those headed for Santa Fe in the late 1820’s; towns such as Independence, Franklin, and Liberty advertised goods for sale to Santa Fe traders⁹ and housed a mercantile class of businessmen active in the trade. Local shopkeeper James Aull profited from the trade, selling from \$8,000 to \$10,000 worth of goods in 1830, a twenty-five percent markup over Philadelphia

prices for similar goods.¹⁰ Aull, in fact, acted as a merchant lender, financing the goods at zero interest for six months, followed by ten percent interest payable afterwards.¹¹

John Aull also had a profitable commission and trading business in western Missouri. James and Robert followed their brother’s lead with James establishing a lucrative general store in Lexington in 1825. The brothers later opened stores in Independence, Richmond, and Liberty. These mercantile establishments served as points of importance for anyone traveling west to Santa Fe and beyond. Either the Aull brothers collectively had considerable business acumen, or they just happened to be in the right place at the right time. A letter dated July 14, 1848, mentioned “[agents] from Chihuahua, bringing with them the balance of effects of Owens & Aull, \$51,295.62/100. This amount will leave, after paying all expenses, a small profit.”¹²

Expeditions returning from Mexico carried furs, silver, gold, and mules. The Rocky Mountains and the Sierra Nevadas supplied furs; silver and gold came from the mining regions of Mexico; and mules came from California and Sonora.¹³ For transporting specie, traders would compress the coins into a pouch made of buffalo hide. As the buffalo skin dried it would shrink into an iron-like receptacle, squeezing the coins into a solid,

condensed mass. One merchant claimed to have conveyed 27,500 pesos from Mexico to Santa Fe by employing this method in 1830.¹⁴

However, the trade did not come without costs. Debts owed to merchants often would take months to collect; luckily for some, creditors in the East would grant extensions. Sales receipts of \$8,000 in 1830 only netted James Aull one-fourth of their purchase price before traders left for Santa Fe. He received the balance due just as he requested extension of payment for wholesale goods ordered from back East. In 1833 a delinquent note payable in the amount of \$842.16 to James Aull by a trader named Captain Bent of Santa Fe again resulted in Aull having to delay remittance to his creditors.¹⁵

Tariffs – taxes on imports – only made the Anglo trader’s job more difficult as Mexico sought to curb exports of foreign goods into Mexico. A July 1829 edition of the *Niles Register* provided a list of excluded goods: “Spurs, Cotton, Plough Shares, Pick Axes, Bed Quilts, Children’s Toys, of all descriptions.” The *Register* observed that the list prohibited mostly American-made products, “while many of those of England, and the silks of France, are to be admitted.”¹⁶ For those caravans traveling within Mexico, Josiah Gregg explained that “at some ports a custom has been said to prevail... dividing the legal duties into three equal parts: one for the officers, a second for the merchants, the other for the government.”¹⁷

Indian attacks also took their toll on traders.¹⁸ Arapahos and Apaches robbed Moses Goldstein, a merchant from Independence, Missouri, of \$600 as he traveled along the Sante Fe Trail in 1849; stranded that following May outside of Wagon Mound, New Mexico, Goldstein and ten others met their deaths at the hands of the Apaches.¹⁹ Taken together, the harassment by Native Americans, the financial setbacks of bribing Mexican officials, the inclement weather along the trail, and the flood of goods into Independence and other towns brought depressed profits for the merchants.

Still, the volume of trade apparently offset the probability of economic hardship and loss of life. By one estimate, \$35,000 in goods taken to Sante Fe in 1824 resulted in \$190,000 in furs and specie brought back to Missouri during that same period. Beaver and otter skins from Sante Fe sold in Missouri for \$8 to \$12 each, respectively, during the first fifteen years of commerce. A trader could typically expect a net profit of 10 to 40%.²⁰ Missouri Senator Thomas Hart Benton, an advocate of the Santa Fe traffic, remarked that “[New Mexico trade] had grown up to be a new and regular branch of interior commerce, profitable to those [engaged] in it, valuable to the country for the articles it carried out and for the silver, furs, and mules it brought back....”²¹

Spanish silver allegedly strengthened the monetary system of Missouri when the U.S. witnessed a scarcity of hard currency. The description of one trading venture in 1823 detailed how the trip brought back a “considerable sum of specie” and that the endeavor contributed to “alleviate the scarcity of money.”²² Subsequent undertakings in 1827 delivered \$30,000 in specie to Franklin, Missouri, along with several hundred mules.²³ Captain Harris in his correspondence to a U.S. Congressman in 1840 wrote, “The state of Missouri is this day the soundest in the Union in her monetary affairs. She is filled with specie; and the interior Mexican states have supplied it.” Harris’ claim appears plausible given that a year earlier several traders had “bailed out” the Bank of Missouri when they sent \$45,000 in specie for deposit to her vaults.²⁴

The first influx of Anglo-Americans into the Southwest were the mountain men of the 1820’s. A number of them traveled over portions of what later became the Old Spanish Trail. Much in need of supplies, trappers would finance their purchases either through bartering or use of the highly redeemable Mexican silver peso. As Clifford Walker has noted, the peso had a greater circulation than the dollar in western Missouri.²⁵ Financing of such a venture typically would last for a year. Weekly salaries ranged from three dollars for a hunter, two for a camp worker and ten for the company clerk. The annual costs

of wages was \$4,000; the cost of feeding and transporting of the crew was \$5,000.²⁶

The flow of specie went from west to east contributing to a scarcity of gold; in turn, paper money drawn on eastern and western banks took on greater usage. Still, this scarcity allowed for a growing barter trade in whiskey, needles, potash, maple sugar, salt, and wood. In St. Louis, merchants would accept fur deposits and issue receipts backed by these deposits. Under the belief that not all of these receipts would be redeemed for furs at one time, merchants borrowed and lent against them. St. Louis merchants would issue warehouse receipts, backed by furs that could be used as collateral to buy trading supplies.²⁷

By the late 1820’s New Mexican authorities, desiring to increase the returns from trade along the Sante Fe Trail, recognized the importance of extending the commercial line westward toward California. With permission granted by Jose Antonio Chavez, the provincial governor of New Mexico, Santa Fe trader Antonio Maria Armijo led a trade caravan west to California. Armijo looked to trade serapes, blankets, and quilts for California mules and horses by traveling the route subsequently known as the *Old Spanish Trail*. This new, somewhat un-chartered path would effectively extend the Sante Fe Trail westward. The Old Spanish Trail eventually became the typical route for commerce

between New Mexico and California during the 1830's and 1840's.

Armijo understood that trade routes to California had already been attempted by Spanish padres seeking to convert indigenous people to the Catholic faith and fur trappers who had traveled west looking for beaver. One of the earliest and well-documented treks from Santa Fe to California, chronicled as the "Domínguez-Escalante Expedition" of 1776, involved the Franciscan friars Francisco Domínguez and Francisco Velez de Escalante. The two Franciscans had hoped to establish missions and open a direct route to Monterrey, California;²⁸ however, the loss of their Indian guide and inclement weather impeded their efforts. Because "the winter had now set in with great rigor, and all the mountain ranges that we could see were covered with snow,"²⁹ the expedition left present-day Utah and headed east for Santa Fe. Despite their failure to establish a route to Monterrey, the Domínguez-Escalante expedition supplied much information on the North American interior and the Great Basin.³⁰ Succeeding explorers looking for a more linear route from Santa Fe to California would encounter hostile Hopi, Yuma, and Apache natives who were less receptive to Spanish interests in establishing trade routes. Eventually those following on the heels of Domínguez and Escalante recognized the futility in traveling across the desert and into

the Grand Canyon. Future travelers would follow the Domínguez-Escalante route into Ute territory north of the Colorado River, a geographically less cumbersome route with fewer hostile indigenous people and better grazing and water for the animals.

Armijo's expedition would follow the Old Spanish Trail along the route taken by fur trappers. In 1830, Armijo's caravan became the first to travel from Santa Fe to California. The consistent affinity for theft by the New Mexican traders who later followed Armijo's lead resulted in local *Californio* authorities regulating their activities.³¹ Moreover, many of these New Mexican merchants participated in the Indian slave trade.³² Trading horses for captured children in Navajo and Ute territory, New Mexican traders would in turn trade the children for mules, horses, and other goods when they returned to New Mexico. In the 1830's, boys would sell from \$100, with girls from \$150-\$200.³³

The use of gold dust supplemented the existing mediums of exchange used along the Old Spanish Trail. In 1847, prior to the discoveries at Sutter's Mill, Utah merchants issued script backed by gold dust. The Mormon church also had a tithing office and storehouse, using debits and credits in recording deposits and withdrawals from the storehouses. Church-issued receipts were backed by gold and sometimes functioned as bank notes. Yet the financial landscape

of Utah improved even more with the Mormon Battalion's transport of gold dust from California. Tendering their holdings to the Church's mint, the Battalion's transports eventually became 46 ten-dollar gold coins in 1848; this coinage became the basis for additional notes issued during the 1849-1858 period.³⁴

Prior to the gold discoveries of 1848-49, early California money consisted of "cowhides, dry, flat, and stiff enough to sail like Frisbees off a cliff."³⁵ These "California Dollars," sometimes referred to as "California Bank Notes," served as a medium of exchange during the Mexican period. Later, section 34 of the California State Constitution of 1849 stated: "The legislature shall have no power to pass any act granting any charter for banking purposes; but associations may be formed under general laws, for the deposit of gold [and or] silver; but no such associations shall make, issue, or put in circulation, any bill, check, ticket, certificate, promissory note, or other paper of any bank to circulate as money."³⁶ Given the criticism of banks and the desire for hard currency throughout the Jacksonian period, apparently California legislators recognized the supremacy of specie over fiat currency.

Much recorded data on the Santa Fe and Old Spanish Trails describe the toil faced by migrants traversing the lower Southwest en route to California.

In addition, inclement weather, hostile attacks by Native Americans, and starvation all seemed fundamental to the traveler's journey, regardless of his physical, mental, or economic preparation. Notwithstanding these difficulties, the presence of trading networks sustained commercial traffic on the trails up until the Mexican-American War and the Gold Rush. Such rudimentary systems of economic intermediation provided a basis for commerce, which to some degree helped to alleviate the hardships of nineteenth-century cross-country migration.

Endnotes

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3. Frank W. Blackmar, *Spanish Institutions of the Southwest* (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1891, reprinted 1976) 305.
4. *Ibid.*
5. "A Report on Alta California by Enrique Virmond, 1827." From *Lands of Promise and Despair; Chronicles of Early California 1535-1848* (Santa Clara, CA: Santa Clara University) 350.
6. R.L. Duffus, *The Santa Fe Trail* (New York: David McKay Co., 1975) 107.
7. *Ibid.*
8. Cleland, 132.
9. Lewis Atherton, "Business Techniques in the Santa Fe Trade," *The Missouri Historical Review* 34, (April 1940) 339.
10. *Ibid.*
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12. Robert Aull to Siter, Price & Company. Lexington, MO, July 14, 1848. In Ralph Bieber, ed. "Letters of James and Robert Aull," *Missouri Historical Society Collections* 5, No.3 (June 1928).
13. Cleland, 141.
14. *Ibid.*, 142.
15. Atherton, 340.
16. *Niles Register*, July 11, 1829, 319-320; the list also limited the importation of "large iron and copper wire, instruments of husbandry, iron padlocks, brushes, assorted iron nails, woolen yarns...." We might infer from this catalog of prohibited goods that Mexico may have wanted to spur domestic manufactures, therefore necessitating the exclusion of foreign imports.
17. Josiah Gregg, 79.
18. *Ibid.*, 18-21.
19. William Patrick O'Brien. "Olam Katan (Small World): Jewish Traders on the Santa Fe Trail," *Journal of the Southwest* 48, No. 2 (Summer 2006) 224.
20. Duffus, 110.
21. *Ibid.*, 108
22. Hatte M. Anderson, "Frontier Economic Problems in Missouri, 1815-1828, Pt. II," *Missouri Historical Review* 34 (January 1940): 184.
23. *Ibid.*
24. Duffus, 111.
25. Clifford J. Walker, *Back Door To California: The Story of the Mojave River Trail*, ed. Patricia Jernigan Keeling (Barstow, CA: Mojave River Valley Museum Association, 1986) 96.
26. Lewis E. Davids, "'Fur' Money and Banking in the West," *Journal of the West* 23, No. 2 (April 1984): 7.
27. *Ibid.*
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29. *Ibid.*, 455.
30. *Ibid.*, 457; Leroy Hafen and Ann Hafen, *Old Spanish Trail: Santa Fe to Los Angeles-With Extracts from Contemporary Records and Including Diaries of Antonio Armijo and Orville Pratt* (Norman: University of Nebraska Press, 3rd Publication, 1993) 73.
31. Joseph P. Sanchez, *Explorers, Traders, and Slavers: Forging the Old Spanish Trail- 1678-1850* (University of Utah Press, 1997) 124-126. The California State Assembly in 1833 required that New Mexican traders receive licenses from the local *alcalde* before purchasing goods; further, they had to keep a record of items bought. Los Angeles officials, in an attempt at recovering possible stolen animals, stipulated New Mexican traders were subject to searches and seizures before returning to New Mexico.
32. *Ibid.* See also Caling Malouf's "The Effects of Spanish Slavery on the Indians of the Intermountain West," *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology* 1, No.3 (Autumn

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35. Larry Schweikart and Lynne Pierson Doti, "From Hard Money to Branch Banking, California Banking in the Gold-Rush Economy," from *A Golden State: Mining and Economic Development In Gold Rush California*, eds. James J. Rawls and Richard J. Orsi (Berkeley: University of California Press) 211.
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OST Exhibit at Fort Lewis College

The museum at the Center for Southwest Studies at Fort Lewis College in Durango, Colorado, will have an exhibit on the Old Spanish Trail from January 27 through May 2008. The exhibit will travel to the Palace of the Governors in Santa Fe, New Mexico, in June 2008. A panel from the exhibit is shown at the right. For further information, see swcenter.fortlewis.edu.
(courtesy Mark Franklin)



OLD SPANISH TRAIL

1829-1848

FORGING A ROUTE

The Old Spanish Trail was primarily a horse and burro pack route linking Santa Fe to the Pueblo of Los Angeles. The route developed from a network of Native American and Hispanic trade thoroughfares that crossed the modern states of New Mexico, Colorado, Utah, Arizona, Nevada, and California.

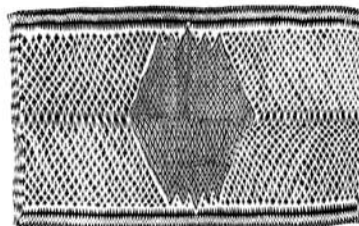
Forged by Hispanic traders beginning in 1829 the Old Spanish Trail was the first successful Euro-American effort to connect the Mexican frontier provinces of New Mexico with California. This overland trail linked the burgeoning ranch economy of the pacific communities to the pastoral villages of the intermountain southwest. Ultimately, the Old Spanish Trail became a crucial part of the commercial triangle comprising the Santa Fe Trail to the east and Mexico's *Camino Real* to the south.

Although the trail was neither "Spanish" nor especially "old" when western pathfinder, John C. Frémont, coined the term in his report of 1844, anglo-Americans popularized the name. To hispanos the trail was known variously as "*El camino de Nuevo México*" or "*El camino de California*."



Mules carried woolen goods from northern New Mexico to California on annual pack caravans on an overland route through what is now central Utah.

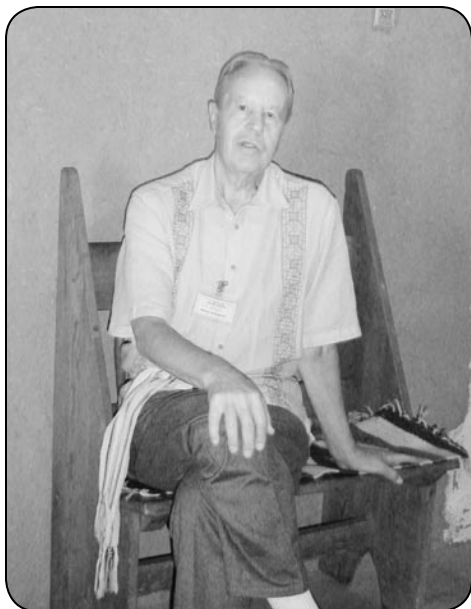
~ Painting by Frederick Remington.
Image from *The Old Santa Fe Trail* by Henry Inman.
Photo courtesy of the Museum of New Mexico, #135985.



Frazada Blanket - pre 1850.
This churro wool weaving represents the height of the Saltillo-style weaving in the Rio Grande Valley.
~ Original Textile -
The Albuquerque Museum

A Tour of Las Golondrinas

*conducted by Doug Peterson
transcribed, edited, and
photographed by Deborah and
Jon Lawrence*



Doug Peterson

[Editors' note: Doug Peterson spent his working life at Mountain Bell Telephone Company. When he left the Telephone Company after 33 years, he pursued his life-long interest in New Mexico history. He developed several history slide presentations and lectures for the Santa Fe Community College. He has lectured around the state, giving talks on religion, art, and history. He has been a volunteer and guide at *Rancho de las Golondrinas* for 22 years.]

Bienvenidos al Rancho de las Golondrinas. Welcome to the Ranch of the Swallows. The early Spanish government officials

and traders came by here on the 1,500-mile trip down *El Camino Real* from Santa Fe to *Ciudad de México*.¹ This was the first stop on the way to Mexico. There was an abundance of barn swallows here, which is why the place is named "*Golondrinas*."

This particular barn and ranch was established in the early 1700's. After the Pueblo Revolt of 1680,² the Spanish were driven out of New Mexico and forced into exile in El Paso where they remained for 12 to 13 years. In 1692-1693 Don Diego de Vargas³ returned to re-establish the Spanish control of northern New Spain. The Spanish government authorized new colonists, so in 1693 a group came up from Mexico City. One of the colonists was Miguel de la Vega y Coca. Although he was only sixteen years old at the time, he was married. After his wife died, he remarried, and in the next few years the couple had eight daughters and one son. For the rest of his life, one of his important jobs was to marry off his daughters with the other colonists in the area.

The king of Spain owned all the land by decree and by right of possession in the invasion. The king could give land grants to individuals and communities or he could sell the land. Miguel de la Vega y Coca purchased this property in the early 1700's. Two of his daughters married two brothers who established the farm and ranch. The *Salon y Capilla* was the earliest building constructed after the ranch was

established. Initially, it had dirt floors, a lower ceiling, a flat roof, and a corral in the back. The ceiling was raised and the wood floor and metal roof that we see now were added later. You can imagine how the two young women with their two new husbands lived in such a situation. As their family grew, they built the compound of adjoining rooms in a defensive square, which surrounded the *placita*.

A key mission of the *Las Golondrinas* museum is to show the self-sufficiency of the colonial northern New Mexico Spanish tradition. I have already mentioned that the trip from Santa Fe to Mexico City on *El Camino Real* was 1,500 miles one way. It took six months to get to the trade center. To obtain a new axe or farm implements or clothing required a six-month trip down and a six-month trip back. Ordinarily the trip took a year and a half. Later the trail stopped at Chihuahua so the year-and-a-half round trip was shortened to about nine months, but it was still a long way to go. In the absence of nearby hardware stores or grocery stores or any kind of consumer goods, and given the long round trip to Mexico, the colonists became self-sufficient. So if you needed a new plow, you went and chopped down a tree and made a plow. If you were lucky, you had an old horseshoe that you could fashion into a steel tip for the plow. The people had to grow their own food, and at harvest time they had to prepare it for storage for the whole year. They made



The chapel at Las Golondrinas.

their own clothing. They were completely self-sufficient.

This is the compound [see p. 34]. As mentioned, when the young families first started, they only had the one building, and if you notice, the building is made of rock. Because they were self-sufficient, they had to build with whatever material they had available. There are four different native building materials here: rock, adobe, sod, and logs. It took years to complete the compound. The first family to live here, Maria and her husband, Diego Manuel, had three sons. When they got married, each son added a new room. They only built a house when they needed it. So the compound was completed over a period of thirty to fifty years in the eighteenth century.

This was a protective compound. By the mid-1700's, the Comanches and the Utes were raiding in this area, so the Spanish government

wanted the people who lived outside of Santa Fe to build defensive compounds.

Over there is a *torreón* [p. 35], which is a lookout tower. A sentinel would be in there; if he saw any trouble, he would be able

to sound an alarm, and the men would come in from the fields. In the event of a raid, the animals could be driven in and the gates of the compound could be locked. We have written documentation on two Comanche raids, one in 1775 and the other one in 1776, but there were many undocumented raids by Comanche, Ute, Apache, and Navaho over a period of 200 years, causing damage and death to the people in the valley.

When the Spanish came, the Pueblo people were building structures, similar to the ones you see today in Taos and San Ildefonso, using mud, rock, stone, and logs. They didn't have adobe as such. They did use mud, but they had a different construction technique called "wattle and daub."²⁴ The Spanish brought the technique of making an adobe brick in a wooden form. They built their structures with the bricks. The

outside plaster is also adobe, the same material.

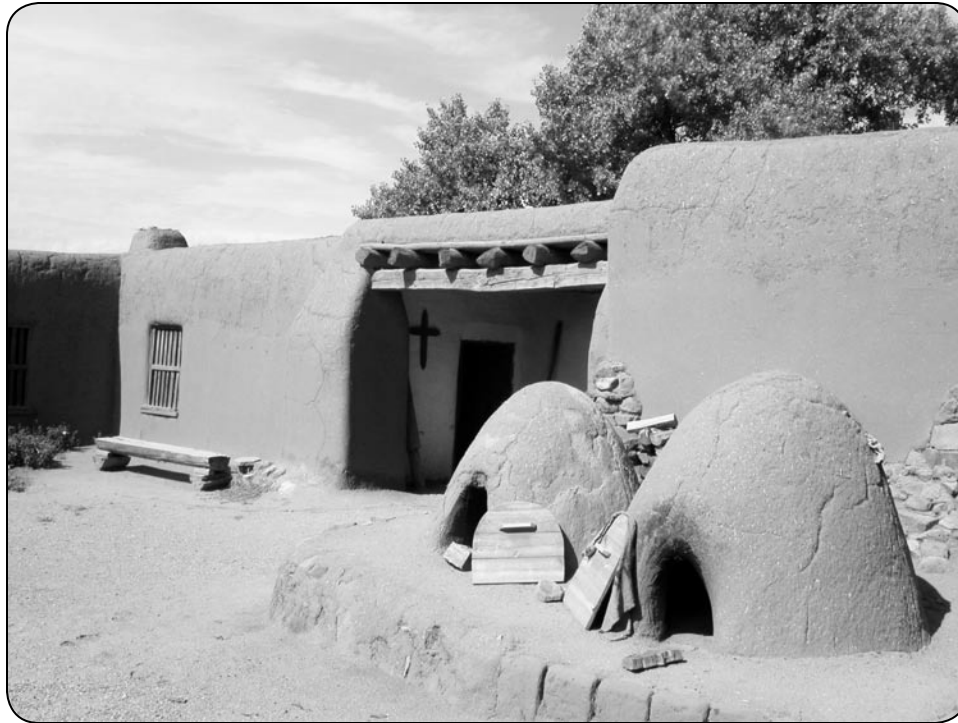
These ovens are called *hornos* [p. 34]. They came from North Africa along with adobe. When the Muslims of North Africa invaded Spain, they brought all kinds of technical innovations that the Spanish didn't have: the arch, adobe, the irrigation system, the *horno*, and so forth. For a period of several hundred years, the Spanish developed this technology and then brought it to New Spain and then up here to New Mexico. The Pueblo people took to the *hornos*. Sometimes today people call them Indian ovens, but they really came from North Africa. We have had people visit here from Egypt and Greece and other countries where they have ovens exactly like this, so they are not unique to the Spanish or the North Africans. They exist all over the world.

As you look around the compound's kitchen, you'll see versions of things that you have in the kitchen at your house today. The dried herbs are the spice cabinet and the medicine cabinet. Grandma knew which herb could be ground up and put into hot water to cure a headache or diarrhea or a stomach ache. And they used herbs in their cooking. The hollowed-out log is a storage bin. They put their dried corn, beans, or squash in there to store for the rest of the year. The *metate y mano* is a food processor. They used it to grind the corn to make corn flour for tortillas. On living

history days, we make the tortillas in the fireplace over there. The flat rock is called a *comal*; we put the tortillas on it, poke it in the open fire, and in just a few minutes the tortillas are cooked. The hollowed-out gourd is a drinking cup. Much of the pottery you see is Pueblo pottery. When the Spanish arrived they found that the Indians were already making pottery, so the Hispanics could trade for it rather than create an industry of their own. The pottery is used for storage, for carrying water, and for cooking food. A little cradle was hung so that when the mothers or older daughters were grinding corn, they could simply kick the cradle to rock the baby.

In the bedrooms of the compound, there is hardly any furniture. A storage box was used for clothing. Mats on the floor served as beds. Only Grandma got to sleep on a real bed with a mattress stuffed with straw or sheep's wool. Every room in the compound has a fireplace where they would burn piñon wood for warmth.

The bin in the storage room is for food. It is divided into sections to put beans, corn, squash, and so forth. They sliced up apples



Hornos in the courtyard of the compound.

and put them on a string – a dehydrator. They took apricots and peaches, opened them up and put them on a blanket to dehydrate. Later they put them in to stews or ate them dry. There were probably 20 to 30 people living in this compound at a time. You can imagine the bulk of food that they had to store to feed 20 or 30 people for a whole year. As I said, since there were no grocery stores to go to, they had to grow their own food, prepare it, and store it.

Beginning in the 1540's when the Spanish came to New Mexico, the food supply of the Pueblo people was basically corn, beans, and squash. For animals, the Indians only had domesticated turkeys and dogs. The Spanish brought many other kinds of crops, such as lettuce, rice, carrots, fruit trees,

and different kinds of corn, wheat, barley, and oats. They also brought a farm technology that the Indians didn't have: a plow pulled by a burro, a horse, or an ox. And they showed the Indians how to build an irrigation system by rows. Prior to this, the

Indians had irrigated by flooding the crop area. So the Spanish farm technology increased the yield of the Indians crops.

Another thing that the Spanish brought was Churro sheep.⁵ With sheep they had wool for weaving and mutton for meat. The Indians had been weaving with cotton and fibers; they used a vertical tension loom [p. 44]. The tension is created by attaching the top of the loom to the roof beam and then burying the bottom under two feet of rocks. The Spanish brought a European loom. We have several such looms here, of varying sizes. The Spanish also introduced wool for the yarn for their rugs and clothing. Wool is a lot better clothing material than cotton. Before and after the Pueblo Revolt, many Pueblo Indians escaped to the Navaho area northwest of here

and took the wool technology with them. The Navaho people took the vertical tension loom from the Pueblo people and the wool processing from the Spanish, and they began to make Navaho rugs, which are, in my opinion, the finest rugs in the area right now. The Navaho people borrowed from both traditions.

All the rugs in our weaving room were made at *Rancho de las Golondrinas* by volunteers. We card the wool, spin it, and dye it right here on site. Then we weave with it. There was one kind of weaving for the floor rugs and serapes and so forth, and another kind of weaving for trade rugs, which needed to be of better quality than the rugs that were made to be put on the floor. The trade rugs would be taken on *El Camino Real* to be traded for hardware, axes, shovels, clothing, spices, and chocolate.

In the pen over there are Churro sheep [p. 44]. As I said, they were brought from Spain to New Spain. The first ones came with Coronado,⁶ who left them here. When Oñate⁷ came 48 years later there weren't any left; the Indians had either killed them or they just died out. Oñate had about 7,000 animals in his caravan, 4,000 of which were sheep. Sheep were the primary domestic animal industry

that the Spanish set up. It is usual with this kind of sheep for the rams to have two, three or four horns. We shear the sheep and wash the wool here. It is a very labor intensive process.



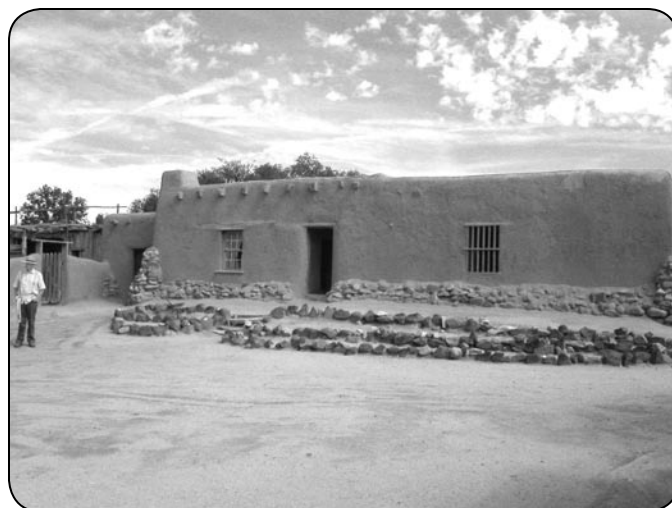
The *torréon*.

This group of buildings, next to the eighteenth-century compound, was built in the 1800's. By that time, the nomadic Indian threat was gone. The people that lived here no longer had to have a compound and so they could build structures out in the open. The log houses that you see over there were brought in from the mountains of northern New Mexico; they were not built here. The only original house in this section is the house of

Manuel de Baca. You can see the deterioration of the house from the rain; we have to re-plaster it every year.

We make adobe at *Las Golondrinas*. We mix the mud with sand. Finding the correct mixture is a trial and error process. When we put the mixture into the molds, we have to see if it stands up. We remove the molds after a day or so, and then turn the bricks over and let them sun-dry to harden. We use the same mud to plaster the house. We even have adobe workshops here at *Las Golondrinas*.

These are *carretas*, farm carts [p. 36]. They are made out of cottonwood. You can see that the cottonwood trees used for the wheels had a large diameter. These are three-piece wheels. Cottonwood is a soft wood and it



Manuel de Baca house.



Carretas.

deteriorates and wears out, so the wheels can be taken off and the parts replaced. Such carts were primarily used to haul things around the farm; a cart like this would probably not even make it to Santa Fe. We got a man in Chihuahua to make these carts by hand. There are no nails in them, only wooden pegs.

The ponds at *Rancho de las Golondrinas* are the reason the Spanish settled here; they needed water for their agriculture. The ponds are spring-fed. The *acequias* work by gravity flow. We block off the acequia to let the water flow down into the fields below. The furrows are plowed downhill, so that the water flows straight down the rows. We grow a variety of crops: squash, corn, sorghum, chili, beans, watermelon, pumpkin, and sun flowers.

This grouping of crosses is called a *descanso*. The Spanish word *descansar* means “to rest.” This is a resting place in a funeral procession. When someone died,

they didn’t put the body into a coffin. Instead, they wrapped it in a blanket and put it on a wagon or a door, and then brought it down here where they would rest. They would put up an unmarked cross and say their prayers, and then move on to the next *descanso*. Then later

on, they would come by and say a prayer and put a rock by the cross. This was a tradition in northern New Mexico. If you go to the right villages, you will see remnants of them now.

The picnic ground near the *descanso* was used for the marriage scene and the burial scene in the movie *Wyatt Earp* which starred Kevin Costner. *The Missing*, with Tommy Lee Jones, Cate Blanchett, and Val Kilmer, was also shot here. And *All the Pretty Horses* was made out here. The last movie we had here was *Seraphim Falls* with Liam Neeson and Pierce Brosnan.

A separate area of the site is called the Sierra Village. It represents an old mountain Hispanic village built during the period 1850-1860. The Sierra village area also has been used in a number of films – in a Val Kilmer scene in *The Missing* and as the ranch of John Tunstall⁸ in *Young Guns*.

The area contains an actual shepherd’s cabin from southern Colorado. It’s a little out of context in this location; it would be used in the mountains in the sheep ranges. The shepherd didn’t necessarily live here since he would be with his sheep most of the time. A shepherd could have as many as a couple of thousand sheep.

Up on the hill is a little *oratorio*, a chapel. In the absence of a church in this community, the Spanish built small chapels. This one is six feet by six feet. About three people can get in it at one time.



The descanso.

Several of the buildings have pitched roofs. After the U. S. Army invaded in 1846, they brought in a saw mill. The first saw mill was up where the Randall Davey home is today on Upper Canyon Road in Santa Fe. With milled lumber, pitched roofs became possible. Such roofs were much more efficient in the mountains than the flat roof because the rain water could run off. Plus it created more space. Several of these houses have space up above which was used for storage or more bedrooms.

The traditional building in the mountains was built with logs. We have one, called the *Casa Primitiva*, the primitive house. The floors were packed with earth, and the walls were adobe-plastered. When the newlyweds first lived in it, it had one room, but as they had children, they added more rooms.

The doors are small. These people were shorter than we are today. Two hundred years ago, the average height of a male was 5' 6" inches and the average female was 5' tall. Doors were hard to build and were merely openings to get in and out. They didn't need a 7-foot door.

Another building is the *Casa de la Abuelita*, the grandmother's house. It was the custom for the Spanish families to take care of their elders because there were no nursing homes or retirement centers. So Grandma and Grandpa would live here, and their grandchildren would come and sleep with them.

Grandma would teach family traditions, such as cooking and herb use, and the child would help with the garden, chop wood, weave, and so on. By the 1850's or so, they started using metal utensils that came on the Santa Fe Trail. There is a cast iron stove and a coffee grinder – Santa Fe Trail stuff. The glass would have come from Mexico

This is the big house of the Mora family, *Casona de Mora*. It is made out of adobe. They didn't have a lot of adobe in the mountain area, so they had to find a secret place to get mud that wouldn't fall apart. You notice the doorways are full size. They would buy door kits from the Santa Fe Trail traders. They also bought glass and windows. These were manufactured in the Midwest and the traders would sell them as kits. This house has furniture that would have come out on the Santa Fe Trail, such as are real beds. But there are also things that are New Mexican: the *santos* and the tinwork. The cradle would have come on the Santa Fe Trail. There is an all-purpose room with a bed, and a common table with kitchenware. This house shows



Casona de Mora in the Sierra Village.

evidence of a little bit of wealth compared to the *Casa Primitiva*.

Next door is the pigpen and chicken coop where they kept small animals. Because there are hawks here that would prey on the little chickens and geese and even the little pigs, the structure was covered. They kept them here until they grew big enough that the hawks wouldn't bother them. The structure was brought in from the Truchas area. In *Young Guns*, Billy the Kid hid here when the bad guys were coming down the hill.

With this mill [p. 40] we enter the 1870's. The power from the water wheel runs the equipment. Mills like this one were built in the Moro Valley to furnish the U. S. Army with flour. Fort Union was the main quartermaster center at that time. The mills contracted to provide the flour to Fort Union,⁹ which then distributed the flour up and down New Mexico to

the different military posts. This mill was actually built and used in Sapelló, New Mexico. The machinery was manufactured in Buffalo, New York, and was shipped to New Mexico by railroad in the 1880's. *Las Golodrinas* had it dismantled and brought here. We built a new building for it. If you go to Sapelló and know where to look, you can see the old building. Nothing is in it now because the guts have been taken out for this structure.

The house behind the mill was built in 1978 for the filming of *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid: The Early Years*. It's just a shell of a house – the back of the house is still unfinished because no filming was done there. We ordinarily skip this building because it's not in the historic context of the place, but it does represent an 1880's mine manger's home in Madrid, New Mexico.

This *morada* is built on the plan of the south *morada* at Abiquiú, but is only about three quarters of the size. It was built for the museum. The grave yard is fake. Notice how rocky it is. They didn't have the technology to dig graves in a rocky area like this. The highway department was doing some right-of-way work and came across an abandoned cemetery. They offered the crosses and gates to *Las Golodrinas*. They disinterred the bodies and set the *campo santo* crosses up here next to the *morada*. It's a picturesque location. The word *morada* comes from

morar, which means "to dwell." This is a dwelling place, used by *Los Hermanos de Nuestro Padres Jesus Nazareno*, or *Penitentes*, as a meeting house and a chapel. It has three rooms: a chapel, a meeting room, and a storeroom. The *Penitente* brothers were an organization within the Catholic Church that believed in penance. They were formed in New Mexico about 200 years ago in the absence of pastoral care in the community. They took care of the social welfare in the community. Their function was primarily neighbor helping neighbor. If a widow needed help in the fields or wood chopped, they would do that. If someone had had a fire in his house, they would get together to help paint his kitchen. They also had certain religious functions during the year, particularly on Good Friday when they had a re-enactment of the crucifixion. By the altar, you will see a huge statue of Christ with arms that

are hinged so it can be put on the cross. There's a crown of thorns around his head. The Brothers would come into this room and say prayers and sing songs. Mass would not be held in a building like this. After the prayer service, they would go into the next room, which is a meeting room.

In the *morada* dining room, the table is set up for a Lenten meal. The trade rug was woven by one of the volunteers out here. A second room is the storage room where they kept the crosses that they used in their processions.

During the early years, the Brothers self-flagellated, and after the ceremony was over, they would bathe in a tub. The tub has no inlet or outlet so a neophyte would have to bring water in buckets from the creek to fill it up. The *Penitentes* used herbs to bathe their backs. Then the neophyte would empty out the tub.



The *morada*.

Self-flagellation is a world-wide phenomenon. It is a way to drive one's sins out. Martin Luther was a penitent before he railed against the church. You read stories about him self-flagellating. On television, you see people whipping themselves in Iraq and Iran, and they use heavy chains.

When the Protestants came into New Mexico after the Civil War and observed the Good Friday processions, they wrote back to their church members that the *Penitente* processions were medieval, barbaric. So the *Penitentes* became a private organization. They didn't allow people to come in and take photographs or to take part in the processions. The *Penitentes* are still alive and well today. There are about 80 active *moradas* left in southern Colorado and northern New Mexico with probably 800 to 1,000 members in the group. They continue to provide social welfare in the community and they still re-enact the crucifixion of Christ on Good Friday. And they have Lenten services. But primarily, they help the needs of the community. We get a lot of visitors here who are from a community where there is an active *morada*, and they are very open about what they do.

There were also *hermanas*, women who were members, but primarily it was a men-only group. Women had their own group, the Our Lady of Light Society, like an altar guild. It

is disputed as to whether Padre Martinez¹⁰ was a *Penitente* – he was certainly a supporter – but there are active priests today who are brothers in *moradas*.

The schoolhouse below the *morada* came from Ratón, New Mexico. Public education didn't come to New Mexico until 1890. The education before that time was run by the Catholic or Protestant churches. There were also subscription schools where a teacher would set up a school and then charge for the service. Those schools usually only lasted until the teacher got sick or she until didn't have enough students; they often didn't work out. When the railroad came to New Mexico in 1880, the people in Ratón, who were mostly from the Midwest, didn't have a school system. So the families got together and turned this building into a schoolhouse. It was for first grade through sixth grade. There was one teacher, and the older kids helped instruct the younger kids. The reason the school didn't go beyond sixth grade was that the older children had to work in the shops or on the farm. The teacher's quarters were in an adjoining room. The families agreed to provide the teacher's board and room, so one option was to have a second room in the schoolhouse, and the other option was for the teacher to board with the families for six weeks at a time. Having a room in the schoolhouse was a better option because the teacher had her own space.

During our morning at *Las Golondrinas*, we have traveled in time from the early 1700's at the compound to the early 1800's at the Baca House, then to the 1850's at the Sierra Village, to 1870 with the flour mill, to 1870 or so with the *morada*, and finally to the 1880s/1890's at the schoolhouse. Even during the late period, farmers who lived away from Santa Fe still made their own clothes and did their own food preparation and storage. So *El Rancho de Golondrinas* represents 200 years of New Mexican history and emphasizes the remarkable self-sufficiency of the Hispanic settlers.

End Notes

1. *El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro* (The Royal Road of the Interior Lands) is North America's longest (1,550 miles) and oldest (1598) route. It stretches from Mexico City to San Juan Pueblo, north of Santa Fe, New Mexico. *El Camino Real* is now a National Historic Trail in the portions traversing the states of New Mexico and Texas. For a guide to the route, see Hal Jackson's *Following the Royal Road: A Guide to the Historic Camino Real de Tierra Adentro*.
2. The Pueblo Revolt of 1680 or Popé's Rebellion was an uprising of many pueblos of the Pueblo people against Spanish colonists in the New Spain province of New Mexico. Approximately 21 of the province's 33 Franciscans, and 380 Spaniards, including men, women and children, were killed.

Spanish settlers fled to Santa Fe and Isleta Pueblo, one of the few Pueblos that did not participate in the rebellion. Believing themselves the only survivors, the refugees at Isleta fled to *El Paso del Norte*. Meanwhile Popé's insurgents besieged Santa Fe and cut off its water supply. Defeated, the Spanish settlers there also retreated to *El Paso del Norte*. For an interesting discussion of the Pueblo Revolt, see David Roberts' *The Pueblo Revolt: The Secret Rebellion that Drove the Spaniards Out of the Southwest*.

3. Diego de Vargas (1643-1704) was appointed governor of New Mexico in 1690. He is most famous for leading the re-conquest of the territory for Spain following the Pueblo Revolt of 1680. After meeting with Diego de Vargas in Santa Fe, the Pueblo leaders agreed to peace, and on September 14, 1692, de Vargas proclaimed a formal act of repossession. Although this repossession of New Mexico is often called a "bloodless re-conquest" since the territory was initially retaken without any use of force, in 1696 a second pueblo revolt was attempted and warfare continued between both sides until the end of the century.
4. Wattle and daub technique consists of a woven latticework of wooden stakes called "wattles," which is daubed with a mixture of clay and sand and sometimes animal dung and straw to create a structure. It is normally whitewashed to increase its resistance to rain.
5. Oñate and his colonists brought the Churro sheep with them into New Mexico in 1598. A series of

U.S. government sponsored flock reductions and "improvements" by cross breeding nearly caused the Churro sheep to go extinct. In the 1970's attempts began to preserve and promote the original breed.

6. Francisco Vázquez de Coronado (ca. 1510-1554) explored the Southwest between 1540 and 1542. He sent out parties that ranged all the way to the Colorado River on the present border between California and Arizona, exploring much of what is now New Mexico. He also led a party in search of the city of Quivira and its mythic riches, into what is now Kansas.
7. Don Juan de Oñate Salazar (1552-1626) led a colonizing expedition to northern New Mexico in 1598 at the request of King Philip II. His stated objective was to spread Roman Catholicism and establish missions. He founded the province of *Santa Fé de Nuevo México* and became its first governor. For a biography of

Oñate, see Marc Simmons' *The Last Conquistador: Juan de Oñate and the Settling of the Far Southwest*.

8. John Henry Tunstall (1853-1878) was a New Mexican rancher and merchant. On January 18, 1878, Tunstall was murdered in what is now called Tunstall Canyon, about twenty miles south of Lincoln. This event ignited the Lincoln County War. For more information on Tunstall, see Frederick Nolan's *The Life and Death of John Henry Tunstall*.
9. Established in 1851 in order to guard the Santa Fe Trail, Fort Union is situated along the trail in the northeastern New Mexico grasslands, about 25 miles west of Watrous. During its forty-year history, three different forts were constructed close together. The third Fort Union was the largest in the American Southwest and functioned as a military garrison, territorial arsenal, and military supply depot.



Flour mill at Las Golondrinas.

10. Father Antonio José Martínez (1793-1867) was a New Mexican priest, educator, publisher, rancher, farmer, community leader, and politician. In Willa Cather's *Death Comes for the Archbishop*, he is portrayed as corrupt and dictatorial.

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From the Spanish Trail Suite video. courtesy Sara Penny

William Knight: An Early Spanish Trail Traveler in Iron County, 1841-1842

by Steve Heath

Despite the thousands of travelers along the Old Spanish Trail, there are few traces of their passage through what is now Iron County, Utah. One of the rare exceptions is an inscription near the mouth of Little Creek Canyon at Paragonah, Utah. It reads:

1842

Wm Knight

My first encounter with this interesting rock signature brought two immediate questions: "Was it authentic?" and, if it was, then "Who was William Knight?" At first I thought that it might be a fake, since there have been residents of Iron County named "Knight." Reference to Leroy and Ann Hafen's *Old Spanish Trail* reveals that there was indeed a William Knight who traveled to California in 1841 (204-218). Had someone wanted to fabricate the inscription in the walls of Little Creek Canyon, he or she most certainly would have engraved the year 1841 instead of 1842.

I learned of the inscription from Spanish Trail enthusiast Alva Matheson, who told me that he had seen the engraving in the 1930's as a young man. The interesting style of the inscription letters, the Hafen's reference to Knight, and Matheson's testimony persuaded

me that it was authentic. I was completely convinced when I later discovered that Knight had made two additional trips across the Spanish Trail in 1842. Reference to these two trips did not appear in print until 2001 (Spitzzeri 25).

William Knight's life narrative is worthy of consideration, in that it provides us with an example of a pioneer who, in the face of social and political conflict, traveled to California along the Old Spanish Trail.

Knight was born in Baltimore about 1795. By age twenty-four, he had a bright future ahead of him as a physician. Perhaps life in Maryland was too docile for him, for by 1830 he was living in St. Louis. At this gateway to the West, he came under the influence of adventurers and experienced western pioneers like William Wolfskill and John Rowland. Encyclopedic historian Hubert Howe Bancroft wrote of him: "He was a great hunter, and though said to have been educated as a physician, was a man of very rough ways, violent in temper, always ready to take offence, and settle all differences by force" (IV, 702). Excited about the far western frontier, Knight traveled down the Santa Fe Trail to Santa Fe (Walters and Anderson 131). Although he also may have practiced medicine in Santa Fe, he became a trader along the trails between Santa Fe and the southern towns in Sonora and Chihuahua.

In 1831, Knight married Carmen Tapia y Arce. She was the daughter of Jose Tapia, a prominent Mexican resident of Santa Fe. Records indicate that William and Carmen had eight children, five born in New Mexico and three later in California (Walters and Anderson 13; LDS Family Group Records).

Even though Knight became a Mexican citizen in 1835, he and many other American-Mexicans were “distinctly Anglo” in their associations with Indians living in the area (Hafen, VII 386). The Mexicans, on the other hand, had become bitter enemies of the Indians. The murder of Juan Jose in 1837, in which Knight was indirectly involved, illustrates the dramatic change in the attitude of the Indians toward American-Mexicans. Juan Jose, a young chief of the Mimbres Apache, was educated for the priesthood at a Chihuahuan Catholic school. He apparently was a model student until his father was unjustly killed by Mexican officials. Following this unfortunate event, Juan Jose became a renegade leader in the long-standing fight against Mexicans. But at the same time, Juan maintained good but cautious relationship with Americans in Mexico. Irritated with the Apaches in general, the governor of Sonora hired an American named James Johnson to assassinate Juan Jose. Johnson’s opportunity came when a group of Americans led by a man named Ames were on a mule-buying expedition in Oposura (modern-day Moctezuma, Sonora,

Mexico). Knight was one of the members of the party (Hague 193). Johnson offered to guide the group north to the Gila River where they might obtain the mules they sought from the Indians. The route he proposed took them through Apache country in present-day southern Arizona. Johnson knew that he might entice Juan Jose to visit the caravan of American traders, and he was not disappointed. As a result, he and an accomplice named Gleason were able to carry out their treacherous assassination plan (Hague 194-195). The response of the Apache was immediate and deadly. The trade caravan was driven back to Oposura. Several in the group were killed, but Knight escaped as did Johnson and Gleason. We are not told how Knight returned to Santa Fe, but whatever trail he took was fraught with danger. The friendship between the Apaches and Americans in New Mexico continued to deteriorate during the days and years that followed.

By 1841 it was becoming unbearable for American-Mexicans to remain in New Mexico, not only because of increased hostility with Indians, but also because they were being persecuted by Mexican officials. Texas had been taken from Mexico in 1836, and Mexican government officials were now fearful that Americans in Santa Fe and Taos might be planning to liberate New Mexico from Mexican control. Two of Knight’s friends, John Rowland and William Workman, were accused of having such

sympathies. Knight himself may also have been suspected of similar views. During the summer and early fall of 1841, Rowland and Workman planned a trip to California on the Spanish Trail to avoid immediate conflict with the Mexican government. These Spanish Trail pioneers hoped that Mexican-California might be a better place to live than New Mexico.

The details of the Rowland-Workman expedition have been provided by Spanish Trail historians LeRoy and Ann Hafen (195-225) and Paul Spitzzeri (20-28). According to these accounts, the members of the expedition assembled at Abiquiu where they purchased several hundred sheep to eat along the way. They also convinced a few Mexican families to join them. Knight did not bring his wife and children with him since his wife was probably pregnant or had recently delivered their fifth child. He likely felt she would be safer with her father at the ranch where they had recently lived and farmed between William’s trading expeditions.

Historical sources for the trip are very limited, but we do know that the expedition followed a route which traversed the path which has been recognized as the northern route of the Old Spanish Trail. The group left Abiquiu the first week of September and arrived in Los Angeles on November 5. The records indicate that they passed through the Little Salt Lake Valley on the way. They were probably

in Iron County by the middle of October. Knight, an experienced frontiersman, no doubt was very helpful to the pioneering group.

After spending the winter in California, Knight joined Rowland and others headed for Santa Fe and a reunion with their families. Both men had determined to make California a permanent home. They left California on April 7, 1842, for the long journey back to Santa Fe along the Spanish Trail. The party experienced no major difficulties on the return trip except for the swollen rivers in their path. At the Green River crossing, they lost two of their party, James Doke and a man called Tibeau. The two men, who had also been in the 1841 expedition, drowned at the treacherous crossing of the river (Spitzzeri 25). Knight may have carved his name on the rocks at Little Creek on the trip back, but he probably did not since his party would have been traveling as rapidly as possible on the return trip.

The date the group arrived back in New Mexico has not been recorded. This is not surprising since they may have been fugitives from Mexican officials. At the end of the summer, the men quietly organized their families, friends, and others and commenced traveling back to California. They knew that too early a departure would take them into the Nevada and California deserts when the heat made travel unsafe. They probably left New Mexico in September as they had done the

year before, but with the addition of extra families and young children, they did not reach California until December 12 (Spitzzeri 25). Knight and his wife had five children, ranging in age from one to seven, to take care of during the trek. I suspect that Knight carved his name in the rock wall of Little Creek on the return trip when the expedition was moving at a slower pace. They would have passed through the canyon in late October 1842. Rowland would later write to a friend of the group's experience:

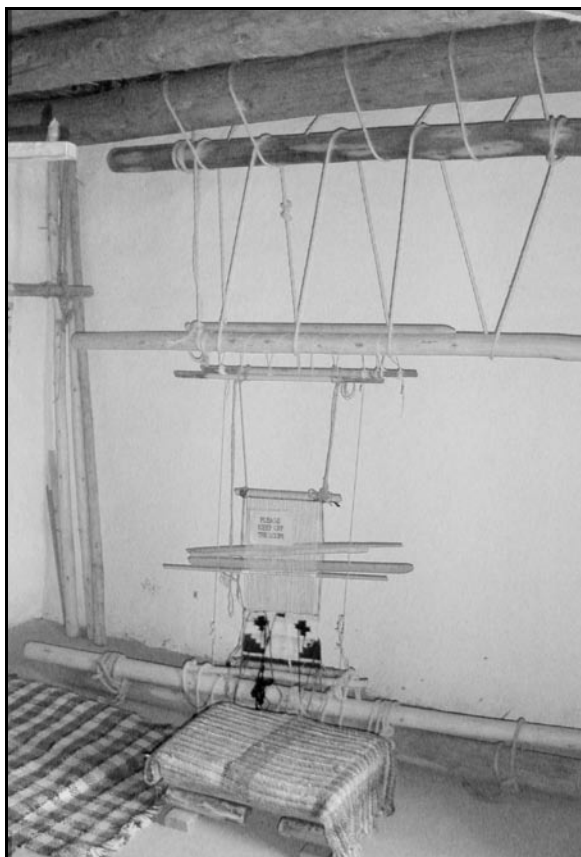
On the road we had nearly all the time very cold unpleasant weather in which our women and little ones suffered very much an accident also happened to our sheep by which we lost about 400 which got smothered by the flocks rushing into a deep ravine or gully; but on the whole we at last got here, for which I shall always feel grateful to the Divine Ruler of destinies of us Mortals for having delivered me from the bondage of the Taosanos and Apaches to which I was always doomed whilst in New Mexico. (Walters and Anderson 14)

Mexico was happy to have American-Mexicans to settle in California, and Knight and his many emigrant friends were welcomed to their new home. Knight stayed in Los Angeles area for a short time and then settled in northern California along the Stanislaus River. There he built a ferry and established a small farm for his family's support. He was a good hunter and made his living as a trader as he had done in New Mexico. When the Mexican War broke out in 1846, Knight sided

with those bent on taking California and the Southwest from Mexico. During the subsequent gold rush he prospered greatly. Although he found some gold, the ferry brought greater wealth for him and his family. Some days he made as much as \$500 ferrying men and goods in the gold fields. The new American government did not recognize the claims on his property at Knight's Landing. He did not live long enough to secure his Mexican land grant or spend his new-found income, for on November 9, 1848, he was killed. Family members later charged that he was murdered (Walters and Anderson 16). Knight's widow was taken care of by his older children.

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Churro sheep and Indian loom at
Las Golondrinas.



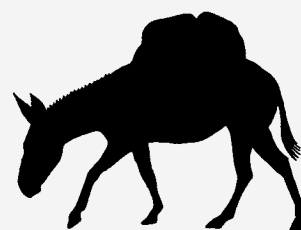
Old Spanish Trail Association 15th Annual Conference

June 5- 8, 2008

Ohkay Owingeh Resort and Conference Center
Española, New Mexico

The conference theme is "At the Beginning: Sheep/Wool and Mules." Speakers will represent the New Mexico end of the trail. Major addresses by Native Americans and Hispanics will be included. There will be demonstrations of items and techniques of the trail period. A day-long field trip will explore Abiquiú, Ghost Ranch, and other nearby trail sites.

For further information,
contact the conference
co-ordinator,
Patricia Kuhlhoff, at
pglk@cybermesa.com or
505-466-4877.



Tour of the Camino Real de Tierra Adentro

Noted historians Dr. Hal Jackson and Maestro Luis Urías will lead a tour of Mexican portions of El Camino Real, beginning on February 14, 2008. The tour will begin in El Paso, pass through the colonial cities of Chihuahua, Parral, Durango, and Zacatecas, then return to El Paso on February 25. Many sites will be visited, providing participants with the fullest understanding of the economic, political, and cultural significance of the trail as a whole. For further information, visit the web site: tourelocaminoreal.com.



P.O. Box 7
Marysville, WA 98270