



# THE OLD SPANISH TRAIL ASSOCIATION

## 6TH ANNUAL NATIONAL CONFERENCE

JUNE 5, 6, & 7, 1999 - LAS VEGAS, NV

The *people* - the *price*- the *program* - the *location*- together these things make a conference a success. Our conference was a success.

**OSTA's thanks go to:**

### THE PEOPLE

Hal Steiner and Liz Warren of Las Vegas for doing all the leg work setting up the conference site and program. Charles & Judy Querfeld (OSTA President and wife) and Willard Lewis (Conference Chair) for being responsible for the overall accomplishment of having the conference.



Col. Harold Steiner



Liz Warren

Our program lecturers: Dr. Joe Sanchez, Cliff Walker, Liz Warren, Kim Zukosky, Greg Seymour, Col. Harold Steiner, Bill Helmer, Alice Baldrice and Charles Querfeld.

And, we want to thank Dr. Harry Godshall and his wife, Jo, for inviting us to his ranch, Resting Springs, on the Old Spanish Trail.

### THE PRICE

\$45 for 2 days per OSTA member including two meals, an all day program and coach tour of OST sites was a deal. The Silverton was reasonably priced (\$50-59 Fri. & Sat., \$27-29 Sun.

& Mon.) and the buffet was good—who among us did not eat our weight in crab legs and shrimp.

### THE LOCATION

Las Vegas—one word: entertaining.

### THE PROGRAM - SATURDAY, JUNE 5

Registration: (The coffee went as fast as it could be provided.) Richard and Marie Greene name-tagged our attendees and welcomed the walk-ins.

Judy Querfeld opened the OSTA store and was busy selling OST thermal mugs, OST Logo Ts and denim shirts.

Willard Lewis had books for sale and sold all copies of Dr. Joe Sanchez' book "Explorers, Traders, and Slavers- Forging The Old Spanish Trail, 1678-1850." Special thanks are due to Paul Spitzzeri for giving OSTA the conference sale proceeds for reprints of his article "To Seduce And Confuse: The Rowland-Workman Expedition of 1841" published in the Southern California Quarterly.

President Charles Querfeld made the introductions and welcomed everybody. He turned things over to the Las Vegas coordinators, Liz Warren and Hal Steiner. They gave us survival and comfort tactics for Las Vegas and the forthcoming Conference activities. The program was soon underway.

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**Dr. Joe Sanchez** presented his keynote address, "The Old Spanish Trail Mosaic: History and Concept - Cultural Landscapes."

He sketched the history of the OST from its origins in Ute trails and trade with the Pueblo Indians before Onate settled New Mexico in 1598. After the Spanish entrada, trade with the Utes continued and the eastern portion of the OST was extended into the Utah Lake area near Provo. This illicit activity included a lively trade of New Mexican horses and mules for, among other items, Ute captives, typically Paiute women and children. At that time official trade in New Mexico was limited to that on the Camino Real de Tierra Adentro. In this context it is important to remember that although Spain expanded settlements to near Tucson around 1700, in Albuquerque in 1706, and in San Antonio in 1718, California was not settled until 1769.



Dr. Joseph Sanchez

Dr. Sanchez reminded us that the settlement of California happened much later than either New Mexico or Arizona. San Diego was founded in 1769 and missions and settlements as far north as Monterey followed soon after. Other settlements, notably San Francisco and Los Angeles, came later in 1776 and 1781, respectively.

The stage was now set for travel between New Mexico and California, but it was slow to develop.

Explorations for a land route between California and New Mexico proceeded both ways. In 1765, before California's establishment, Juan De Rivera reached the vicinity of Moab, Utah. In 1776, Father Garces toured, on foot, with only an Indian guide, from San Gabriel to the Hopi village at Oraibi where he left a note for Fray Silvestre Velez de Escalante, the resident missionary. Shortly thereafter, Escalante and Fray Francisco Atanasio Dominguez set out from New Mexico to Monterey, reached central Utah and then returned to New Mexico in the face of deteriorating

winter weather. Garces' southern route was forgotten.

Between 1777 and 1821 neither Spain nor Mexico developed the land route from New Mexico to California. However, mountain men like Jedediah Smith were exploring the Southwest and finding the way to California. By 1822, Mexico had won independence from Spain, California had become prosperous and Mexico had a new attitude on trade with foreigners and access to California. In 1829 Antonio Armijo took the first trade caravan from New Mexico to California. It was the start of trade and eventually migration. The route from New Mexico to California eventually became known as the Old Spanish Trail.

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Bill Helmer, OSTA's Historian, followed Dr. Sanchez. Bill presented a slide show accompanied by taped music (Bill on the harmonica—a friend sang and played guitar—nice music). The slides showed scenes from Bill's 500-mile hike on the OST. Bill talked about the impact on the Timbisha Shoshones who were and are still impacted by the migration of western civilization. In fact, the tribe is in negotiations with the U.S. for the restoration of tribal lands.



Bill Helmer



Cliff Walker

Cliff Walker then told us that "watering holes" naturally dictated the direction of the trail through the desert. Thus, when Indians ran away from the California missions and merged with other desert tribes and began to steal livestock, the Indians used the "watering hole"

trails—as did the New Mexican traders who crossed the desert. The New Mexicans raided small Indian villages and traded their captives in California and New Mexico. The 1853 Beale Expedition noted that the slave trade still existed. Walker showed us slides of a fault line where water flowed on one side—wagon tracks in an area but no mule tracks—Indian trails 10-15” wide; mule trails are 22”- several OST sites.

After lunch, we heard about the efforts to preserve the Las Vegas Springs—an OST camp site in the middle of Las Vegas.



Greg Seymour



Kim Zukosky

Liz Warren, Greg Seymour (Archaeologist) and Kim Zukosky (So. NV Water Authority Preserve Manager) presented the history and current status of the Las Vegas Springs. There is evidence that the Springs were used by Indians long before their discovery by mountain men and Spanish traders. The Springs were the largest on the OST. Mormons remarked that the Springs “formed a small creek that spread out over the Las Vegas Valley to form meadows 2 ½ miles long and ½ mile wide.” So what happened to this oasis? The Springs have been capped to supplement the water supply of Las Vegas. The meadows have disappeared under roads and concrete. Kim Zukosky told us about the efforts to preserve the immediate area around the capped springs—the regrowth of native vegetation, the return of animals and birds and the effort to maintain the vestiges of pioneers who used the Springs.

Liz, Greg and Kim primed us very well for the Sunday visit to the Springs.

Charles Querfeld, OSTA President, updated us on the OST National Historic Trail Feasibility Study. The NPS now expects to issue their Preliminary Report for public comment at the end of 1999. We are now waiting for its release before filing comments.

Hal Steiner discussed “The OST Across The Mojave--Is It Worth Preserving?” The invasion of off-road vehicles, housing developments and highways are all contributing to the disappearance of parts of the Trail. It was agreed we need to start marking the Trail and erecting markers at significant sites.

Alice Baldrice, Nevada’s Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), showed us how we can work with the SHPO of any state to get approval for protection of historic sites and trail segments and perhaps find funding for the erection of markers. Alice’s comments gave us a lot to think about when she said that perhaps we could get segments of the OST



Alice Baldrice

designated as National Register Sites should the NPS not designate the OST as a Historic Trail. OSTA is grateful to Alice for taking the time to come to the conference and for her enthusiastic presentation.

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### The OSTA Annual Business Meeting

Charles Querfeld was pleased to mention the progress that OSTA has made in a year—national membership has increased from less than 100 to its present level of 240 mailing addresses—324 individuals (Hats off to our Membership Chairman Richard Greene). A

Southern California Chapter has formed under John Robinson's direction. Richard Greene, OSTA Treasurer presented the Treasurer's Report: The Treasury has grown from a Fiscal Year 97-98 Balance of \$1,166 to \$8,085 in Fiscal Year 98-99 ( Revenues \$13,375- Expenses \$5290).

This ended the program for Saturday and we moved to the reception. There was plenty to eat and drink and we all had a chance to mingle. The Silverton provided an excellent spread.

## SUNDAY, JUNE 6

Our bus was comfortably packed even though there was not a spare seat when we left the Silverton. We were grateful for the AC - this was June in Las Vegas. Hal Steiner and Liz Warren took turns as our guides.



We cruised the Strip. There is nothing like the Strip—where else can you drive by replicas of world famous architecture collected in one spot.

After arriving at the Big Springs Preserve ("the" Las Vegas Springs), Kim Zukosky guided us through this normally closed facility. First, you become aware that this is an enclave surrounded by housing and traffic. Yet, as you explore, you become oblivious to the outside world. You focus on nature—vegetation, old cottonwood trees, birds (especially the kestrels) and the gentle flow of water. Then, there is Man: pumps, old buildings, water collection tanks, pathways, the now dry, spring caul-

drons. You are well aware of the heat and glare of the sun and that you are immersed in history.

We went on to the Mormon Fort. This building is the oldest in Las Vegas and is the remnant of the fort built by Mormon settlers. There is a pioneer garden here to put you in touch with past life. The site was selected by the Mormons because it was on a creek at the head of the meadows for which Las Vegas is named. The fort subsequently became a ranch under O. D. Gass and Helen Stewart.

We proceeded to the outskirts of Las Vegas and began to get the feel for the Trail. The typical desert terrain rolled with the usual ups and downs—some pretty steep slopes. Trail travelers went from spring to spring: Cottonwood Springs in Blue Diamond once had good water holes and grass. Mountain Springs lay to the west, uphill, in a gap not visible from Las Vegas.

Mountain Springs was our lunch stop. Locals know the "Saloon" just below Mountain Springs summit (at 5502 feet the highest part of the OST in NV). It is also a watering hole for bikers. I don't know which was more intimidating: the bikers and their Harleys or our bus load of OST folks. Hal Steiner had box lunches for everybody, but chance decided which flavor sandwich you would get. We had a pleasant lunch under the trees. Some people checked



the springs close to the restaurant. There is an OST concrete pylon marker and a bronze plaque here.

From Mountain Springs we retraced our way back toward Las Vegas. Liz Warren pointed out the agave plants growing on the slopes. Agave, when cooked in pits, is edible and can be stored. Liz pointed out the limestone middens that remained at several cooking pits.

We went to Cottonwood Springs. The springs are on private property. The community around it was an oasis. We stopped at the Blue Diamond store for further refreshment and took in the OST marker there.



The store at Blue Diamond, Nevada

After passing the Wheeler Spring Preserve, we drove to the entrance of the Red Rock Canyon Recreation Area. Because buses are not allowed in without special authorization, we stopped and looked at the view from the entrance area and headed back to the Silverton.

The bus tour was comfortable, the AC felt good, the history was great.

## MONDAY, JUNE 7

It was already sunny and warm when ten cars left the Silverton under Hal Steiner's leadership. We carpoled to minimize the number of cars in our caravan.

We stopped at a small community just before Mountain Springs to look at some wagon tracks that the community had fought to preserve and then went on to see more trail beside a road cut just before the summit of Mountain Springs. We drove down to the road to Pahrump and looked at another possible OST trace. Then, it was on to Stump Spring.

Stump Spring: Bill Helmer, OSTA Historian, took us down into the arroyo where in the sand in certain areas you could dig down and get water to surface. Reba Grandrud found a wet spot and was able to scoop out some water. It was deja vu for Bill because he had hiked through this arroyo some years ago and was seeing some of the same willows. Stump Springs was a lonely place surrounded by brush and if water were not so precious (no matter how brackish), I am sure past travelers like Fremont (1844), Orville Pratt (1848) and Gwinn Harris Heap (1853) would have not mentioned it. The view of snow-capped Mt. Charleston was breathtaking - even Fremont remarked on it. Two miles beyond Stump Spring is California.

The community of Charleston View, on the Nevada-California boundary, has cleared a stretch of desert for an air strip. The OST was clearly visible as it crossed the airstrip. Rose Ann Tompkins easily pointed out the trail when challenged by Hal Steiner. Community roads have crisscrossed the area and impacted the Trail.

Emigrant Pass: If you want to see one of the best views and most graphic evidence of the OST, THIS is the place. You can drive and park at the top of the Pass. From there you can look over the valleys to each side and clearly see a long segment of trail. On top of the pass and on both sides of the slope is so much evidence of wagon wheel rust on rocks that you know you have had one of those trail "experiences." It was a great spot for lunch.



Hike up Emigrant Pass



The OST mule trace lives on at Emigrant Pass

Resting Springs Ranch lies a few miles west. Resting Springs is a genuine oasis. Dr. Harry Godshall and his wife, Jo, and their great danes welcomed us. Harry is an OSTA member and offered Conference attendees the opportunity to visit Resting Springs. Harry gave us a pamphlet on the history of Resting Springs. About 1850, the Mormons gave Resting Springs its name when their wagons regularly passed and stopped here. Fremont called it Agua de Hernandez after the Hernandez family (killed by Indians). In the mid 1850s the army built a redoubt here to counter Indian attacks. California horse thieves passed through here.

About 1877, Jonas Osborne built the first permanent building. Other buildings were

erected: a stone hotel and three saloons among others. Water from the spring was piped 2 or 3 miles via gravity flow in 3" pipe to a mill. Sections of rusty pipe can still be seen in the desert. The spring flows at about one million gallons per day and is excellent drinking water. It flows out of the ground from an extended source.



Dr. Harry Godshall and wife Jo visit with OSTA President Charlie Querfeld at Resting Springs

Resting Springs Ranch includes 520 acres and Harry inherited 1/20 of the ranch at the death of his grandfather. He spent a few years buying out the other 19/20 interests. Each succeeding 1/20 interest became more difficult to buy. In 1958, there were 18 cottonwoods left of all those planted by Jonas Osborne, but they have all died. The Godshall's have planted all the greenery on the ranch including an incredible grove of palm trees. When they moved onto the property in 1981 they could not walk from the house to the barns because of heavy brush and wire fences; pastures had to be cleared, plumbed for irrigation and fenced—they started from scratch and in their own words—"It's been worth every sweaty moment." It is indeed paradise.

Another concrete OST pylon is on the ranch.

From Resting Springs we journeyed to China Ranch. It is reached by a pleasant drive through a canyon with interesting remnants of past mining ventures, natural arches, holes and hoodoos. The owner welcomed us. The ranch is famous for dates and the group enjoyed tasting date shakes out of the hot desert sun.

This was the end of the car tour except that Hal mentioned he was going to stop on the way back to Las Vegas near Shoshone, CA to check out a road cut with obsidian. We followed Hal to the road cut . The obsidian was soft—almost like coal.

We said “Bye” to Hal who was heading home and the rest of us returned to the Silverton. We had a great day—thanks to Hal Steiner.

## SEE YOU NEXT YEAR IN TAOS



### MINUTES OF THE GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING OLD SPANISH TRAIL ASSOCIATION

President Querfeld called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

#### REPORTS:

##### MINUTES OF THE 1998 ANNUAL MEETING:

**MOTION:** Forgo the reading of the minutes. Made, seconded and approved unanimously.

##### TREASURERS REPORT: Richard Greene

Fiscal Year 1998-1999 (June 1 - May 31)

Revenues	Expenses - Actual	
Starting Balance	\$1166	Spanish Traces \$ 989
Nat'l. Conf.	\$1505	Nat'l. Conf. Rpt. \$ 122
Dues	\$2655	Membership Exp. \$ 465
Gifts - general	\$1255	Board Mtgs. \$ 41
Gifts - markers	\$6612	CO Corp. Fee \$ 45
Promotions	\$ 60	LA Memorial \$1494
Spanish Traces	\$ 57	Pioneer Woman Plaque \$ 100
Interest	\$ 65	Postage \$ 359
Total	\$13375	Off. Supplies \$ 130
		Promotions \$ 554
Current Balance	\$ 8085	Nat'l. Conf. \$ 991
		Total \$5290

**MOTION:** Accept the Treasurers Report as presented. Made by Pat Etter, seconded by Willard Lewis and passed unanimously.

##### 1998 ACTION ITEMS:

**Membership Growth** - Richard Greene - Membership has grown continuously throughout the year, increasing from approximately 100 last year to a present 240. The president

thanked the Greenes for their major effort and a job well done.

**New Chapters** - Willard Lewis - A new Chapter, formed in Southern California thanks to the efforts of John Robinson, has become our largest Chapter. 1999 Priorities are:

1. Chapter in Nevada
2. Two Chapters in Utah - Ron Jewkes.
3. Chapter in Durango, Colorado.

Chapter growth is not limited to these areas, but these are priorities.

**Newsletter** - Due to the Querfeld's production of "Spanish Traces" costs have been kept to a minimum. We need a permanent editor for *Spanish Traces*, although the Querfelds will continue to do the layout. *Spanish Traces* needs articles from the membership.

**Bylaws** - New bylaws are modeled on the Santa Fe Trail Association bylaws. The Board approved them, as amended, January, 1999. They were presented to the general membership, March 1999. Revisions include, Board composition (one from each of our six states), terms of office (Directors, three years, officers, one year), voting procedures (general membership will vote by mail rather than at the Annual Meeting).

**MOTION:** To approve Bylaws as presented. Made by Reba Grandrud, seconded by Rod Stock, and approved unanimously.

**Election of Directors and Officers** - The following slate of Officers and Board Members was presented for nomination.

Past President - Ron Kessler

Vice President - Willard Lewis

Director/Nevada - Elizabeth Warren

Director/New Mexico - John Coffman

All other Directors and Officers remain.

**MOTION:** To bring slate to vote. Made by Reba Grandrud, seconded by Richard Greene, and approved unanimously.

##### ONGOING PROJECTS:

**BLM Cooperative Agreement:** - Board is in favor.

**ational Park Service Report** - Need to prepare an official response.

**Y2K Annual Conference:** - proposed for Taos, NM or Los Angeles, CA.

**Publicity:** - Need a committee chairman to work through local and regional historical groups, create copy for publication, and project OSTA into public view.

**Mapping & Marking:** - Need to get organized and started.

Clark Co. is leader in marking and mapping historical sites. We should all work with our own counties. Utah Historical Society wants us to develop an official logo that is simple and recognizable for use on signs.

**MOTION:** To adjourn meeting. Made by Judy Querfeld, seconded by John Robinson, and passed unanimously.

This annual conference report is produced for OSTA members. Narrative: Richard Greene; Photography: Marie and Richard Greene. Editing and Layout: Judy and Charlie Querfeld. We extend our thanks to all guest speakers and participants.



The plaque at Blue Diamond, Nevada near Cottonwood Springs.

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Conference Report

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