

SPANISH TRACES



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The Saint Francis of Assisi Mission in Ranchos de Taos, New Mexico

Photo courtesy of C.W. Querfeld

For many years travelers, artists and photographers have visited the Taos area to enjoy its many offerings. The San Francisco de Asis Mission is but one of many attractions. The scenery, atmosphere, architecture and cuisine captivate the senses. Book shops, art galleries and missions provide other satisfactions.

OST Travelers to Converge on Taos

June 10 and 11

By Willard E. Lewis, Jr.

Come join *SOME TAOS TRAVELERS ON THE OLD SPANISH TRAIL* in Taos on June 10-11 at the Old Spanish Trail Association's Annual Conference! The "Taos travelers" theme is woven throughout super program sessions on June 10, and three field trips on June 11.

Keynoting the conference will be Dr. Marc Simmons, an eminent professional historian and author of the Southwest, with 35 books to his credit. His topic will be *Kit Carson and the Romance of the Old Spanish Trail*. This will be the first public presentation by Simmons in about three years. While Simmons has researched and written extensively about the Santa Fe Trail, and served as a founder and president of the Santa Fe Trail Association, he has more recently turned to extensive study of Kit Carson. Simmons was knighted by order of the King of Spain in 1993 for his contributions

Continued on the back cover

Revised Location for Jedediah Strong Smith

15 February 2000

Judy Querfeld, Editor
SPANISH TRACES
PO Box 47
Niwot, CO 80544

Dear Ms. Querfeld:

This letter is a follow-up to the telephone message that I left at your number on Monday. I am writing to you in my capacity as the President of the San Dimas Historical Society, Past Sheriff of the San Dimas Westerners, and Board Member of the San Dimas Festival of Western Arts.

Your Winter 2000 issue contains an article written by Kenn and Lorraine Carpenter, *Experiencing the Old Spanish Trail from a Bicycle Saddle*. While I enjoyed the article, I was quite surprised to see the statue of Jed Smith on page 8 listed as being in La Verne. This statue, the only one of Smith, is located in San Dimas on the grounds of the San Dimas City Hall. It is the first piece of public art that the Festival of Western Arts had sponsored, and represents an item paid for in the most part by the people of the City of San Dimas, California. While we can understand that the Carpenters could easily have been mistaken because of the lack of boundaries between La Verne and San Dimas, the location should be correctly noted in your next edition.

The Jedediah Smith Society, located

All matters relating to **Spanish Traces** should be directed to the Editor:

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Spanish Traces is the official publication of the Old Spanish Trail Association, a nonprofit organization incorporated under the laws of the State of Colorado. **ST** welcomes submission of letters, articles, and OSTA related news. The next deadline is August 15, 2000.

in Stockton, California, plans to have its Year 2000 Rendezvous here in San Dimas in October. Their meeting will be at the same time that we will be celebrating our Western Days.

I have taken the liberty of sending a copy of this letter to one of your directors, John Robinson. John is a member of the San Dimas Westerners and is quite familiar with the location of the Smith statue.

Please convey my best wishes to the Carpenters. With the exception of the location of the Jed Smith statue, I enjoyed their article immensely

Sincerely,
Nick Martocchio



The San Dimas, California monument to Jedediah Strong Smith

OSTA's efforts will help preserve one of America's great long distance trade routes and increase appreciation of the West's multicultural heritage. Please join us!

Membership Dues:

Institutional	\$25/year
Family/Individual	\$12/year
Student	\$ 5/year

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President's Corner

This is my last column as the president of the OSTA and it is appropriate to comment briefly on how our association is faring. The state of health of the OSTA has improved materially because of your support and the hard work by your officers and directors. I especially want to thank Richard and Marie Greene for their herculean labors in increasing our membership from below 100 members to our present 270 members.

Our chapters have also increased in number: Southern California and Las Vegas Chapters have been established with efforts by John Robinson, OSTA director for California, and Nick Saines in Las Vegas, NV. Yvonne Halburian has revitalized the Saguache Chapter. Jack and Katherine Nelson of the Mesa County Chapter have established a very much needed liaison with the Colorado congressional delegation in our on-going effort to convince the National Park Service (NPS) that the OST genuinely merits National Historic Trail designation.

My wife, Judy, the editor of *Spanish Traces*, has produced a series of issues that include interesting and important articles written by a broad spectrum of our members. These

issues have succeeded primarily because of your willingness to provide good copy for our newsletter. Judy will retire from her labors after the Fall 2000 issue. We hope that there is a nascent editor among you who will accept this responsibility for the following few years.

The future of our association will necessarily include major trail conservation efforts. Growth in the Las Vegas area and in adjacent California has the potential for effacing a number of pristine OST segments that are the only surviving mule traces. OSTA members must assist our new governing board in this effort. There will be major efforts at preservation preceded by mapping and marking activity. Because we have funds that have been donated for durable trail memorials, I ask that you assist the governing board in placing the most important memorials, Santa Fe, Abiquiu and San Gabriel Mission.

The NPS preliminary report of the study of the OST should be released in June or July of this year. The recommendation that will be offered is unknown, although past experience suggests that the NPS will continue to be (forgive me) mulish about granting historic trail status. No matter what the outcome of the study the OSTA must be prepared for

a long term struggle with the NPS to achieve National Historic Trail status on terms that are reasonable and responsible to the OSTA and the public in general.

In closing, I want to convey my gratitude to all of the OSTA governing board, the chapter presidents and the membership for your support during the past two years. Finally I must thank my wife for her help and forbearance.

Noticias

On March 31, Utah Board member Ron Jewkes attended the dedication of an OST interpretive sign in Moab, Utah. Jewkes and the Mayor of Moab unveiled the plaque in the Old City Park in Moab. (Photo in the Fall 2000 issue.)

The Utah State Historical Society produced a fabulous map of *Utah Historic Trails* from Dominguez-Escalante in 1776 up through early automobile routes (ca. 1910-30). The map may be obtained from the Utah State Historical Society Bookstore: 801-533-3525 at a cost of \$5.00 plus shipping.

Steve Madsen has been preparing a complete update for our website—and members should be sure and check it out at <http://www.slv.org> in the near future.

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Chapter Reports

Mesa County

Where has the winter gone? We here on the Western Slope had a most happy winter, had very few nights below zero, and heaviest snowfall came on the first day of Spring. We are progressing quite well with our marker to commemorate the "Crossing of the Grand."

We have been donated a huge boulder, about 5' x 4' x 6'. Through the kindness of a local road construction operator, and the knowledge and wherewithal of members of our Chapter, the boulder is resting in place at the top of the arroyo along the old historic road bed leading down to the river crossing. We are in the process of accepting bids for the bronze plaque at present. The plaque will read "Crossing of the Grand. To honor the countless travelers who forded the Grand (Colorado) River from this site. This arroyo's location on the North Branch of the Old Spanish Trail and the Salt Lake Wagon Road was a vital link in the opening of the West, c. 1830-1880." A list of sponsors follows the inscription. The whole thing will be capped off with Yvonne's familiar OSTA logo as displayed on Spanish Traces frontispiece.

We have been quite actively communicating with our national legislative staffs. We had a face to face meeting with staff of both senators and one congressional office, and are receiving very positive feedback. This communication is not just a wham bang pat on the back and out the door, but a very interested supportive follow through type of "take it to the bank" help. You have to remember members of our chapter have been working on this project for several years along with other dedicated Trail folks. The Colorado State Legislature passed an

Act several years ago recognizing and urging what we are all trying to do. It could be that the Park's folks will realize that we are very serious about this Trail.

It is our most sincere wish that all the historians/evaluators who will hopefully complete and submit the report on the Old Spanish Trail this year, will have an opportunity to view at least some segments of the route from the ground. Hopefully when we dedicate the "Crossing" rock, you all can come and view it and pretend this is the same boulder that Colonel Loring mentions when he came across here in the 1850s, as one marking the crossing.

**Jack Nelson, President
Grand Junction, Colorado**

Salida del Sol

The Salida del Sol Chapter has much to report since the Fall 1999 issues of *Spanish Traces!* After two successful Fall programs, the chapter kicked off its Spring 2000 program series with a March program, *General Stephen Watts Kearny: Winning the West*, by Stephanie Kearny, the great-great granddaughter of General Kearny. The meeting was a joint meeting with the End of the Trail Chapter of the Santa Fe Trail Association, attended by more than 50 people.

Our second Spring program will be on April 29 at 2 p.m. at the Palace Meeting Room of the Palace of the Governors. The speaker will be Dr. John Porter Bloom, former president of both the Western History Association and Westerners International. His topic is *Johnny Gringo in New Mexico: Kearny, Doniphan, et al, 1846-1848*. His talk will focus on the ordinary soldier in the Mexican War, and will be a nice follow up to the March Kearny program. This

program is presented through the auspices of the Speakers' Bureau of the Historical Society of New Mexico. The Annual Chapter Membership Meeting will be held at the conclusion of the program session.

The final series program will be in Abiquiu on May 20. Chapter members will gather at the Abiquiu Library at 1:30 p.m. to present Southwestern books to the Library. Following will be a program on the history of Abiquiu presented jointly by Aubrey Owen, curator of the Ghost Ranch Museum, and Augustin Garcia of Abiquiu. Details are still being worked, so contact Chapter President Willard Lewis at 505-984-2978 for specifics if you are not a Chapter member, but are interested in attending.

In addition to programs, the Chapter has other activities to report. Chapter President Willard Lewis provided a two-hour December training session on the Old Spanish Trail to more than 50 Palace of the Governors docents and staff.

Chapter board member Pat Kuhlhoff is researching requirements for obtaining permission to erect trail interpretive markers in Santa Fe and Abiquiu, and perhaps other sites in New Mexico.

Chapter members Richard and Marie Greene, Robert Shlaer, Charles Bennett, Charles and Judy Querfeld, and Dr. Tom Chavez are assisting in planning and arrangements for the OSTA annual conference in Taos on June 10-11.

Finally, the Chapter has been invited to participate in a Trails Commemoration Project involving the Santa Fe Trail, the Camino Real, and the Old Spanish Trail. Chapter President Lewis is serving on a steering

committee with other trails representatives, officials of the State Tourism Department, the Santa Fe Convention and Visitors Bureau, and the Palace of the Governors History Museum. An event may take place as early as October of this year.

Willard Lewis
Santa Fe, New Mexico

Southern California

The Southern California Chapter continues to grow. 1999 was a banner year with the dedication of the plaque in La Plaza of Old Los Angeles in January, followed by five well-attended outings, three last spring (previously reported in Spanish Traces) and two this past fall.

Jane Stewart, one of our most active and enthusiastic members, did all the planning for the October 22-24 outing. We met Saturday morning in Shoshone (some came in Friday night and camped). After visiting an old desert mine, we drove east to Mountain Springs, Nevada, where we were joined by ten members of the newly formed Las Vegas Chapter. After lunch, we followed Harold Steiner, author of the just-published *The Old Spanish Trail Across the Mojave Desert*, west, staying as close as possible to the original route of the trail. We visited Stump Spring and Emigrant Pass, where traces of the trail can still be seen; and ended up at the oasis of Resting Springs, where owner and fellow OSTA member Harry Godshall greeted us. The Las Vegas Chapter members then headed home, while most of our Southern California members remained overnight in Shoshone, some attending the performance at the Amargosa Opera House that evening. Sunday we visited China Ranch and walked along a stretch of the Amargosa River before heading

home.

For our second fall outing, 26 of us assembled at the Mojave-River Valley Museum Saturday morning, November 20. Cliff Walker, a museum founder and noted Mojave Desert authority, led us eastward to Fork-of-the-Road, where the Old Spanish Trail branched away from the Mojave Trail, then northeast through Spanish Canyon, up to "Impassable Pass," and on to Bitter Springs, a crucial waterhole now within the boundaries of the Fort Irwin Military Reservation.

These two great fall outings made us familiar with the Old Spanish Trail through most of the California desert. The hardships of the original travelers of this most historic pathway were easy to imagine.

John Robinson, Chairman
Fullerton, California

Las Vegas

The Las Vegas Chapter had its organizational meeting last September. We got the ball rolling with a field trip led by Stan Rolfe (BLM) and Hal Steiner, which had great press coverage in the Las Vegas newspaper. Our charter meeting was in November attended by OSTA President Charles Querfeld. We now have 16 paid members, and a much larger E-mailing list.

The elected officers of the Las Vegas chapter are:

President: Nick Saines
Vice President: Hal Steiner, author of a recently published book on the OST through the Mojave
Treasurer: Chris Macek, ranger at the Old Mormon Fort on the OST in Las Vegas
Secretary: Karen Earley
Director: Liz Warren, historian and

on the National Board of Directors of OSTA

Director: Helen Mortenson, one of the movers and shakers in the preservation community in Las Vegas.

Hal Steiner showed Nick Saines the last stretch of intact OST in the Las Vegas metropolitan area and Nick launched an all-out effort to try to save the stretch from development, although warned that it was too late. In spite of great press coverage and a lot of interest from citizens and members, the fight had to be abandoned. One developer agreed, however, to put in a little park and a plaque on the Trail on his property. We are now trying to preserve the Trail just outside the metropolitan area.

In January we had a wonderful meeting at former Lieutenant Governor Lonnie Hammargren's house/museum, where western artist Roy Purcell displayed and lectured on his art related to the OST. In March Hal led a four-wheel drive trip along the OST between Las Vegas and Blue Diamond (Cottonwood Springs), including a walk on some relatively pristine stretches.

Upcoming events in Las Vegas: On April 8 the reconstructed Mormon Fort will be dedicated, presided over by Chris Macek. The same day Nick Saines is leading a combined Sierra Club/OSTA field trip along the OST near China Ranch in California. In May the chapter will be participating in the Statewide Archaeological and Historic Preservation Week – May 14 through 20. We will have a table at the Southern Nevada Archaeology and History Festival on the 14th and will have a walk along the OST in Blue Diamond on the 20th.

Nick Saines, President
Las Vegas, Nevada

The Old Spanish Trail

Significant in the Opening of the West

The Spanish Trail was a significant corridor in the opening of the West. Efforts to find the best and most direct routes to the Pacific in the gold rush era, led Pacific railroad surveyors over long segments of the Spanish Trail and brought the American Southwest largely out of its logistical isolation. But by 1858, the “Map of the Utah Territory Showing Routes Connecting it with California and the East,” issued by the Corps of Topographical Engineers, carried the bold phrase “Region Unexplored Scientifically.” Supplementing the work of the railroad surveys, the explorations of the Topographical Engineers and the scientific surveys of Hayden and Wheeler, many of which followed the Spanish Trail route, vastly increased America’s geological and geographical knowledge of the region. Moreover, the Spanish Trail helped government explorers fill in the blank places on the map of the United States. In addition, the yet unexploited areas of the West could be easily accessed via the Spanish Trail by miners, farmers, cattlemen, and lumbermen who studied the government publications and maps. (The map published as a result of the 1859 Macomb military expedition, which located over 200 miles of the Spanish Trail route, provided valuable information for men rushing into Colorado’s mineral-rich Southern Rockies and for cattlemen who supplied the miners with beef.) Beyond plotting the easiest routes into the West, these studies delineated the irrigable lands, revealed the mineral resources, and mapped the vast timber and grazing lands. Furthermore, 19th century travelers of the Spanish Trail enhanced the West’s historical literature and helped debunk the geographical myths, including El Dorados and fictitious lakes, streams, and mountain ranges.

Contributed by Steven K. Madsen

Editor’s Note: Madsen’s listing of U.S. Government Publications that reflect the significance of the Old Spanish Trail in facilitating the mapping, examination, and description of the West’s vast resources follow. Detailed articles by contributing authors on Fremont’s 2nd Expedition, Brewerton, Gunnison, Marcy, and Fort Jurupa also follow. The trail made possible gathering of basic scientific information of the region; and the world could see the American Southwest that had formerly been blank space on maps of the United States.

Several 19th Century U.S. Government Publications that Document the Old Spanish Trail

U.S. Congress. House. Ex. Doc. 91, 33rd Cong., 2d sess.: "Reports of Explorations and Surveys, to Ascertain the Most Practicable and Economical Route for a Railroad from the Mississippi River to the Pacific Ocean. Made under the direction of the Secretary of War, in 1853-4, according to Acts of Congress of March 3, 1853, May 31, 1854, and August 5, 1854." Vol. 2, Washington, D.C.: A. O. P. Nicholson, Printer, 1855. (See pages 58, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, and 69.)

U.S. Congress. House. Ex. Doc. 193, 43rd Cong., 1st sess., 1874. (See pages 25, 26, 27, and 56 of "Reconnaissance in the Ute Country. Letter from the Secretary of War, Transmitting a report and map of reconnaissance in the Ute country, made in 1873 by Lieutenant E. H. Ruffner, of the Corps of Engineers.")

U.S. Congress. Senate. Ex. Doc. 78, 33rd Cong., 2d sess.: "Report of Explorations and Surveys, to Ascertain the Most Practicable and Economical Route for a Railroad from the Mississippi River to the Pacific Ocean. Made under the direction of the Secretary of War, in 1853-4, According to Acts of Congress of March 3, 1853, May 31, 1854, and August 5, 1854." Vol. 3 (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1856). (See pages 125, 130.)

U.S. Congress. Ex. Doc. 41, 30th Cong., 1st sess.: "Notes of a Military Reconnaissance from Fort Leavenworth, in Missouri, to San Diego, in California, including part of the Arkansas, Del Norte, and Gila Rivers. By Lieut. Col. W. H. Emory." (Washington, D.C.: Wendell and Van Benthuysen, Printers, 1848.) (See page 460 about the "famous mule trail from Santa Fe to the 'Pueblo de los Angeles' in California.")

Frémont, John C. Report of the Exploring Expedition to the Rocky Mountains in the Year 1842, and to Oregon and North California in the Years 1843-'44. By Brevet Captain J. C. Frémont, of the Topographical Engineers, under the orders of Col. J. J. Abert, Chief of the Topographical Bureau."(Washington, D.C.: Gales & Seaton, Printers, 1845).(See pages 259,270,271.)

Hayden, F. V. Eighth Annual Report of the United States Geological and Geographical Survey of the Territories, Embracing Colorado and Parts of Adjacent Territories; Being a Report of Progress of Exploration for the Year 1874. (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1876). (See page 377 of the Report of W. H. Jackson.)

Hayden, F. V. Ninth Annual Report of the United States Geological and Geographical Survey of the Territories, Embracing Colorado and Parts of Adjacent Territories: Being a Report of Progress of the Exploration for the Year 1875. (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1877). (See page 349 of "Topographical Report on the Grand River District," by Henry Gannett.)

Hayden, F. V. Tenth Annual Report of the United States Geological and Geographical Survey of the Territories, Embracing Colorado and Parts of Adjacent Territories, Being a Report of Progress of the Exploration for the Year 1876. (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1878). (See page 189 of "Report on the Geology of the Sierra Abajo and West San Miguel Mountains, by W. H. Holmes.")

Hayden, F. V. United States Geological and Geographical Surveys of the Territories, Geological and Geographical Atlas of Colorado and Portions of Adjacent Territory. (Washington, D.C.: Julius Bien, 1877). (See Sheet VIII.)

Macomb, John N. Report of an Exploring Expedition from Santa Fe, New Mexico, to the Junction of the Grand and Green Rivers of the Great Colorado of the West, in 1859, with Geological Report by Prof. J. S. Newberry. (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1876). (See pages 6, 80, 81....)

Ruffner, E. H. Annual Report upon Explorations and Surveys in the Department of the Missouri, by E. H. Ruffner, First Lieutenant of Engineers, U.S.A.; Being Appendix QQ of the Annual Report of the Chief of Engineers for 1876. (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1876). (See page 20.)

Williamson, R. S. Reports of Explorations and Surveys to Ascertain the Most Practicable and Economical Route for a Railroad from the Mississippi River to the Pacific Ocean... Vol 5. (Washington, D.C.: Beverley Tucker, Printer, 1856). (See pages 33-34 of "Report of Explorations in California for Railroad Routes to connect with the Routes near the 35th and 32d Parallels of North Latitude.")

John Charles Frémont's Second Expedition and the Old Spanish Trail

by Patricia Joy Richmond

When John Charles Frémont set forth to explore trails and wilderness terrain of the Far West in the spring of 1843, he was aspiring toward the pinnacle of his exploratory career. A survey of the Wind River Mountains of central Wyoming the preceding year launched Frémont's reputation as America's *Pathfinder*. Examination of the Sweetwater River and legendary South Pass during that first expedition culminated in a precise map identifying one of the most important routes through the Rocky Mountain barrier. Frémont's well-received, exuberant report describing America's frontier, viewed for decades as a desert wasteland useless to civilized agrarian peoples, encouraged thousands of migrants to head west toward the twin promises of new land and new fortunes.

The objective of train-like mass migrations of settlers walking, pushing handcarts or driving wagons laden with precious relics from abandoned lives was the Pacific Northwest—specifically Oregon. From 1818 to 1846 the United States and Britain disputed the right to lay claim to this fruitful land. A few bold missionaries tentatively reinforced the United States' claim, but Canadian trappers and British

soldiers presented a real threat to America's expansionist plans. Marcus Whitman's daring ride from his Columbia River mission to Taos, New Mexico, via the Cochetopa branch of the Old Spanish Trail, and thence to Washington, D.C. to lobby Congress to "save Oregon for the Union," fired patriotic ambitions to secure what political propagandists of the day promoted as America's territorial right to extend its border to the Pacific Ocean. The young nation's *Manifest Destiny* dream depended upon large congregations of settlers successfully migrating across a vast and hostile landscape.

Suddenly famous, but still remarkably young, John Charles Frémont received his commission for a second expedition with specific orders to explore the Oregon Trail to the Pacific coast. Private conferences with his superiors may also have brought suggestions to scope the strength of Britain's presence and how far toward California, already a fabled Eldorado, the British may have extended their influence. The United States' clear title ended at the Rocky Mountains, western boundary of Jefferson's Louisiana Purchase; but the Lewis and Clark expedition had carried America's flag to the mouth of the Columbia River.

Explorations dating back to Coronado and Cabrillo (1539-40) secured Mexico's claim to California and an interior mountain and basin domain that the United States would eventually carve into five states—Nevada, Utah, Arizona, New Mexico, and Colorado. But Britain, already in control of the vast region of North America known as Canada, considered adding the Far West to their ever-expanding empire a fair prospect.

The government guide hired to lead Frémont westward over the Oregon Trail was a crusty Missourian named Thomas "Brokenhand" Fitzpatrick who had considerable experience within the western mountains. Charles Preuss, whose grumbling diary entries provide insightful comments on Frémont, Kit Carson, and the 1842 expedition in general, again served as cartographer. Without official sanction, Frémont decided to drag along a brass cannon. An uneasiness had haunted the 1842 expedition after Jim Bridger spread a wild rumor about several tribes preparing for warfare. Perhaps Frémont felt apprehensive about the kind of reception the 1843 expedition might encounter not only along the trail but also within disputed territory. Whatever Frémont's reasoning, the cannon became a nuisance and slowed the expedition's progress. However, as a military leader Frémont dared not ditch the artillery piece where it might fall into civilian or hostile use.

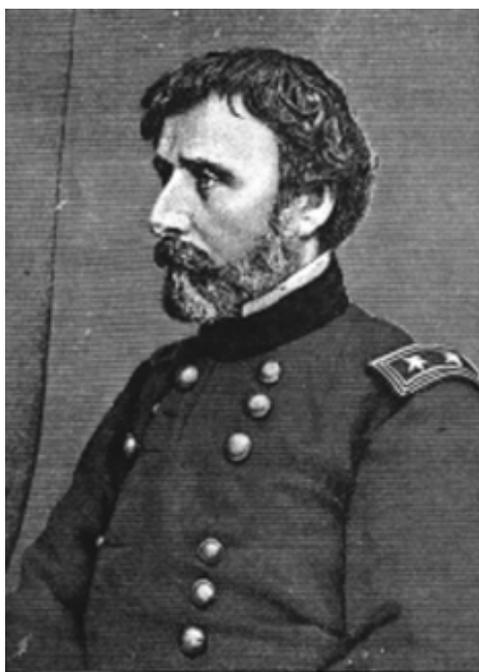
Frémont's second expedition departed from Kaw Landing (Kansas City) May 30, 1843. Touted as one of the best-outfitted expeditions to leave the Missouri frontier, they

carried scientific instruments essential for an accurate and complete survey and enough supplemental provisions for an absence of eight months. Fourteen months would pass before the 39 well-seasoned frontiersmen who joined Frémont, including some veterans of the 1842 expedition, would return to anxious families. Amazingly, considering severe weather, formidable terrain, hostile encounters with native people, and intrusions into disputed and foreign lands, only two members of the party perished. (The expedition could have ranked as a disaster along with Frémont's 1848-49 fourth expedition in which one third of the men who entered the San Juan Mountains of Colorado died of hypothermia and starvation.)

More to the chance of luck, particularly in securing guides who had first-hand knowledge of trails and terrain, Frémont's career as the *Pathfinder* would remain secure. His report for the 1843-44 expedition gave potential migrants an accurate and extensive portrayal of North America's western frontier. Though not anticipated at the time of departure, one of the major contributions of Frémont's second expedition would be exploration of the high desert basin and range country lying between the Rocky Mountains and California. Frémont's careful documentation of the landscapes and resources would provide essential knowledge for anyone bound to California via either the Humboldt River or the Spanish Trail.

To accommodate the inconvenience presented by a train of carts and the cannon, Frémont took to dividing his expedition into two parties. With a

smaller group able to travel more rapidly, Frémont would scout unknown terrain while the main party proceeded along known routes. Kit Carson, who had established a friendship with Frémont while serving as guide for the 1842 expedition, sometimes worked as a hunter for Bent's Fort on the Arkansas River. Upon hearing about



Kit Carson

Frémont's new expedition, Carson joined ranks at *El Pueblo* without even bothering to say farewell to his new bride in Taos. Frémont hired Carson as a guide, but at lower pay than Fitzpatrick who continued as the official guide for the main party.

After celebrating Independence Day at Fort St. Vrain, the reunited expedition moved to a camp on the Big Thompson River before heading north toward the Cache la Poudre. Fitzpatrick and the main party continued over known trails toward

the Sweetwater River and South Pass. (In 1824, Fitzpatrick had wintered near South Pass with fur trapping comrade Jedediah Smith.) Frémont's smaller party examined a road leading through an unexplored "high prairie, broken by buttes and boulders, with scattered cedars, the dividing ground between the Laramie and Cache la Poudre."

Mapping the legendary South Pass had opened a northern route through the Rockies to each and all who dreamed of venturing west. However, hordes of migrants bound for Oregon quickly denuded land adjoining the trail of firewood and pasture. The influx of travelers into remote, wild country also threatened other natural resources essential to survival. Locating alternate routes to the Pacific would become an important and necessary objective of Frémont's second expedition.

Frémont's two parties reunited on the Sweetwater River August 9 and then proceeded to the Green River via South Pass. By September, the expedition, in passing through the Bear River Valley on the Idaho-Utah border, skirted north of the Wasatch Mountains. Upon arriving at the Great Salt Lake (first encountered by Jim Bridger in 1824), Frémont and a small party took an India rubber boat out to an island where they spent the night making astronomical and other scientific observations. A sudden storm almost caused a disaster with the boat and its occupants as they returned to shore the next day.

After a stop at Fort Hall, Frémont's expedition continued their journey toward Oregon by a route comparable to modern U.S. Highway 30

(replaced in part by Interstate 84). In following the Snake River, they passed the American Falls and camped at “Rivière Boisée” (Big Woods River) to arrive at Fort Nez Percé on the mighty Columbia the last week in October. Leaving their carts with friendly American settlers on the “Walahwalah,” Frémont’s party transferred supplies to pack animals. The trip along the Columbia Gorge provided fantastic views of Mount Hood, Mount St. Helen and “Mt. Regneir,” [sic], the latter two spewing volcanic ash.

Frémont found many Americans at Fort Vancouver while noting others had already set to colonizing the “Walahmette” Valley. British agents of the Hudson Bay Company provided a cordial reception for the explorer and members of his party, but Frémont did not tarry. Instead, the expedition, fortified with provisions sufficient for three months, headed east up the Columbia as if returning to the States. However, upon reaching the Dalles in mid-November, Frémont turned south at the Deschutes River to follow a route first traveled and mapped by Peter Skene Ogden. (Ogden, working for the Hudson Bay Company, retraced his entire route from Fort Clatsop to the Humboldt River in 1829.) The mild coastal climate, which permeates much of the Columbia’s rift-like gorge, vanished as the second expedition trudged through snow-clad mountains in central Oregon.

Upon reaching the headwaters of the Klamath River in southern Oregon, Frémont turned southeast to pass along the east shore of Goose Lake. During Christmas week the expedi-

tion crossed the corner of California, near the modern town of Alturas, to enter a desert wilderness. Frémont may have anticipated finding the Humboldt River, thereby connecting with Ogden’s 1828 route to the Great Salt Lake. (The Humboldt River would become Frémont’s route westward toward California on his third expedition.) Certainly Frémont hoped not only to explore the Great Basin, but also to ascertain existence of the fabled Buenaventura River which supposedly linked the Great Salt Lake to the Pacific Ocean. To this end his intended line lay through territory “absolutely new to geographical, botanical, and geological sciences.”

Even today, the northwest corner of Nevada comprises a formidable, desolate region subject to dangerously unpredictable weather changes. Frémont’s report describes alkaline lakes, boiling springs, mud flats, black rock deserts, and the odd formation characterizing Pyramid Lake. Following along the western edge of the lava beds and dry lake lowlands, where cold air settles in a puddle as in a chest-style, deep freeze, the expedition arrived at a meadowland basin now encroached by modern Reno’s condominiums, resorts and golf courses. Frigid air sweeping off the glaciated peaks in mid-January, coldest of winter months, sapped waning strength from men and animals.

Frémont had intruded into Mexican territory soon after passing Goose Lake. During the trek across the lava desert, the expedition acquired some supplemental provisions by trading with Indians for piñon nuts and antelope meat. However, one-third

of their 104 horses and mules either had been stolen or had perished enroute. Compromised by diminishing supplies and dying animals, the expedition’s survival now hinged upon a drastic decision.

To avert potential starvation and complete disaster, Frémont and his men had three options: 1) Stay put to regain strength while hoping severe weather or blizzards would not completely destroy any prospect for survival; 2) Continue to push east with hopes of finding some relief with friendly Indians or at one of the mountain man outposts; 3) Cross the formidable Sierra Nevada barrier. Only the last promised warmer weather, hospitality, and an opportunity to re-supply if the expedition could successfully endure passage through the mountains. Even experience-toughened Kit Carson, renowned as having seen and done it all as trapper and mountain man, declared they had no choice but to ascend the Sierras to save the expedition. Frémont’s men may have concurred, but not without reservation.

Today, with knowledge of regional climate and modern highways passing through towns filled with places for lodging, gas, and food, it becomes easy to second-guess decisions made by pioneering explorers like Frémont. Nevada, with its desolate, and basin and range configuration, holds more desert regions than Arizona. Farther east lie the mountain ranges of Utah and mile upon mile of dry, labyrinth canyons. The Colorado Plateau, buttressing the west face of the Rocky Mountains, remained as untamed as any other mid-19th

century western wilderness.

For two decades mountain men had traipsed into California either to hunt beaver or to procure horses and mules. Lured by tales of “perpetual spring,” several parties of settlers had already migrated from Missouri into the upper Sacramento Valley to settle near the fort of John Sutter. Like the mountain men who eventually took roots in Taos and Santa Fe, Sutter and his American neighbors agreed to pledge fidelity to Mexican law in exchange for the privilege of taking up land. The Mexican authorities, following their Spanish forefathers’ policy of establishing outliers populated with Christianized Indians or half-breeds (half Spanish, half French), tolerated the outsiders by assigning them to buffer areas most likely to carry the brunt of attacks by “wild” Indians, that is Native groups not conscripted as slave labor for the California mission system.

Speculation cannot fully explain Frémont’s motive in his decision to detour from the well-known trail leading back to the States. Manifest Destiny advocates, like Frémont’s father-in-law, Missouri’s Senator Thomas Hart Benton, had already cast an American eye toward California. Santa Fe Trail travelers and traders, familiar with political dissatisfactions in New Mexico, hinted a friendly reception if the United States ever decided to intervene in Mexico’s affairs. Perhaps Frémont deliberately took his mission toward Mexican territory not only to determine whether the British had extended their influence into northern California, remote from the scrutiny of Mexican offi-

cial, but also to assess the mind-set of Californians both native and foreign born.

While attempting to cross the Sierra Nevadas in mid-winter may appear foolhardy in hindsight, Frémont’s men had accepted that alternative as the most likely prospect for their survival. Success would allow the expedition to acquire fresh animals and adequate supplies for the journey home. Success could afford Frémont opportunity to evaluate the situation in California and to determine sympathies of colonists and

Frémont’s second expedition was the first United States military expedition to travel the Old Spanish Trail

foreign settlers. The second expedition’s fateful decision also would place Frémont in the position of leading the first U.S. military expedition across the Old Spanish Trail.

Sierra Nevada slopes and summits commonly receive a half dozen feet of snow at a time. Unable to secure a guide among local Indians, who warned of extreme danger by repeating their word for snow (anglicized to the name, Lake Tahoe), the second expedition headed toward the mountains on its own. Finally, Frémont gave an order to abandon the cannon. Marching south along the foot of the Sierras, possibly in search of Jedediah Smith’s pass (Ebbetts Pass), the expedition made camp in a

“relatively benign basin” at the eastern base of the mountains. (Historians tend to place the expedition in the vicinity of Grover Hot Springs.)

On February 1, the men received permission to kill and eat a dog that had been a traveling companion since the Bear River. The expedition easily covered 16 miles February 2; the next day, seven miles. By day four, they were mired in deep snows. The struggling pack animals refused to move until relieved of baggage. One man, Baptiste Derosier, disappeared. (Listed as lost, he eventually found his own way back to Missouri.) On the 18th day of their ordeal, February 20, 1844, the expedition topped a summit south of Lake Tahoe. (Discussion continues among knowledgeable historians in determining exactly which pass the second expedition took across the Sierras.) Using a spyglass, Carson spotted landmarks familiar from his trapping days with Ewing Young. Frémont estimated they had traveled 1,000 miles since leaving the Dalles.

During their descent of the pass, the expedition started killing their pack animals for food. Charles Preuss lost his way and wandered for three days without sustenance except ants, small frogs and wild onions. (From then forward Preuss’s diary entries reflect a changed attitude toward wilderness life.) After another 14 days of mountain travel down headwaters of the *Rio de los Americanos*, Frémont’s rag-tag second expedition finally reached Sutter’s Fort. A full month of life-threatening ordeals had brought them to relief. One half of the pack animals forced across the mountains

had survived. The expedition lingered two weeks to recuperate while Frémont conferred with Sutter and neighboring British and American settlers.

On March 22, 1844, with the coming of spring, Frémont and his men departed from the Sacramento Valley. Keeping a low profile and avoiding coastal communities so as not to aggravate concern among Mexican officials, the expedition moved south along the Sacramento River toward the juncture with the San Joaquin River. “Our direct course home was east, but the Sierra would force us south some 500 miles of travelling, to a pass at the head of the San Joaquin River.” Having obtained a description of Walker Pass (on highway 178 east of modern Bakersfield), Frémont anticipated exiting California via that route through the Sierra Nevada. (Missourian Joseph Walker had been a member of Bonneville’s 110 man trapping party that traveled from their Green River outpost to explore beaver prospects in California in 1832. Later, in 1843, Walker opened the main cutoff into California from the Oregon Trail when he took a party into California via the Humboldt River. Walker’s route became the gold rush trunkline into California--the California Trail.)

Continuing southward past the Tulé Lakes, where fog lay so thick they had to navigate by compass, the expedition crossed a large stream which Frémont identified as the main headwater of the San Joaquin. (This river now bears the name Kern River in honor of Edward Kern, who would serve with Frémont’s third and fourth expeditions.) Frémont’s

April 9th journal entry reads, “We have here approached considerably nearer to the eastern Sierra, which shows very plainly, still covered with masses of snow, which yesterday and to-day has also appeared abundant on the Coast Range.” Upon missing the trail leading to Walker Pass, the expedition’s objective would become the road known as the *Spanish Trail*, which tied the northern New Mexican capital of Santa Fe to California’s *el pueblo de los angeles* and nearby mission communities.

Frémont’s local guide advised that a broad road, “Buen camino,” allowed easy travel through ensuing hills which Frémont described as “very broken country.” In approaching a pass (identified by Donald Jackson and Mary Lee Spence as Oak Creek Pass about five miles from Tehachapi Pass [7]), the expedition encountered a dry stream bed impregnated with numerous horse and Indian tracks. “We ascended a trail for a few miles along the creek, and suddenly found a stream of water five feet wide, running with a lively current, but losing itself almost immediately.” Their camp in a “handsome, green oak hollow” contained enough grass and pea vines to feed their livestock and horses.

After conferring with a “Christian Indian” on furlough from the San Fernando mission, Frémont remarked, “I have entered the pass [Oak Creek] with a strong disposition to vary my route, and to travel directly across towards the Great Salt lake [sic], in the view of obtaining some acquaintance with the interior of the Great Basin, while pursuing a direct course for the

frontier; but his representation, which described it as an arid and barren desert, that had repulsed by its sterility all the attempts of the Indians to penetrate it, determined me for the present to relinquish the plan; and, agreeably to his advice, after crossing the Sierra, continue our intended route along its eastern base to the Spanish trail. By this route, a party of six Indians, who had come from a great river in the eastern part of the desert to trade with his people, had just started on their return.”

Frémont’s new associate agreed to accompany the expedition for a few days. April 14, Frémont wrote: “As we reached the summit of this beautiful pass [filled with trees, flowers, hummingbirds and “other feathered friends”] and obtained a view into the eastern country, we saw at once that here was the place to take leave of all such pleasant scenes as those around us. The distant mountains were now bald rocks again; and below the land had any color but green.” According to Frémont, the road over this pass [Oak Creek], which he found excellent for horse travel, could be improved to accommodate wagons with a bit of labor:

“We here left the waters of the bay of San Francisco, and, though forced upon them contrary to my intentions, I cannot regret the necessity which occasioned the deviation. It made me well acquainted with the great range of the Sierra Nevada of the Alta California ... it also made me well acquainted with the basin of the San Francisco bay and

with the two pretty rivers and their valleys, (the Sacramento and San Joaquin,) which are tributary to that bay, and cleared up some points in geography on which error had long prevailed. It had been constantly represented, as I have already stated, that the bay of San Francisco opened far into the interior, by some river coming down from the base of the Rocky mountains, and upon which supposed stream the name of Rio Buenaventura had been bestowed. Our observations of the Sierra Nevada, in the long distance from the head of the Sacramento to the head of the San Joaquin, and of the valley below it, which collects all the waters of the San Francisco bay, show that this neither is nor can be the case. No river from the interior does, or can, cross the Sierra Nevada. ...”

Considering the number of migrants destined to invade California, this enlightenment about the geography of the region might well justify Frémont’s determination to explore the Mexican territories.

Frémont’s remarks further reinforce the purpose of his mission as well as the importance of United States’ claims to the Oregon territory: “There is no opening from the bay of San Francisco into the interior of the continent. The two rivers which flow into it are comparatively short, and not perpendicular to the coast, but lateral to it, and having their heads towards Oregon and southern California. They open lines of communication north and south, and not eastwardly; and thus this want of

interior communication from the San Francisco bay, now fully ascertained, gives great additional value to the Columbia, which stands alone as the only great river on the Pacific slope of our continent which leads from the ocean to the Rocky mountains, and opens a line of communication from the sea to the valley of the Mississippi.”

Having reached the land of Joshua trees and cacti, the expedition continued its southward journey -- “the trail on which we rode appearing to describe the eastern limit of travel, where water and grass terminated.” Through heat and haze, they observed a few barren buttes and ridges. Frémont’s guide spread his hands and described the scene of “the great llanos, ‘no hay agua; no hay zacaté—nada: there is neither water nor grass—nothing; every animal that goes out upon them, dies.’ It was indeed dismal to look upon, and hard to conceive so great a change in so short a distance. One might travel the world over, without finding a valley more fresh and verdant ... than we had left in the San Joaquin here, with a few miles ride, a vast desert plain spread before us, from which the boldest traveller turned away in despair.”

The second expedition had become a motley conglomeration. In Frémont’s words, “forced south by a desert on one hand, and a mountain range on the other: guided by a civilized Indian, attended by two wild ones from the Sierra; a Chinook from the Columbia; and our own mixture of American, French, German--all armed; four or five languages heard at once; above a hundred horses and mules, half wild; American, Spanish,

and Indian dresses and equipments intermingled—such was our composition.” The procession, with scouts taking the lead, pack and stock animals in the middle, stretched a quarter of a mile, often in a state of undisciplined confusion.

On April 15, a snowy range stretching eastward came into view as the expedition continued their march south. After riding all day through fields of orange poppies, they reached a series of hollows where their guide announced, “a este piedra hay agua.” Frémont commented, “He appeared to know every nook in the country. We continued our beautiful road, and reached a spring in the slope, at the foot of the ridge...” In crossing Cajon Pass (north of modern San Bernadino) on April 17, they arrived at a small lake with alkaline, but drinkable, water. Before turning southwest toward his mission, the guide pointed to a dark butte on the eastern horizon, “aqui es camino, ... no se piedra -- va siempre.” Using this landmark, Frémont proceeded along a barely visible trail to reach “the Spanish trail, deviously traced from one watering place to another, which constitutes the route of the caravans from *Pueblo de los Angeles*, near the coast of the Pacific, to Santa Fé of New Mexico.”

Excitement filled the air on April 20: “...after a difficult march of 18 miles, a general shout announced that we had struck the great object of our search--THE SPANISH TRAIL, which here was running directly north.” Since leaving the Columbia Gorge in mid-November, the expedition had moved south and away from their intended line of return. “The course of the road, therefore, was

what we wanted; and, once more, we felt like going homewards. A *road* to travel on, and the *right* course to go, were joyful consolations to us; and our animals enjoyed the beaten track like ourselves.”

Wind became their traveling companion. Frémont noted that most of the information provided about the trail by people claiming to have passed over it was inaccurate. Waterholes were nonexistent, dry, or alkaline. Probably due to spring runoff, rivers surfaced where none supposedly existed. Although the road had been described as sandy and gentle to horse’s hooves, the expedition “found it the roughest and rockiest road we had ever seen...” According to Frémont, the trail destroyed many animals every year with “a disease called the foot evil.”

Finding that even streams several feet deep eventually disappeared into the sand, Frémont determined, “We were now careful to take the old camping places of the annual Santa Fé caravans, which, luckily for us, had not yet made their yearly passage. A drove of several thousand horses and mules would entirely have swept away the scanty grass at the watering places...”

The expedition continued along the dry bed of the Mojave River, which the Spaniards had named *Rio de las Animas*, to one of the usual campgrounds where they encountered some Mojave Indians, each of whom carried a cord-wrapped gourd canteen. From one Spanish-speaking mission Indian, Frémont learned about various groups living along the *Rio Colorado*. These Indians had

brought goods over the trail to trade with the “Indians of the Sierras.” The traders forewarned Frémont about the difficulties of taking animals across the desert as well as horse thievery by the Paiutes in the vicinity of the *Rio Virgen*.

April 24, the second expedition approached a stretch of the trail that presented “a very long *jornada* of perhaps sixty miles, without water.” Frémont’s men were engaged in butchering and jerking meat from three cattle, which had succumbed to

***Frémont’s expedition
“found it [The Old
Spanish Trail] the
roughest and rockiest road
we had ever seen ...”***

the rigorous trek, when a Mexican man, Andreas Fuentes, and an 11 year old boy, Pablo Hernandez, approached the camp. Driving 30 head of horses, their party had gone ahead of “the great caravan” preparing to depart from *El Pueblo de los Angeles*. The small Mexican party had stopped at “one of the customary camping-grounds,” known as the *Archilette* (80 miles from Frémont’s site), to await the arrival of the larger caravan. When a large party of Indians invaded their camp, Fuentes and Hernandez, who were guarding the horses, drove the herd away from the camp. Leaving the horses at a watering hole, *Agua de Tomaso*, the two horse guards then back-tracked in hopes of meeting some comrades along the trail.

The second expedition had estab-

lished camp away from the main trail, which veered from the river a few miles upstream. Frémont’s party, joined by the two Mexicans, reconnected with the road which now passed through “a miserable tract of sand and gravel” marked by black ridges, sand-filled basins, and boulder-strewn plains typical of high desert country. Despite the misery of this and terrain, snow shone upon slopes of neighboring mountains. In seemingly dry arroyos the men found waterholes, dug by wolves, filled with two feet of fresh water. Frémont noted though barren of trees, “the naked sand would bloom with some rich and rare flower...”

Continuing eastnortheast through a gap in the mountains, the expedition approached the spring known as *Agua de Tomaso*. Tracks revealed that the horses left by the Mexicans had been driven away. Frémont did not wish to waste time seeking reprisal; but Carson and Alexis Godey, accompanied by Fuentes, offered to retrieve the animals. Fuentes returned to Frémont’s camp at nightfall, but Carson and Godey proceeded to the Indian camp. In a moment turned violent, the mountaineers killed two Indians whom Godey proceeded to scalp. Though the two men were successful in securing the stolen horses, the brutality of their act shocked Preuss who denounced the incident in his diary.

Advised by Fuentes that the next 40 to 50 miles of trail lay through elevated desert, the expedition departed late afternoon to take advantage of traveling by moonlight. Frémont wrote, “the line of our road was marked by the skeletons of

horses, which were strewn to a considerable breadth over the plain. We were afterwards always warned on entering one of these long stretches, by the bones of these animals, which had perished before they could reach the water." As if heat and lack of water were not enough misery, the expedition endured a sandstorm of gale force winds. (This stretch held only bitter water termed *Amargosa* by the Spaniards.) After a day's journey of 12 miles, Frémont's men found a green valley at the foot of the mountain, "the best camping ground we had seen since we struck the Spanish trail." Here were springs with fresh water and sufficient grass to refresh the livestock.

The *Archilette* [Resting Spring], where the Mexicans had camped, lay seven miles farther north over one of the worst stretches of desert yet to be encountered. While traveling, Fuentes advised Frémont of a pulpy-fleshed plant eaten by travelers to slake thirst. Amid sand surrounded by black ridges, the *Archilette* presented an oasis of grass, willows, and springs. Upon entering the silent campsite, the expedition found Fuentes' compadres massacred and mutilated; the women, apparently taken captive. "A little lap-dog, which had belonged to Pablo's mother, remained with the dead bodies, and was frantic with joy at seeing Pablo: he, poor child, was frantic with grief, and filled the air with lamentations... 'Mi padre! -- mi madre!' -- was his incessant cry." Frémont commented that "this pitiable sight" and consideration of the fate of the two women removed any "compunction" members of

expedition had about Godey and Carson's victims. Frémont renamed this camp *Agua de Hernandez* and left a note describing the tragic events for the caravan that would arrive from the west.

For several days the road continued across desert terrain typical along the southern California-Nevada border. The expedition repeatedly had to dig for water. As horses gave out, Fuentes would cut off mane and tail to make horse-hair girths before abandoning the animals to their fate. After traveling from 12 to 24 miles per day through this rugged region in a slightly northeasterly direction, the expedition made camp in a large, spring-fed, marshy plain--*las Vegas*.

"Two narrow streams of clear water, four or five feet deep" gushed from two large warm springs. Although Frémont considered the water too warm for a pleasant drink (at 70 plus degrees), the springs provided the weary travelers with refreshing baths.

Next day the expedition set forth early, but soon found the super-heated air oppressive. Skeletons of horses warned of "another dry *jornada*, which proved the longest we had made in all our journey—between fifty and sixty miles without a drop of water." About midnight the wild mules, smelling water, began running ahead and in a few miles the expedition, after 16 hours of "uninterrupted march," arrived at the *Rio de los Angeles* [Muddy River] branch of the *Rio Virgen*.

The animals needed a full-day's rest in this place, but Indians forced the

men to establish a diligent watch. The Indians' actions seemed hostile and provoking for conflict; but "peace being our objective," Frémont only ordered his men to remain defensive. A small party, who had backtracked after some strayed horses, reported finding flesh of the butchered animals hung on bushes to dry. A present of a worn-out horse to one group that evening initiated a dinful lament among others less fortunate. Frémont's journal does not present a kindly description of these desert people, whom he designated as "Diggers" speaking a Utah language.

The expedition managed to depart their camp without incident. After another 20 mile stretch of desolation, they reached a river described by Frémont as "A torrent, passing swiftly by, and roaring against obstructions." Having reached the Virgin River, flowing southwest from snow-covered mountains in southern Utah toward the *Rio Colorado*, the expedition proceeded along the river bottom. Indians, prowling in bands, waited for opportunity to prey upon any animals left behind to rest for a few hours. After traveling upstream about 28 miles, Frémont's men realized they had lost track of the road in the sandy soil and had followed an Indian trail through the brush-choked river canyon. "In a few hours the hunters returned, having found a convenient ford in the river, and discovered the Spanish trail on the other side."

Unfortunately, this camp brought another fatal encounter with Indians. When one man, Tabeau, who had left camp to search for a mule, failed to return, Carson and a small party

rode out to investigate smoke rising from a cottonwood grove. They found the mule mortally wounded with an arrow, but no sign of Tabeau except a trace of blood on some dry leaves. With dark approaching, the scouts returned to the main camp. Next morning Fitzpatrick, Frémont, and several others resumed the search which revealed that Tabeau probably had been wounded, dragged to the river, and thrown in as nothing of him, or his property, remained but blood on beaten-down bushes. "We wished to avenge his death; but the condition of our horses, languishing for grass and repose, forbade an expedition into unknown mountains." Frémont observed that the Indians who had pestered the expedition the previous days now disappeared completely.

If not for this tragedy, Frémont's men might have welcomed the drastic topographical change in the country through which the trail now led. "Our camp was in a basin below a deep cañon—a gap of two thousand feet deep in the mountain—through which the *Rio Virgen* passes, and where no man or beast could follow it. The Spanish trail, which we had lost in the sands of the basin, was on the opposite side of the river. We crossed over to it, and followed it northwardly toward a gap which was visible in the mountains." For mile upon mile, mountains had presented an image of barren, boulder-strewn rock. Now the slopes began to show cedar and pine, and "clusters of trees gave shelter to birds—a new and welcome sight..."

The morale of the expedition improved as they proceeded through this more hospitable terrain. In the

distance one snowy range loomed behind another. The evening of May 10 they found a good campsite on the Santa Clara River. After 27 days spent crossing the desert, the men experienced their first rain. The road following the Santa Clara fork was not easy. The change in weather as well as the terrain, now covered with pine and cottonwood, indicated their desert ordeal lay behind them.

In approaching the dividing summit between the waters of the Virgin and Sevier rivers, the animals grazed on abundant grass. The expedition had arrived at "*las Vegas de Santa Clara*," which had been so long presented to us as the terminating point of the desert, and where the annual caravan from California to New Mexico halted and recruited for some weeks." The mile-wide, ten-mile long *vegas*, surrounded by snow-covered peaks, afforded both men and animals a welcome and much needed change. Frémont decided that all deserved "some relaxation from the severity of camp duty; ... for camp guards, horse guards, and scouts are indispensable from the time of leaving the frontiers of Missouri until we return to them."

Another six months would pass before Frémont, and his men would arrive in St. Louis. By good fortune, or as Diego de Vargas would have noted in his journal *providencia divina*, mountain man Joseph Walker also had departed California with a horse caravan. Seeing signs of the second expedition's trek through the desert, Walker and eight others hurried ahead of their caravan and intercepted Frémont, shortly after his expedition left the Santa Clara *vegas*. (Walker's reputation as an

explorer included not only locating Walker Pass but also memorizing the lay of the Old Spanish Trail through Mojave country.)

Heading north by northeast (along a line paralleling today's Interstate 15 in Utah), Frémont's expedition now reversed the route of Jedediah Smith's famed 1826 trek which had opened the long-used Old Spanish Trail to a new generation of trappers, traders, explorers, settlers and eventually gold-seekers. The track of this north-south route through central Utah was not an easy one. Smith had referred to the region as "a land of starvation" after his party had almost perished.

In passing through the Sevier River Valley, the second expedition anticipated reaching Utah Lake, which Frémont presumed to be part of the Great Salt Lake. On May 16, 1844, Frémont's men camped on a small salt lake [Little Salt Lake] about seven miles long at the base of the Wasatch Mountains—"nearly opposite a gap in that chain of mountains through which the Spanish trail passes: and which, again falling upon the waters of the Colorado, and crossing that river, proceeds over a mountainous country to Santa Fé." Next day, with the expedition bearing northeast, Frémont wrote: "After 440 miles of traveling on a trail, which served for a road, we again found ourselves under the necessity of exploring a track through the wilderness. The Spanish trail had borne off to the southeast, crossing the Wah-satch range."

A party of Utah Indians, led by a chief "Walker," approached the expedition on May 20th. Frémont

described the well-armed, mounted patrol: "They were journeying slowly towards the Spanish trail, to levy their usual tribute upon the great Californian caravan." May 23, the expedition built rafts to ferry equipment and supplies across the Sevier River which now turned from its northerly course. (The Sevier River passes through a gap in the mountains, makes a giant U-turn at the Tintic Valley, and then flows southwestwardly toward Sevier Lake.) Here the expedition buried another casualty lost to a gunshot wound in the head.

Frémont noted the expedition had heard Indian names during the 1,000 miles traveled from the Dalles through the Sierra Nevada. Spanish names predominated from the Sacramento Valley across the desert to the Santa Clara *vegas*. French, American, and British names spread from the Mississippi Valley to the Pacific. Frémont commented further: "...this prevalence of names indicates the national character of the first explorers."

Early morning, May 24, the expedition sighted Utah Lake. "We had now accomplished an object we had in view when leaving the Dalles of the Columbia in November last: we had reached the Utah lake; but by a route very different from what we had intended..." Fremont's report continues, "In arriving at the Utah lake, we had completed an immense circuit of twelve degrees diameter north and south and ten degrees east and west, and found ourselves in May, 1844, on the same sheet of water which we had left in September, 1843." (Based on his presumption that Utah Lake was a thumb of

the Great Salt Lake.) "The circuit which we had made, and which had cost us eight months of time, and 3,500 miles of travelling, had given us a view of Oregon and of North California from the Rocky mountains to the Pacific ocean, and of the two principal streams which form bays or harbors on the coast of that sea."

Having returned to northern Utah, the expedition connected with Etienne Provost's 1824 route, which touched the south end of Utah Lake. "Turning our faces once more eastward, on the morning of the 27th we left the Utah lake, and continued for two days to ascend the Spanish fork, which is dispersed in numerous branches among rugged mountains..." With Walker as guide they ascended a rough trail through the Uintah Mountains. "From the summit we had a fine view of the snowy Bear River range..." Their descent brought them onto the Uintah River.

June 1st, the expedition arrived at Fort Uintah, "...a trading post, belonging to Mr. A. Roubideau, on the principal fork of the Uintah river." Frémont described the outpost as "a motley garrison of Canadian and Spanish engagés and hunters" with a number of Indian women. (A footnote in Frémont's report indicates that after his expedition departed, the fort was attacked by Utah Indians who killed all the men and carried away the women.) The expedition secured basic supplies of sugar, coffee, jerky, and a cow and then proceeded to Ashley's fork. (In 1825 William Ashley explored the Flaming Gorge and country around today's Dinosaur National Monument.) After resting

at Brown's Hole June 7th and 8th, Frémont's men exited the northwest corner of Colorado along the Little Snake River (Frémont mistakenly identified the location of his June 10 and 11 observations as the Elkhead tributary of the Yampa River.)

The expedition continued its trek toward the headwaters of the North Platte. Mid-June, they camped in "New Park" (Colorado's North Park). Unwilling to return to familiar territory, Frémont turned his expedition southward. Their route then opened onto Old Park [Middle Park], headwaters of the "Grand" or Colorado River. Frémont mused, "...Old Park is interesting, though of a different character from the New; instead of being a comparative plain, it is more or less broken into hills, and surrounded by the high mountains..." Here the expedition almost met with disaster again as a large party of Arapaho and Sioux warriors approached with intent to attack as the expedition's line of travel had come from enemy territory. A parley and large quantity of gifts successfully appeased the Indians.

Now they were in Carson's home territory. Explorations of surrounding terrain continued as they passed into South Park. Exiting the Rocky Mountains via Ute Pass, Frémont's second expedition returned to the mountain man outpost of *El Pueblo* July 1, 1844, one year after departure. Their long absence had caused many to believe the expedition had come to grief. After stopping at Bent's Fort July 2, the second expedition turned homeward via the Smokey Hill Road and the Santa Fe Trail. August 5, 1844, Frémont's second expedition arrived in St.

Louis amid a flurry of excitement.

The explorations of Frémont's expedition of 1843-44 presented the first comprehensively accurate cartographic representation of the Far West. Their investigations beyond the already rutted Oregon Trail not only provided valuable descriptions of the Pacific regions--the Columbia, the Sierra Nevada, and upper California—but would also add knowledge about one of the primary routes into southern California. Frémont declared, "And in returning from California along the Spanish trail, as far as the head of the Santa Clara fork of the Rio Virgin, I crossed only small streams making their way south to the Colorado, or lost in sand—as the Mo-hah-ve; while to the left, lofty mountains, their summits white with snow, were often visible, and which turned water to the north as well as to the south,..." Frémont cautioned that despite his expedition's extensive trek, the Great Basin itself had yet to be revealed.

Following the initial successes of Jedediah Smith and Joseph Walker in penetrating the interior of California, more and more Americans would use either the Old Spanish or the Gila trail to enter California. While some trails traversed by westering migrants originated with individuals or specific groups, such as the Mormon Trail, the Old Spanish Trail's reputation lay in a long pattern of traditional use. By the 1850s three main roads through the American Southwest would lead to California. Though these routes followed well-worn Indian trails or old Spanish roads, known to a few adventuresome mountain man, each

route had to be explored or re-discovered for official government reports and accurate maps used by professional trail masters or as guidebooks that stirred imaginations of emigrants seeking a way west to the Pacific coast.

With the advantages of science and technology, modern generations have come to rely upon predictability. When disaster occurs, whether resulting from natural or human causes, we clamor for accountability because our faith in predictability failed. Frémont may not satisfy modern criteria to justify the fame he achieved in his day, but he and those who traveled with him deserved their reputations as adventurers—men willing to embark upon bold journeys without assurance of the outcome. (Frémont's career was not without criticism in his lifetime.) Some 20th century historians have taken to dubbing Frémont a *Pathmarker* because Spanish explorers, priests, and gold seekers, as well as trappers and traders with homes in Taos or St. Louis, had previously traversed most of the trails Frémont followed and mapped. (Generally Frémont's reports acknowledge his predecessors.) Unlike Columbus, Frémont was not a discoverer; he was an explorer. Despite Revisionist efforts to redefine Frémont's place in U. S. history, to his contemporaries Frémont was the *Pathfinder*.

Robert F. Kennedy observed, "Those who dare to fail miserably can achieve greatly. " One cannot travel east-west roads and major highways across the United States without noticing proximity to the routes of Frémont's explorations. In state after state Frémont's fame remains indel-

ibly marked for future generations—Frémont's Pond, Frémont's Orchard, Fremont Pass, the Frémont River, more than one Frémont Peak, several Frémont counties, a half dozen towns, Pathfinder Reservoir, plus species of trees, flowers, and animals bear names honoring John Charles Frémont's achievements. The second expedition's long detour into California and its homeward trek via the Old Spanish Trail altered America's perception of the West and transferred the corridors leading across deserts, through canyons and valleys, or past lofty peaks, from the obscure domain of mountain men to the realm of public knowledge and the nation's geographic treasury.

See Section of the 1845 Fremont (Preuss) map on pages 20-21

Endnotes:

- [1] Barnes, Gertrude. "Following Fremont's Trail Through Northern Colorado," *Colorado Magazine*. #19, September 1942; pp. 185-189.
- [2] *The Conquest of North America*. The Encyclopedia of Discovery and Exploration. Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1973, 488 pp. with maps, illustrated.
- [3] Frémont John Charles, Brevet Capt. *To the Rocky Mountains in the Year 1842 and To Oregon and North California in the Years 1843-44*. Document No. 166. Washington, D.C.: Blair and Rives, Printers, 1845, illustrated.
- [4] Goetzmann, William H. and Glyndwr Williams. *The Atlas of North American Exploration: From the Norse Voyages to the Race to the Pole*. Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1992, 224 pp. with maps, illustrated.
- [5] Perrigo, Lynn I. *The American Southwest: Its Peoples and Cultures*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971, 469 pp. with maps and photos.
- [6] Roberts, David. *A Newer World: Kit Carson, John Charles Frémont and the Claiming of the American West*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 2000, illustrated.
- [7] Jackson, Donald and Mary Lee Spence, eds. *The Expeditions of John Charles Frémont, Volume 1, Travels from 1838 to 1844*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1970, 854 pp. with drawings and maps.

An Artist on the Old Spanish Trail: George D. Brewerton

By Jourdan Houston

He was energetic, often anxious, with an air some saw as supercilious. He was tall for the time—nearly six feet—and, in 1848, still quite young. Douglas Brewerton had not yet entered his 'twenties' when he made his first and only trip across the Old Spanish Trail, a journey that forged his future and remained the pinnacle of his past.

The significance of Brewerton's travels across the Old Spanish Trail has long been considered the record he left in a series of articles he penned for *Harper's New Monthly* beginning in 1853. In them, the impressionable lieutenant recounted his six-week transit with Kit Carson from Los Angeles to Carson's home in Taos in 1848, followed by Brewerton's solo crossing eastbound on the Santa Fe Trail. The three articles were later compiled into a book, *Overland With Kit Carson*, re-issued in paperback in the 1990s.

But Brewerton's accounts of his often harrowing Spanish Trail experience are only part of his Southwestern legacy. In addition to his sketches and prints of the Carson trip, he left a vast visual memoir in an array of paintings, some of the earliest canvases of the region. Nearly a decade before Albert Bierstadt (1830-1902) first visited the Far West, Brewerton was evoking praise in the New York press for his large paintings of California, Colorado and New Mexico. Decades before eastern artists colonized

Taos, Brewerton presented New York's elite with a view of the town.

Brewerton had barely returned to the east in 1853 when his paintings evoked attention. As early as February, the *Home Journal*, published in New York by the poet and editor Nathaniel P. Willis, wrote of a Southwestern landscape by "G. D. Brewerton, late of the United States Army." The painting "...illustrates southwestern scenery with vivid accuracy, and portrays some features peculiar to that region, and such, moreover, as are seldom represented in paintings of this description. His truthfulness in delineating the misty mountain-tops, turbid streams, decaying forest-wood, and other remarkable aspects of this portion of our continent is worthy special and close attention."

In early 1853, one of the nation's first illustrated weeklies reproduced a Brewerton scene of the Sangre de Cristo mountains in New Mexico. Several of his paintings soon hung at the National Academy of Design in New York. He would paint and sell his canvases of the Old Spanish Trail for decades, but the locales and the significance of his works did not translate into the next century. Their ties to New Mexico and Colorado in particular have only lately been reclaimed.

George Douglas Brewerton (1828-1901) was a competent artist, trained by the eminent historical painter

Robert W. Weir (1803-1889) at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. Brewerton's father, Henry, was a career officer, a West Point alumnus, and superintendent of the school from 1845 to 1852. Douglas Brewerton had been born in Newport, Rhode Island, home to his mother's forebears, who included the miniaturist Edward G. Malbone (1777-1807), her uncle. Douglas Brewerton would return to Newport for periods throughout his long life.

His route to the Spanish Trail began in 1846 with the advent of the Mexican War. Only 18, he joined the Seventh New York Volunteers, later known as the First Regiment of New York Volunteers, under Jonathan D. Stevenson, a friend of the Brewertons. The regimental mission: to prevent "hostilities in Mexico, probably in upper California" and to establish a stronger American presence there. A second lieutenant, Brewerton sailed around Cape Horn to California, arriving in August of 1847. He ended up at the Presidio in Yerba Buena, "old dobie barracks" that he and his 30 men defended with two captured Mexican cannons which he described as "prolific in cracks, but deficient on bore."

In the spring of 1848, Brewerton was ordered to accompany Kit Carson from California east; Carson was carrying official messages to Washington, including evidence of local

Continued on page 22

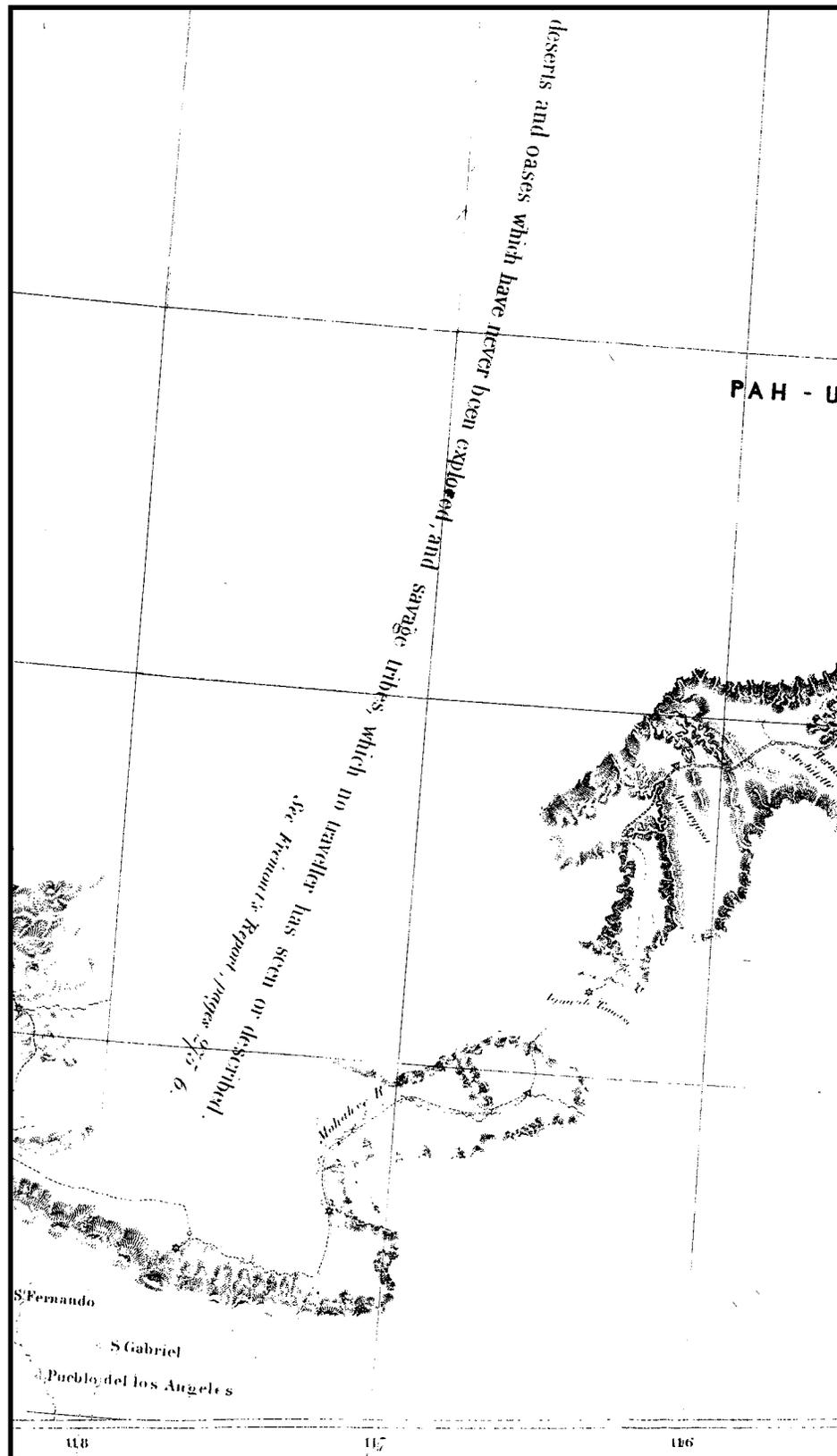
The Old Spanish Trail

“The year 1845...because of a single event is in fact one of the towering years in the story of Western Cartography. In that year John C. Frémont’s report of his journey to Oregon and California in 1843-44 was published. This report and the Frémont (Preuss) map which accompanied it, changed the entire picture of the West and made a lasting contribution to cartography.”

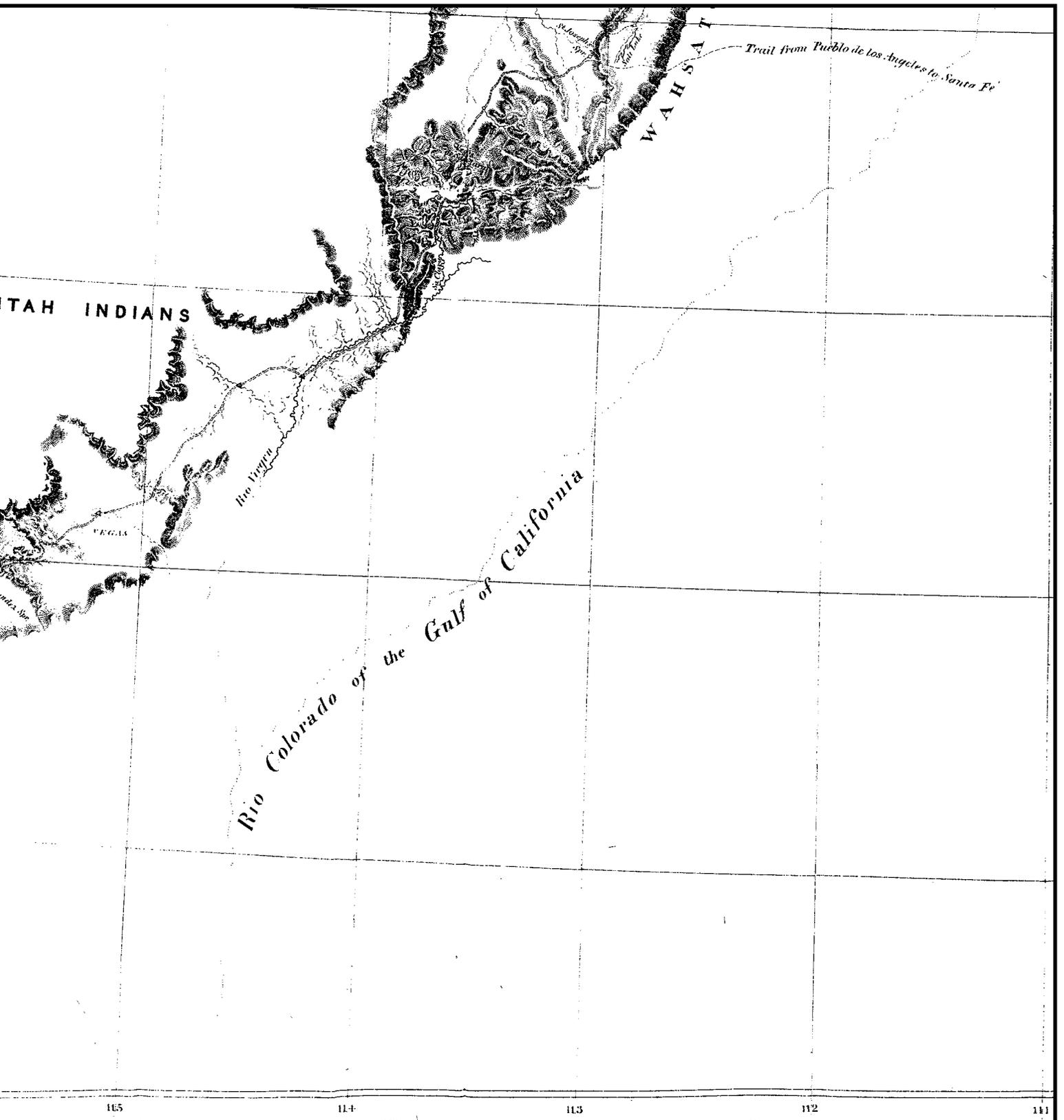
Carl I. Wheat

*Mapping the Transmississippi West
Volume 2, p. 194*

See Patricia Joy Richmond’s article, *John Charles Frémont’s Second Expedition and the Old Spanish Trail*, on pages 8-18 in this issue.



Partial Section of The Frémont - Preuss Map of 1845





George Douglas Brewerton

By Mathew Brady

Credit: Library of Congress

Continued from page 19

gold. Brewerton, now an Army regular, had been assigned to a new post with the First Regular Infantry in Mississippi.

The men traveled on mules, accompanied by two dozen hands, includ-

ing several of John Frémont's expeditioners. They left May 4, 1848, and followed the Old Spanish Trail to Utah, where they skirted the Wasatch Mountains and entered present-day Colorado east of Moab. Traversing the north branch of the Trail, they probably followed the Gunnison River, crossed 10,032-foot

Cochetopa Pass and entered the San Luis Valley, then still in New Mexico Territory. From there, they turned south to Taos, arriving in mid-June.

Brewerton detailed the rigors of the journey, including snows, raging rivers, submerged saddles and munitions, and encounters with unfriendly Indians at both the beginning and end of the trip. His bond with Carson, who probably saved his life at least once, was enduring. After spending time in the Carson household and recovering from a bout of flu, Brewerton left for his Mississippi posting via the Santa Fe Trail, sketching and taking notes as he went. He would spend four more years as a soldier.

By the beginning of 1853, however, Brewerton was a civilian in New York City, where he was rapidly recognized as "that talented and peculiar artist." The description suited Brewerton throughout his life, although one could add "poet" and "historian" and "journalist" as well as "minister" and "lawyer," to the phrase. Brewerton wrote several books and published many, many poems.

His paintings of the Southwest were not the first seen by easterners; several artists, mostly on governmental expeditions, had preceded him. But his oils of the region were among the first landscapes to be presented in the academic mode, reflective of the more formal, highly-finished style drawn from Robert Weir's European training. Size, in particular, characterizes these early Brewerton landscapes of California and the Southwest: the canvases are often large for the time. Only a handful of these canvases has been located 150 years later; one—a self-portrait in a likely California landscape dated 1856—measures nearly



Print from the Illustrated News (NY), March 19, 1853. Title:
Prairie Scene Near The Rocky Mountains. "By George D. Brewster"

[It is the Mora, in New Mexico territory, by Brewerton.]

Citation: Private collection.

four by six feet.

Brewerton's paintings of scenes along the Old Spanish Trail enjoyed wide public display for nearly two decades. A small sampling of his output shows the breadth of his now hard-to-find early Western work. Two oils of New Mexico Territory—

Prairie Scene Near the Rocky Mountains and *Gorge in the Rockies: Storm Brewing*—appeared in New York at the National Academy of the Arts of Design in 1854. *Prairie Scene*—which depicts part of the Sangre de Cristo range—was exhibited again that year at the Rhode Island Art Association in

Providence, along with his *View in the Wah Satch Mts., From an original Sketch*. A Southwestern scene was sent to nation's first world's fair, at the octagonal iron and glass Crystal Palace in New York in 1853.

Brewerton, skilled also in using pastels, sent a variety of them to the



Brewerton's *Self-Portrait in a Western Landscape*. Oil on Canvas.
45 inches x 60 inches. Private Collection. [See Detail on page 26.]

Cosmopolitan Art Association in Sandusky, Ohio, in 1858 and 1859; the association disseminated the artist's works all over the nation—from Natchez, Mississippi, to Augusta, Georgia. The pastels included such scenes from his 1848 trip as *Prairie on Fire*; *Rocky Mountain Scenery*; *Scene on the Frontier*; and *Surveying in New Mexico*. In 1864, a patron of Brewerton's donated *On the Plains* to the Metropolitan Sanitary Fair in New York, raising funds for the care of Union troops. (Early in the Civil War, Brewerton had served briefly as a volunteer in the Carolinas with his old friend,

General Rufus Saxton, but never enlisted as a regular.) The Brooklyn Art Association hung his western works into the mid-1870s, and Boston auction-goers purchased them over the years, also. A scene from his Carson trip, *Green River Falls—Rocky Mts.*, was hung at the Detroit Art Association exhibition in 1876.

Despite Brewerton's dedication to depicting the scenes of his youthful journey, few of these Western works have been located. Several among those surviving, however, are on public display; each measures

roughly thirty by forty-four inches:

- ◆ *Crossing the Rocky Mountains* (1854) hangs today at the Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. It depicts the Mora and the Sangre de Cristo mountains in New Mexico, near where Fort Union was later built.
- ◆ *Gorge in the Rocky Mountains* (1854) is in the collection of the Butler Institute in Youngstown, Ohio; it may picture the Gunnison River gorges visible to the Carson party.
- ◆ *Jornada del Muerto* (1853) is at the Oakland (California) Museum. The scene is the Mojave

Desert, between Bitter Spring and Resting Spring in California, near contemporary Aqua de Tomaso and Archilette. This is a haunting, geometric desert scene.



Detail with initialed blanket and Brewerton from *Self-Portrait in a Western Landscape*.

[Opposite page]

In a private collection, *Self-Portrait in a Western Landscape* shows the artist camping by a large river in mountainous terrain, probably in California. The largest of the located Western paintings, this measures forty-five by sixty inches. The artist painted his initials on his blanket and carved them in a tree; he left his initials on a tree trunk in the Corcoran Gallery prairie oil, also. In this self-portrait, Brewerton wears his favorite red buckskin jacket, which he describes in his accounts.

Besides the proliferation of paintings of the Old Spanish Trail, Brewerton produced probably thousands of other works in both oil and pastel. He visited Kansas during the fighting in the mid-1850s, writing a book about his visit. He supposedly qualified for the bar in Kansas; in 1859, he was ordained as a Baptist minister, practicing for a few years in upstate New York both before and after the Civil War. He lived in Brooklyn, in Newport, in Nebraska and in Tacoma, Washington, and returned occasionally to California. He had almost as many wives as residences – three; two of them

divorced him. Brewerton wrote an elaborate two-volume history of the State of Washington, where he sold real estate in the later 1880s, painted, and sent poems to the Tacoma press.

Kit Carson, long Brewerton's friend and hero, died in 1868. Douglas Brewerton died of pneumonia at Fordham, N.Y., in January of 1901, more than 50 years after their journey together. But Brewerton's ties to the Old Spanish Trail had never paled; their days on the road, he once wrote the scout, had been among the happiest of his life.

Endnotes:

1. The articles written and illustrated by Brewerton were titled [1] "A Ride With Kit Carson Through the Great American Desert and the Rocky Mountains," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, Vol. 7 (August 1853), 306-334, [2] "Incidents of Travel in New Mexico,"

p. 3.

4. Brewerton's dates have been variously given as 1820, 1827 and 1828. His death certificate, gravestone, pension application and a marriage certificate indicate a birth date of 1828.

5. George Douglas Brewerton, *Argonaut Memories* (San Francisco, Frank Eastman & Co., 1887), pp. 18 and 29.

6. *Home Journal*, October 29, 1853, p. 3.

7. Paul C. Mills, Archive of California Art, Oakland Museum of California, Oakland, Cal.

8. Brewerton writes of his carving initials during his trip with Carson, those of a "noble-hearted woman...a fancy of sweet sixteen" in a "gigantic pine."

9. G. Douglas Brewerton, *The War In Kansas, A Rough Trip to the Border Among New Homes and Strange People* (New York: Derby & Jackson, 1856), p.124.

10. Obituary of George D. Brewerton, *Brooklyn Eagle*, February 1, 1901.

Harper's New Monthly Magazine, Vol. 8 (April 1854), 577-596. [3] "In The Buffalo Country," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, Vol. 25 (September 1862), 447-460.

2. George Douglas Brewerton, *Overland with Kit Carson: A Narrative of the Old Spanish Trail in '48* (New York: Coward-McCann Inc., 1930) and *Overland With Kit Carson: A Narrative of the Old Spanish Trail in '48* (Lincoln, Neb.: University of Nebraska, 1993)..

3. *Home Journal*, February 19, 1853,

Captain Gunnison's Pacific Railroad Survey

By William L. Chenoweth

In March 1853, Congress appropriated \$150,000 for surveys to ascertain the most practical and economical route for a railroad from the Mississippi River to the Pacific Ocean. Secretary of War, Jefferson Davis, was to use personnel of the Corps of Topographical Engineers, and other persons, as deemed necessary, to make the surveys. Captain John Williams Gunnison was picked to survey a route along the 38th parallel. Gunnison was selected over John Charles Frémont much to the displeasure of his father-in-law, Senator Thomas Hart Benton. The expedition was specifically ordered to survey a route through the Colorado Rockies, via the Huerfano and Cochetopa Rivers over the Continental Divide, then westward toward Utah Territory and The Great Salt Lake. Due to Gunnison's untimely death, the second in command, First Lieutenant Edward G. Beckwith, Third Artillery, wrote the report of the expedition, using Gunnison's journal [1].

The Gunnison expedition was quite large. Besides Gunnison and Beckwith, there were five scientists, a wagon master, 18 wagons, teamsters, employees and 32 mounted riflemen. Richard H. Kern, artist and topographer prepared maps of the expedition's route. After Kern's death, astronomer Sheppard Holmans completed the maps. Other scientists included Jacob H. Schiel,

surgeon geologist, F. Creutzfeldt, botanist, and J. A. Snyder, assistant topographer. Charles Taplin was the wagon master and the soldiers were under the command of Brevet Captain R.M. Morris. Sixteen of the wagons were each pulled by six mules. An ambulance was drawn by two horses that were replaced by four mules when they reached the mountains. A carriage for the instruments was pulled by four mules.

The expedition left Westport, Missouri on June 24, 1853 and followed the Arkansas River into Colorado Territory. Mistaking the Apishapa River for the Huerfano River, the expedition followed the Apishapa upstream for some 20 miles before heading west. The Cucharas River was crossed and the Huerfano River was located near the landmark of Huerfano Butte. The Huerfano River was then followed into the Sangre de Christo Range. Fort Massachusetts, on the west side of the range, was reached on August 20, 1853. While in the vicinity of the Fort, Gunnison sent Lieutenants Beckwith and Baker to Taos, New Mexico to obtain the services of a guide, Antoine Leroux.

After leaving the Fort, the expedition followed the North Branch of the Old Spanish Trail up the San Luis Valley passing west of the "Sandy Hills" (The Great Sand Dunes). After exploring the north end of the

valley, including a possible route over Poncha Pass, the expedition chose a route over Cochetopa Pass, arriving near the present site of Gunnison, Colorado on September 5.

Following the route of today's U.S. Highway 50, the heavy wagons of the Gunnison expedition experienced much difficulty crossing the valleys of the Lake Fork and Cebolla Creek (Cimarron River). Much cutting and filling was required to make a passable road for the wagons. Beckwith [2] would later write, "it is by far the most difficult and expensive section upon the route for the construction of a road." While descending into the Uncompahgre River valley, via Cedar Creek, Beckwith [3] recorded "the Salt and Abajo Peaks were pointed out to us. The former is directly upon the noted Spanish trail leading from California to Abiquiu, New Mexico, and is a favorite resort for the Utah and Navajo Indians for trade".

One September 17, the expedition forded the Grand (Gunnison) River near "Roubideau's old trading fort, now entirely fallen to ruins." [4] The night of September 18, the expedition camped on a creek the Indians told Gunnison was called Kah-nah (Kannah). This was a favored camping site on the North Branch due to abundant wood, grass and clear water. Here, Leroux and some men left the expedition to show the members who accompanied him "the best road to the Spanish trail." [5]

After leaving the campsite on Kannah Creek, the expedition had some difficulty locating a crossing of the Colorado River, which Gunnison called the Nah-un-kah-rea or Blue River. Some local Indians showed

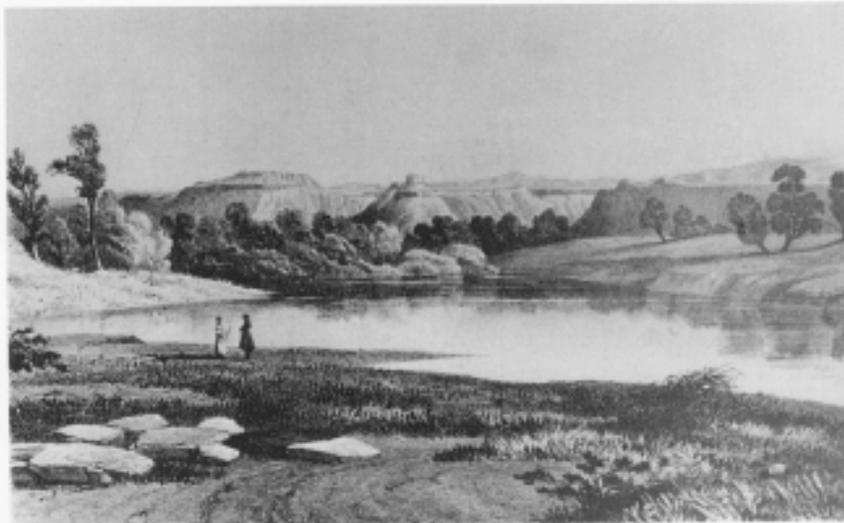
the expedition a crossing which is now believed to be about one mile west of the 32 Road bridge near Clifton, Colorado. After crossing the river, the expedition traveled along the north bank following today's U.S. Highway 50.

Near the present town of Mack, Colorado, and without a guide, Gunnison did not take the main trail to the southwest, down Rabbit Valley, but continued westerly along the Uintah segment of the North Branch. The expedition turned south down a drainage (Coal Draw) and reached the Westwater area on the Grand (Colorado) River on September 22, where they rested for three days. The Westwater area, called Bitter Water by Gunnison, was a well-known camping spot on the North Branch, with plenty of grass, wood, and water. Leroux and three companions rejoined the expedition at Westwater and then returned to New Mexico.

Instead of following the main trail southwesterly for several miles before heading west, the Gunnison expedition headed west out of the Westwater area. After reaching the foot of the Book Cliffs the expedition then turned to the southwest locating the "noted Spanish trail" on September 29, some 20 miles southeast of the Green River crossing. They followed the trail to the crossing that was forded on October 1.

West of Green River, at Lost Spring

Wash, the expedition left the trail and headed north toward the White (Price) River. After turning to the southwest Gunnison rejoined the Spanish Trail, on October 10, at Huntington Creek in the Castle Valley. In this valley Beckwith [6] recorded "The Spanish Trail, though but seldom used of late years, is still very distinct where the soil washes but slightly. On some such spaces



**Sketch of the Green River Crossing of the Old Spanish Trail
By Richard Kern of the Gunnison Expedition.
Book Cliffs on the Skyline**

Drawing courtesy of the U.S. Geological Survey

today we counted from fourteen to twenty parallel trails, of the ordinary size of Indian trails or horse-paths on a way of barely fifty feet in width." The expedition continued to follow the Old Spanish Trail across the Wasatch Plateau and into the Salina Canyon. Gunnison left the trail at the Sawtooth Narrows in the Canyon and near Salina, Utah turned north down the valley of the Sevier River, on October 17.

The expedition continued down the Sevier River. On October 25, Captain Gunnison, four men and several soldiers left the main party to explore the area near Sevier Lake.

The next morning on October 26, 1853, Captain Gunnison, Mr. Kern, Mr. Creutzfeld, William Potter, a guide, John Bellows, an employee, and Privates Caulfield, Liptrott and Merhteens were killed at their campsite by Paiute Indians. After the massacre, the expedition traveled to Salt Lake City, where Beckwith prepared a report to Congress.

The Gunnison expedition, although tragically cut short, did provide the U.S. Congress with a brief description of the topography of Colorado and eastern Utah and the problems faced by the construction of a trans-continental railroad across the Rocky Mountains. The expedition was the first to prepare maps showing the topography along portions of the North Branch of the Old Spanish Trail in Colorado, as well as sections of the main trail in eastern Utah.

Endnotes:

- [1] Edward G. Beckwith, Report of Exploration of a Route for the Pacific Railroad Near the 38th and 39th Parallels of Latitude: U. S. Pacific Railroad Explorations- 33 rd Congress- 1st Session, House Document 129 (Washington DC: A O P Nickelson Printer, 1855).
- [2] Ibid., p. 95.
- [3] Ibid., p. 55.
- [4] Ibid., p. 59.
- [5] Ibid., p. 63.
- [6] Ibid., p. 71.

Marcy's Ordeal Along the North Branch of the Old Spanish Trail

By Jack Nelson

A military expedition which has been referred to on occasion, but which is usually either ignored or grossly underrated, was led by a Captain Randolph B. Marcy during the winter of 1857-58. Captain Marcy, a veteran of many years on the western frontier, was a member of the contingent of United States Army troops which had been ordered to Utah to aid in quelling the so-called "Mormon War" which was coming to a head in 1857-58.

Uneasiness had been brewing between members of the Mormon faith and the "gentiles" for several years, which followed the brethren west to Utah in the early 1850s. There appeared to be ample blame on each side for the cause of the friction. Rumors ran rampant throughout the isolated settlements, and it was not long before armed militia groups became common. An unfortunate situation arose at a well-known campsite along the main route of the Old Spanish Trail.

This campsite, commonly referred to as "Mountain Meadows," was the scene of a massacre on or about September 10, 1857, in which well over 100 emigrants on their way to California were killed. We are not here to discuss the right or wrong of this unfortunate situation, but we need to point out that there was extensive military action in the Utah area during the 1850s.

Fort Bridger, located in the area of the Utah-Wyoming border, was the focus of much of the unrest. Because the fort area was a gathering place for United States troops coming in from the east, it was the scene of much action. Small groups of Mormon guerrilla troops were often sent out to harass any approaching U.S. Army troops and disrupt them in any way they could. The Mormons were

quite successful in their efforts, and destroyed an alarming amount of supplies and equipment and almost gutted Fort Bridger. For the U.S. troops, already on short rations, and facing a long Wyoming winter, it was decision time.

Situated where it was, Fort Bridger was located on the Oregon Trail and a variant of the North Branch of the Old Spanish Trail, an old trapper trail which came from the south. As the closest source of re-supply was from a military outpost in New Mexico, the commandant had little choice but to send a contingent of relief troops in that direction for help. The story can best be told by excerpts from the introduction and body of the journal of the leader Captain R. B. Marcy, 5th Infantry, United States Army. [1] *"During the month of November, 1857, while our troops were encamped at Fort Bridger, in Utah Territory, I was ordered, with a command of forty enlisted men, to cross the mountains by the most direct route into New Mexico, and procure supplies. ... After a march of fifty-one days, they emerged from the forests, and found themselves at Fort Massachusetts, in New Mexico. ..."*[2] This simple statement (as shortened), extracted from the report to the Secretary of War in 1858, tells nothing of what occurred between the first sentence and the last. Marcy's contingent left Fort Bridger on November 24, 1857 with 40 army personnel, several

mountain men and various other civilian support personnel.

Being assured that there would be very little snow, even in the higher passes, the expedition headed down Henry's Fork to reach and ford the Green River. Here they found and followed a trail downstream to reach the North Branch of the Old Spanish Trail, a route they would follow virtually the entire distance to New Mexico.

From the description given in the journal, it appears that the expedition ascended Willow Creek Trail, undoubtedly following Antoine Robidoux's old route through the plateau of the Roan/Bookcliff Range in northeastern Utah. The snow, at this point, was approximately two feet in depth. To add to their concerns, an Indian guide, hired to take them through the range of mountains, left one night taking all of his pre-paid gifts and leaving the group to its own devices. Going on in the morning, and to quote from the journal: *"...Our track led us across this elevated table-land, which we found terminating in a towering and almost perpendicular cliff or bluff, bordering the valley of Grand River [now the Colorado], and some two thousand feet above it. On reaching this lofty escarpment, it did not seem possible that our mules could descend it, indeed, I had previously been told that there was but one place for fifty miles along this cliff*

where the declivity was practicable for animals, and this was at a point where the Indians had cut a narrow path along the face of the bluff. ...

[3] It is very possible that the group had found the one practical escape route down Hay Canyon located on the upper end of Westwater Canyon.

They encamped in a tiny enclosed area, which fits the description of that near Antoine Robidoux's inscription at the mouth of Westwater Creek Canyon. A map showing the route of Marcy's expedition, drawn in the 1860s, would lead one to believe that the group came down either East or Bitter Creek Canyon. [4] While not discounting the route as drawn, and its other valuable historical information, the map scale leaves much to be desired to precisely locate sites unless correlated with other documentation. [Fortunately, first hand information of the physical layout of the area under discussion, aids in the interpretation of Marcy's Journal.]

"On the 8th of December we struck Grand River near the congruence of its two principal branches, the 'Uncompadre' and the 'Bunkara'." [5] This was an interesting entry as it goes on to state "...We forded them, [?] but with great difficulty, as the water was deep and rapid, ... and encamped at the base of the 'Elk Mountain,' near the remains of an old Indian trading establishment, which had formerly been occupied by a man named Robedeau," ...[6]

It is obvious that Marcy had lost a day in his memoirs at this point. The "Uncompadre" [sic], the "Elks" and Robidoux's old fort were located near today's Delta, Colorado. The ford at the "Bunkara" [sic], now called "The Crossing of the Grand," was located above the confluence of the Gunnison and the Colorado

ivers [3] at present Grand Junction, Colorado. This surmise is documented by a comment made the following year in the journal of a Colonel Loring when he came through the same area with a contingent of fifty wagons and 300 men. Loring commented on seeing the remains of Marcy's camp near the Crossing of the Grand, in the vicinity of Kannah Creek. [7]

After leaving the site of destroyed Fort Uncompahgre, Marcy's group continued up the valley of the Uncompahgre River, following the well-established route. A large band of Ute Indians were encamped in the vicinity of present day Montrose, Colorado. Captain Marcy entered into negotiations with them offering to pay them to serve as guides through the mountains ahead. No amount of bribery, cajoling or insults could sway the chief either to part with any of his ponies or to help them along their way.

Pushing onward, the group started to encounter deeper snowdrifts and was forced to cache any extraneous equipment and personal items to lighten their packs. Loring's group was to later record locating one of the caches, probably in the vicinity of Cerro Summit. With snow depth becoming a problem, the pack and riding stock were forced to eat pine needles. Game had been forced to lower elevations, and provisions were slowly being exhausted. As their pack stock died of starvation, the group was forced to eat them, the meat tough, bitter tasting and containing no nourishment. The Captain mentions sprinkling gunpowder on his mule meat to make it more palatable.

Inching their way through the deep drifts, sometimes camping in sight of their previous night's campsites, the

group struggled on through the seven to eight foot deep snows. Often on their hands and knees while breaking trail, progress was extremely slow. With the wind blown, deep powder-like snow concealing the few known trail markers, it was not long before the group became hopelessly lost. Marcy had undoubtedly tried to follow John Gunnison's survey route; however, the deep snow had covered or hidden the access route to Cochetopa Pass.

There is an interesting scientific aside or general observation of the curiosity of the mountain men: Tom Goodale, one of the civilians was breaking trail, when he called out to the Captain to come see some strange birds he had noticed. It seems that in spite of their other concerns, the group had made an ornithological discovery in a previously unknown geographical area, they had located a small flock of white tailed ptarmigans. Tom Goodale stated that in all his wanderings, he had only seen the small white birds once before. Regardless, after carefully packing two of the birds for later scientific study, Captain Marcy relates "... These birds were the only glimpse of animal life we had met with, outside of our own party, during the thirty days that we were struggling through the deep snow." [8]

It was shortly after the incident of sighting the ptarmigans that the group realized that they were going in the wrong direction. A Mexican employee, Miguel Alona, approached the Captain and informed him of their error. The area they were in was an easy one to become confused in as it contains several side canyons and streams. They were by now in the present day, upper Gunnison River watershed. It appears that Miguel had been through

that country before. The Captain, realizing that they were reaching the end of their resources, informed Miguel that if he could lead them out of their white maze, he would be amply rewarded, if not, he would be hung. Miguel, much disturbed that his integrity was being questioned, assured the Captain he would rather die than lie.

Marcy, realizing that he had no other choice, placed the lives of the entire company into the judgment of Miguel. The journal records: "... From this time the uncertainty of our position, and the knowledge of the fact that if we failed to strike the Cochetope Pass we must all inevitably perish, gave me great anxiety, and prevented me from sleeping for several nights. There was not the slightest sign of a road, trail or footmark to guide us; ... but my noble soldiers struggled manfully ahead, and not a single murmur or complaint ever was heard. ..." [9]

After struggling up the Razor Creek variant of the North Branch, the Pass was finally reached ten days later. Suffering severe privation, frostbite, shoeless and virtual starvation, the group guided by Miguel Alona, finally located and crossed over Cochetopa Pass, almost a full month after fording at the "Crossing of the Grand." Their troubles were still not over, they were without supplies and many miles lay between them and Fort Massachusetts.

After ascertaining that they had located and crossed the Pass, Marcy sent a small relief crew on to the Fort riding the strongest animals. The remaining group struggled along down the trail, dropping in elevation, until they reached an area along Saguache Creek where the grass had melted out of the snow and the still surviving animals could feed. Trav-

eling along as best they could, the group waited eleven days before the relief party was sighted and the expedition knew they were saved. Once the loaded relief wagons arrived, great caution had to be exerted to see that the men did not overeat. Regardless of warnings, after a supper of filling soup, some of the starving men pressured the wagon guards to allow them to take more rations. Many gorged themselves only to later suffer severe stomach cramping resulting in the death of one of the men who had survived the long trek.

After the group rested and tried to recoup some of their strength for four days, they pressed on: they still had a mission to accomplish. When the small, but intact, group entered the fort, Marcy reported:

"... As we approached the fort, one of the officers complimented us by saying he took us for a band of prairie Indians. Not more than half of the men had any caps, and but few had any remains of trowsers below the knees. Their feet were tied up with mule hides, pieces of blankets, coat-tails, etc. and certainly were rough and ragged looking specimens of United States soldiers..." [10]

Marcy's "march" may well be recorded as a truism for the old adage: "The cowards *never* started, and the weak ones never got there." The Mexican guide, Miguel Alona, has to considered one of the heroes of the expedition. He was amply rewarded with a sum of five hundred dollars, but it is recorded that he promptly lost the entire sum gambling. The entire mission should go into military annals as comparable to the sufferings endured by George Washington's troops at Valley Forge. Not forgetting the purpose of the mission, several wagon loads of

supplies and equipment were sent back to Fort Bridger by a different route. [11] *

1. Marcy, Randolph B. *Thirty years of Army Life on the Border* (Harper & Brothers, Publishers, New York, 1866.) [Photocopy of pages 198-22, in the author's library.] See also Hafen, LeRoy R. *A Winter March Across the Rockies*. in *The Colorado Magazine*, Vols. IV and V, Jan, 1927 to Oct. 1928. Denver, CO. pp.7-13. This a much modified version of the entire trek from that appearing in Marcy's work. The latter should be read carefully and compared with Marcy's original, there are discrepancies.

2. Marcy, pps. 199-200.

3. *Ibid.*, 202.

4. Macomb, J. N. *Captain, Map of Explorations and Surveys in New Mexico and Utah, 1860.* (Geographical Institute, Baron F. W. Von Egloffstein, No, 154 Broadway, N. Y. 1864).

5. Marcy, p. 203. "Uncompadre" is "Umcompahgre." "Bunkara" is a phonetic corruption of a common Indian name for the Colorado River.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 203.

7. "Colonel Loring's Expedition Across Colorado in 1858." *The Colorado Magazine*, Vol. XXIII, No. 2, The State Historical Society of Colorado, March, 1946, p. 64.

8. Marcy, p. 209. The group, living as they were on tough mule meat, preserved the two birds for scientific purposes. They were later identified as "Sagopus Leucurus." While well known in Europe these birds were rarely seen in the United States and then only in the Rocky Mountains north of 54° Latitude according to the journal's notes.

9. *Ibid.* p. 212. Captain Marcy is even today to be commended for his outstanding leadership. He suffered right along with his men.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 219 The author can attest to the extreme weather conditions Marcy's men were subjected to. Minus 50° and deep snows are very common during the winter months.

11. Hafen, *A Winter Rescue....*, pp. 12-13. *Authors note: Much of the above data is found in an unpublished document presently at the publishers. Its tentative title is "Forgotten Pathfinders." Along the North Branch of the Old Spanish Trail by Jack Nelson.

Fort Jurupa, Robidoux Rancho

A Military Presence at the Post on the Santa Ana River

By Dr. R. Bruce Harley

Editor's Note: Fort Jurupa and Agua Mansa are direct consequences of immigration from Abiquiú over the Old Spanish Trail.

Due to the continuing danger from Indian raids in San Bernardino Valley after California became a U.S. territory, forts--both locally and federally sponsored--were erected at several locations. San Bernardino built one shortly after the Mormons had arrived in 1851. Chino had a government post established in 1850. This garrison later moved to Louis Robidoux's rancho in 1852.

About two dozen infantry troops were stationed there for two years, and a small garrison stayed until after the end of the Civil War. The actual site of "Fort Jurupa" (it was referred to officially as "the post on the Santa Ana River") has not been precisely determined. However, it was probably near the Wilson-Robidoux grist mill in today's town of Rubidoux, for the mill was located at the intersection of Fort Drive and Molino Way. This location is no longer on the riverbank at that point since the river has changed its course over the years, especially after the Great Flood of 1862 which nearly destroyed the communities of Agua Mansa/La Placita and also did considerable damage to Robidoux's rancho.

The location of the Army barracks and other buildings was about one block from the Wilson-Robidoux adobe situated at today's intersection of Mission Blvd. and Rubidoux Blvd. (formerly named Bloomington Blvd.) in down-

town Rubidoux. The adobe hacienda no longer stands, having been bulldozed down after World War II to provide space for a shopping center. Buildings at the nearby military compound included the barracks for unmarried soldiers, several cottages for married personnel, a barn for storage and some horses, and a small chapel. Since over half of the troops were Irish Catholics, the pastor at Agua Mansa's newly-built San Salvador Church journeyed to Jurupa once a month to say mass, hear confessions and baptize, etc. as needed. The chapel was swept away in the 1862 flood.

Major Horace Bell, whose self-assignment in Southern California included visiting the frontier posts, left an interesting description of life at Fort Jurupa as follows: Captain Lovell (the commander) was a sedate, methodical, sober kind of officer who seemed perfectly content to sit in his elegant quarters, issue orders to his little army ... of well-fed, clean shaved, white-cotton-gloved, nicely dressed, lazy, fat fellows, who were seemingly happy and content on the \$8 per month.... They all, from Captain to Corporal, seemed resigned to a life of well-fed indolence.

Prior to the detachment's arrival, Indian raiders were dealt with by Agua Mansa's leader, Lorenzo Trujillo and his four sons along with men on Benjamin Wilson's payroll. These vigilantes gave a good ac-

count of themselves in a series of skirmishes from 1843 to the early 1850's. With the arrival of a small band of soldiers, the civilians bowed out and thereafter apparently little was accomplished to prevent periodic incursions. Although a number of expeditions were sent out against the Indians, negative results were the usual case. The detachment, when at Chino in 1851, did not participate in the pursuit of the Irving Gang; this assignment fell to a company of U.S. dragoons then encamped on the east bank of the Los Angeles River.

The names of the soldiers and their dependents can be derived from the first federal census of California in 1850. Shortly after the military's arrival at Jurupa, the new county of San Bernardino was established in 1853. This meant that no sooner had the detachment settled on Los Angeles County land than the new boundary placed them on San Bernardino County land. This area eventually became Riverside County land in 1893, but because of an ambling boundary line, Chino remained in San Bernardino County.

A tally of the Jurupa assignees shows a total of 23 officers and enlisted men, four wives, one family without a mother, six children, and one general laborer. Half of the adults were from the East Coast, although 13 were born in Ireland, one in England and one in Sweden. The size of the Irish contingent can be explained as the result of the potato famine of 1848 in Ireland and the subsequent migration of many families to America. Military service would speed up naturalization for citizenship.

An alphabetical listing of all the 34 people at this Army outpost, given on the next page, shows the breakdown of the census data. Where the

soldiers eventually settled after their discharge is not known. One can surmise that some of the troops settled in California, although not in the Jurupa area. Cornelius Jensen's census of Jurupa Township in 1856 and the federal census of 1860 do not contain names which correlate to the detachment's names in 1850.

Captain Lovell, being from South Carolina, became a Major-General in the Civil War, although on the

side of the Confederacy. Second Lt. Smith had a reputation as a "ladies' man" from romancing senioritas of the Jurupa neighborhood; but, unlike Robidoux and other Anglos, did not marry one, instead he too answered the call to return to Virginia and fight on the Confederate side.

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1850 Federal Census, County of Los Angeles, U.S. Army Barracks, Chino/Jurupa

Name	Age	Rank	Birthplace
Christopher L. Lovell	31	Capt., Infantry	South Carolina
Sarah A. Lovell	22	wife	Connecticut
Nelson H. Lovell	2	son	California
James W. Schureman	30	1 st Lieut., Infantry	New Jersey
Caleb Smith	25	2nd Lieut., Infantry	Virginia
James T. Overstreet	24	Surgeon	South Carolina
Hiram V. Bogart	37	Soldier	New York
Edwin V. Bogart	8	son	Pennsylvania
Homer Bogart	6	son	Pennsylvania
Emma Ann Bogart	4	daughter	Pennsylvania
Hugh Bums	28	Soldier	Ireland
George W. Cole	29	Soldier	Maryland
Enoch Cook	33	Soldier	Massachusetts
Bowers Danforth	40	Soldier	Massachusetts
James Dempsey	37	Soldier	Ireland
Mary Dempsey	25	wife	Ireland
Charles J. Fox	25	Soldier	Ireland
John Gigology	34	Soldier	Ireland
Margaret Gigology	30	wife	Ireland
Mary Gigology	8	daughter	New York
James Gigology	2	son	New York
Samuel Hains	37	Soldier	England
Laurence B. Harris	31	Soldier	Vermont
William J. Henning	25	Soldier	Ireland
Franklin Hoff	21	Soldier	Pennsylvania
John A. Jackson	25	Soldier	Ireland
William G. Lee	25	Soldier	Ireland
Rosa Lee	22	wife	Ireland
James Macanally	30	Soldier	Ireland
James Maguire	28	Soldier	Ireland
Thomas Maddigan	25	Soldier	Ireland
William Stewart	25	Soldier	Ireland
Laurence Strobal	30	Soldier	Sweden
Jesus Moreno	30	Laborer	Mexico

-- It is noted that no ranks are given for the enlisted troops; with the number assigned, there must have been at least one sergeant and two corporals. The U.S. Army History Center has little data on Fort Jurupa.

A Letter Concerning the Location of the Ute Crossing of the Colorado River

Contributed by Steven K. Madsen

[The following is a transcription of an important document that locates the Ute Crossing of the Colorado River in the vicinity of the Elk [La Sal] Mountains, near present Moab, Utah. The letter was written in Salt Lake City, on July 15, 1876, by Brigham Young and Daniel H. Wells. It is addressed to Latter-day Saint missionaries “encamped on the Little Colorado.” Paragraph two of the letter announces the intention of the L.D.S. leaders to send an exploring expedition to find a better supply road leading south to the Little Colorado River. The proposed road would follow one of two routes: 1). The western leg of the “old Spanish Trail which passed a little north of Panguitch [Utah].” 2). The eastern leg of the Spanish Trail which the 1855 Elk Mountain Mission party followed via Green River ford and the “Ute Crossing on the Old Trail which led from California to Santa Fe.”]:

Salt Lake City, U.T.
July 15, 1876

To Elders Smith, Lake, Ballinger[,] Allen and the Brethren encamped on the Little Colorado [River].

Dear Brethren — We were much pleased to hear the good reports of your progress, which were made to us by Bro’s Wells, Snow and Brigham Jr. We did not imagine that you would not meet with difficulties and perplexities, such are the heritage of all who labor to spread the curtains of Zion. Nor is it to be supposed but that you will have to make many experiments, some of which may prove failures, until you become acquainted with the peculiarities [sic] of the soil, the climate and other surroundings. Nevertheless we thank the Lord that all is as well with you as it is, and we pray that your efforts to accomplish the purposes of God in the direction in which you are now

called to labor may be crowned with abundant success. We are reliably informed that there are a few in some of the camps whose mouths are full of murmuring, and some whose hearts incline to apostasy. We want none such to remain with you, lest they poison the camp with the leaven of their ill-feeling. We desire that the settlements in the Little Colorado be built up to the Lord in righteousness, wherein an example will be set to the surrounding tribes of the Lamanites, [a Book of Mormon term that refers to American Indians] and indeed to all others of the way the Lord will build up Zion. The selfishness and individuality that have characterized the labors of some of our brethren should not find a place with those called to this mission.

We contemplate sending out an exploring expedition very shortly, whose business it will be to find a

better road than the one now traveled by way of Lee’s crossing at the Big Colorado to your camps. It is presumable that a good road can be found by taking the old Spanish Trail which passed a little north of Panguitch [Bear Valley Junction], or by a more northerly route from Salina through Salt Creek [Salina Canyon] eastward. One or both of these roads would cross Green river at the ford passed by the brethren who some years ago went on a mission to the Elk [La Sal] Mountains [at Moab], which is called the Ute Crossing on the Old Trail which led from California to Santa Fe. From whence the road would turn more to the Southward to some point where it would be practicable to cross the Grand [Colorado] and afterwards the San Juan rivers, the latter if possible, not far east of the longitude of your camps. One of the principal reasons why we desire to find some different road from that at present traveled, is that we may have one that will be easier for the stock and sheep to travel

over, where they can have water and feed. And if it should be possible for you to spare a few men from their pressing labors, we should be pleased to have them take a trip North from your settlements to the San Juan to mark out the most acceptable road between the two points and thus hasten the completion of the purposes of the exploration.

Owing to the great depreciation in the price of wool all over the country we do not deem it advisable for you to purchase wool to send to this city for sale this present season. It now only fetches twelve and a half cents per lb[.] cash in this market, at which price you will perceive it will not return you the original cost and the transportation.

The saw mill we will load up at any time that will suit you, and if you will send us word when your teams will be at the Colorado crossing to meet it we will have it forwarded. We think in view of the difficulties of transferring some of the more bulky portions of the machinery, that the same wagons that carry it from St. George had better take it right through to your camps whilst the men and teams can return if desired to St. George.

We request that in all your conversations and associations with the Lamanites you treat them with kindness and present before them an example which they can imitate with propriety and mutual advantage. When any of them present themselves for baptism, we desire that you should instruct them in the principles of the gospel until they, as

far as their limited comprehensions [sic] admit, have an understanding of the importance of the step they are taking. It must clearly be taught to them that when they become members of the church they must stop their waring [sic] and fighting, and live at peace with all men, white or red, that they must change a life of idleness to one of usefulness, and that they must entirely cease from gambling, stealing and all other vices to which the Indian races are addicted. We also earnestly hope that you on the other hand will give them encouragement, help and instruction they need to perform and improve the habit of their lives, and that your helping hands will be extended to aid them in becoming good and useful citizens of the kingdom of the Father, whose set time to favor Israel we trust is nigh at hand.

Elder Henry G. Boyle who has been laboring with much success in Prairie Co. Arkansas, during the past winter is expecting next spring to lead a company direct from that state to settle somewhere in your neighborhood either in the fertile valleys of New Mexico, or near the head waters of one of the branches of the Little Colorado. The members of the church in Arkansas desire to settle near you for various reasons, amongst others it will be more economical than for them to sell their teams and farming implements and spend the proceeds on railroad fares, and be again compelled to purchase on their arrival, while by this move they can bring their teams &c. with them, and thus be prepared to commence the cultivation of the soil on their arrival. They also

desire to build up the settlement they form under the family order and being southerners think they would prosper best in a southern clime. We are also watching with much interest the progress made on the railroads [sic] now in course of construction in southern Colorado, with the hope that by next spring they will be sufficiently advanced toward your settlements to warrant us in bringing the emigration from Europe by that route, with a view to strengthening your present settlements and forming new ones.

We hope to hear from you often that we may be acquainted with your progress, labors and prospects as well as of the success of the missions to the Zuni and other Lamanites in your neighborhood, as tidings thereof reach you from time to time.

May God grant you the wisdom of his spirit that you may never be at a loss to know his will, nor of the means you should take to accomplish it is the prayer of

Your Brethren in the Gospel,

Brigham Young First Presidency
 of the Church
Daniel H. Wells of Jesus Christ
 of Latter-day
 Saints.

Source: Lot Smith Papers, Type-script, Ms. 4, Manuscripts Division, Special Collections, Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City.

Into and Out of Los Angeles on the Spanish Trail

By Lou McCombs

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This is the first in a series of articles written by McCombs on his adventures traveling the Old Spanish Trail from Los Angeles to Santa Fé.

I took my first trip over the Spanish Trail between Los Angeles, CA, and Santa Fe, NM, in 1993. It was the culmination of lots of time spent in

Trail? I've been a bike tourist for over thirty years, and for the past several years, have led cross-country tours for a well-known bicycle touring company. By the time you read this, I'll have again led a tour across the southwest. Needless to say, I suppose, I like touring by bicycle. As for the Trail, I ran across

expansion saga.

Following my first ride, I decided to write a bicycle guide to the Spanish Trail, but soon realized that such a guide would be equally applicable to doing it other ways too, including by four-wheeler, horse, mule or on foot. There's no best way to tour the Spanish Trail. I've been working on that concept on and off ever since, and touring portions of the trail by bike and in the "Beast," my 1977 Ford four-wheel drive truck when I have the time. Someday that guide may come to fruition.

Early on, I decided that there were a number of really interesting national parks and monuments, state parks and other nearby historic sites that would make this tour even more exciting. So, there are alternate roads that, while close, sometimes lead away from the Trail, but the route I describe in the nascent guide still takes you over 300+ miles of dirt roads and Jeep paths that closely parallel the route used by New Mexican mule caravans and pioneer wagons. In general my directions closely follow the route described in the Hafen's book, "The Old Spanish Trail: Santa Fe to Los Angeles" and Crampton and Madsen's, "In Search of the Old Spanish Trail." As a matter of personal choice the route is described west to east.



South Entrance to the Los Angeles Historic Park

Photo courtesy of the Editor

dusty library archives poring over maps, books and magazine articles. I made the trip on a bicycle. It was a rewarding experience and encouraged me to spend more time on the Trail.

Why a bike and why the Spanish

word of it when researching something else. It piqued my interest then and now. And, after all, it was the first commercial and emigrant road across the southwest. I thought: this would be a great trip for people who want to experience an important part of the great American westward

More recently, I joined the OSTA. Through some ongoing discussions, I asked to share my experience on the Trail with other members via the medium of *Spanish Traces*. Such an endeavor requires much more space than is available in one issue, so I proposed to write a series of how-to-follow the Spanish Trail articles. Since I hope to keep each section to a manageable number of words, and if the editors don't give up, there'll be six more of these.

The adventure begins in downtown Los Angeles at El Pueblo de Los Angeles Historic Park, near the intersection of Main and Macy Streets. Things are much different now than they were when the first Santa Fe caravan arrived in 1829. Then, the pueblo was surrounded by orchards, vineyards and small farms tended by less than 2500 residents. For as far as the eye could see, the area from Cajon Pass to the sea was a grassy,

shrub covered plain cut by swift flowing rivers, streams and a small hills. A network of trails led to remote haciendas and well-used river crossings. At Mission San Gabriel, just a few miles east, padres and Indian acolytes tended large herds of cattle and horses which freely roamed the plain. Ranchos at Cucamonga and San Bernardino guarded the Cajon Pass against depredations by Indian and outlaw horse thieves.

That pastoral topography is now gone—replaced by an intricate maze of streets, high-rise buildings, shopping centers and housing projects. The cart roads and trails have been paved over and swapped for traffic jams on busy freeways. However, it's still possible to closely follow the path of the early caravans across the valley. Of course, doing so requires some imagination. And while history's ebb and flow has replaced the old trails with the exigencies of modern city plan-

esting cross-section of modern Los Angeles. My advice is that Sunday is a good day to start the tour in order to beat much of the otherwise miserable L.A. traffic found during the regular workweek.

From the Historic Park, head east on Macy to Mission Boulevard, then follow Mission, Valley Boulevard, and Alhambra Avenue to Mission San Gabriel. The mission, founded in 1771 and recently restored, is the third California mission established at the direction of Padre Junipero Serra.

From the mission, take Las Tunas to Arrow Highway. Turn north on Euclid to the intersection of Foothill Road (Old Route 66) where there is a Madonna of the Trail monument on the northwest corner that describes the story of early pioneers. Route 66, often called the "Mother Road" since it was the first paved road across the U.S., linked Chicago, IL, to Santa

Monica, CA. Best described by John Steinbeck in "The Grapes of Wrath," it was the exodus route for many mid-western Americans fleeing dust bowl conditions and looking for jobs in the far west during the 1930's.

Follow Foothill to Etiwanda Avenue in Rancho Cucamonga, turn left to Summit Avenue and follow Summit to I-15. Just before the freeway, turn left onto Lytle Creek Road. Follow it to DeVore Road and Glen Helen Regional Park, the general area of



McCombs' Schwinn Bicycle and Trailer

Photo courtesy of the Author

ning, there's still much to see and do along the route into and out of L.A.

On the Trail the caravans en route to and from Santa Fe went in a more or less straight line between Cajon Pass, first to San Gabriel mission and then on to Los Angeles pueblo before spreading out across southern California to trade their goods. The roads herein described do much the same. Along the way are museums, surviving ranch houses, historic monuments, Route 66 and an inter-

what in Trail days was Sycamore Grove camp. Near the park entrance are historic plaques that identify the grove as a camping place on the Old Spanish Trail and briefly discuss the Mormon Battalion. The battalion was formed in 1846 to help construct a wagon road across the southwest during the Mexican War. Upon mustering out, some members were the first to take a wagon over the OST along the route that would later become the Mormon, and later still, the Los Angeles-Salt Lake Road.

North of DeVore, take the old highway, a continuation of Route 66. It parallels I-15 on the west. Not many people now drive the road, but it closely follows the Spanish Trail through Cajon Creek Canyon. During gold rush days, forty-niners panned for gold along the creek. Today, many modern day prospectors continue to try their luck. It's not unusual to run across people panning or dredging for gold along the creek.

Route 66 eventually ends at an entrance to I-15. Head north to the SR 138 offramp and exit the freeway. Turn immediately right onto Frontage Road. At the dead end is another Trail monument at the mouth of Crowder Canyon. For the mule trains, this canyon was simply the upper narrows. The monument describes the canyon as the route of the Mormon Road/Old Spanish Trail. The canyon is now part of the California Trail hiking and equestrian system.

To continue on the Trail, return to SR 138 and turn right. This will take you across east Cajon Pass by way of historic Brown's Toll Road and the modern railroad into Summit

Canyon. In a few miles turn left on Summit Valley Road. This leads to the railroad tracks and a 4-mile section of good gravel road. This in turn becomes Santa Fe Avenue near the airport. At the first overpass (Main Street) wind your way up, over and down onto Hesperia Road. Follow it all the way into old town Victorville. For cyclists: Hesperia has recently been widened and



**Mormon/Salt Lake Road-
Los Angeles Road Monument
At Crowder Canyon above I-15**

Photo courtesy of the Author

resurfaced which makes for a much more pleasant ride.

Just a note: While you're in Victorville, make sure you take time to visit the Roy Rogers/Dale Evans Museum. For those of us who grew up in the 40's and 50's, it's a nostal-

gic trip back to the days when the good guys all wore white hats.

Maps: You don't need a briefcase full to take the tour, but the following are essential. The first two are really necessary for negotiating the congested L.A. and San Berdoo streets. The L.A. guide also has some good suggestions about interesting places to visit.

- AAA Guide to Metropolitan Los Angeles
- AAA San Bernardino County
- AAA Guide to Indian Country
- AAA Las Vegas Area Guide
- Utah Travel Council Southwestern, Northeastern and Southeastern guides
- Santa Fe City map

For more info about the city and nearby high desert communities such as Victorville, contact the Los Angeles Convention and Visitors Bureau, 685 So. Figueroa St., Los Angeles, CA 90017, (213) 689-8822.

About the Author: McCombs tells us that following his retirement, he took up leading long distance bicycle tours. He now lives in Utah. McCombs emphasizes that the Trail wanders through some very tough countryside, so there is some risk involved in touring the route. Make sure your vehicle or bike is in good repair, always carry lots of water and let people know where you're going to be when you're in the outback.

This is the first in a series of seven articles written by McCombs on his adventures traveling the Old Spanish Trail. Next: Across a Hostile Desert to Las Vegas, NV

Book Reviews

A Newer World: Kit Carson, John C. Frémont, and the Claiming of the American West. By David Roberts. (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000, 320 pp., illustrations, map, index, \$25)

This is a book that will stir some controversy, and force the reader to make some judgments about the two people and era that the author has chosen to examine. Probably, experienced writer David Roberts could ask for no more than to challenge his readers.

John C. Frémont and Kit Carson had much to do with the promotion and settlement of the Southwest and Rocky Mountain regions. Roberts examines their stories in relation to each other and their involvement in America's expansion in the decades of the 1840s-1860s. Perhaps his "Epilogue" should be read first; but, then, that might be "cheating."

Having researched the documents and visited many areas under discussion, Roberts takes the reader along with him in a fast paced, well written story. Not everyone is going to agree with his conclusions or his description of the people and events. There is glory and adventure here as well as tragedy for those people who already called this land home.

This is a recommended volume. One could argue with the author's failure to provide more information on sources used, particularly after he criticized some who wrote before him for just this "sin," but that is a small matter.

Reviewed by Duane A. Smith
Durango, Colorado

Sights Once Seen: Daguerreotyping Frémont's Last Expedition through the Rockies. By Robert Shlaer, (Museum of New Mexico Press, 2000, retail price \$45, but it will be available to OSTA conference attendees at a discount.)

Old Spanish Trail buffs will not want to miss *Sights Once Seen*. This account of John Charles Frémont's fifth, and last, expedition in the Rockies in 1853-54 notes the expedition's association with the Spanish Trail. Crossing Colorado and entering Utah, the expedition route included a significant section of the North Branch of OST, and later intersected, more than once, the main route of OST. These associations are documented in *Sights Once Seen*.

Robert Shlaer, one of a small number of contemporary daguerreotypists working today, has not only demonstrated his mastery of the art, but has made a significant contribution to the history of Western expeditions. Working in the field, Shlaer has recreated many of the lost daguerreotype photographs taken almost 150 years ago by Solomon Nunes Carvalho to document Fremont's survey of a proposed route for a transcontinental railroad.

Frémont had planned a first in United States history: to comprehensively document his expedition with daguerreotype photography, using a process that had been developed about 14 years earlier, and to publish an expedition report containing images derived from the photos. Unfortunately for history, no report was ever produced, and sadly the more than 300 daguerreotype plates (except for perhaps one, discussed in the book) along with later Mathew Brady photos of the daguerreotype images were destroyed in a New York warehouse fire in 1881.

To recreate the images, Shlaer

successfully played the role of a detective. First, since no comprehensive report of the expedition had been produced and since the original images were destroyed, he had to find engravers' renditions of images. In a coast-to-coast search, Shlaer was ultimately successful in finding 34 images that he believes were derived from Carvalho's daguerreotypes. Second, after finding the images, Shlaer had to find the sites from which the photos were taken. Dealing with problems of reversed images, mislabeled images, and sometimes confusing reports of locations, geographic names, and expedition routing, Shlaer spent four years seeking out the sites. He also photographed many scenes for which no expedition images exist, based on participants' journals and notes.

Shlaer's resulting book serves as a catalog for a companion exhibition of his daguerreotype images, which is now at the Palace of the Governors History Museum in Santa Fe. But this book is far more than a show catalog. Shlaer has written an elegant series of essays that serve as book chapters. In four short chapters, he encapsulates the history of Western exploration and the Frémont Fifth Expedition. In four other short chapters he discusses early expeditionary daguerreotyping and Carvalho's use of the process, as well as his own experiences in modern daguerreotyping. Shlaer successfully explains the daguerreotype process for the layman, without the technical photographic jargon that causes many non-photographers to glaze over. He dramatically emphasizes the enormous difficulties that faced Carvalho (and to a lesser degree, Shlaer) in producing quality images.

Following these eight chapters are 192 engraving images, daguerreotype images, and modern photos

comparing images derived from Carvalho images and expedition members' reports. They show the route from Westport, Kansas Territory to the site near current-day Fremont, Utah, where the beleaguered expedition members, nearly dead from starvation, exhaustion, were forced to cache their equipment. Cached, and never recovered, was Carvalho's daguerreotype equipment. Frémont insisted that the 300 plus daguerreotype plates (about 25 pounds of material) exposed by Carvalho be carried on until the rescue of the group.

While much has been written of Frémont, both good and bad, Carvalho is a little-known, but clearly heroic, figure in a chapter of Western history. He was a Sephardic Jew from Baltimore with no experience in coping with the wilds of the West. With only about two weeks notice, he equipped himself with daguerreotype apparatus and accessories that allowed him to successfully photograph an unforgiving landscape in temperatures as low as 30 degrees below zero, at elevations sometimes exceeding 10,000 feet, occasionally standing in snow up to his waist, and with limited facilities for protecting against dust, moisture, and glare. He encountered prairie fires, buffalo stampedes, and hostile Indians. Interestingly, like many others led by Frémont (sometimes rashly) into perilous situations, he developed a fierce loyalty to Frémont, and later actively promoted Frémont's bid for the presidency. Fortunately for us, he left his own report of this expedition in an interesting book, *Incidents of Travel and Adventure in the Far West; with Frémont's Last Expedition across the Rocky Mountains*.

The book is beautifully done. It is well-written and wonderfully informative, and the images are of fine quality. There are two good maps and an extensive bibliography. This

reviewer has one complaint: museum and academic press books like this should always include a comprehensive index. Regrettably, this book has none. I noted a couple of minor editorial errors: Charles F. Lummis' name is spelled "Loomis," and in one place the name of Frémont's physician, Dr. Ebers, comes out as "Ober." (A good index would have helped catch these errors.) These minor quibbles take nothing away from an outstanding book.

A final tribute to Shlaer's approach is merited. The sites photographed are ultimately based on Shlaer's best judgment of locations where Carvalho produced images. Sometimes these sites are unarguably clear, but at other times Shlaer's decisions could be questioned. In the latter cases, Shlaer is very careful to note the ambiguity, and to give a fair and balanced set of "pros and cons" regarding his judgments.

Reviewed by Willard Lewis
Santa Fe, New Mexico

America's National Historic Trails.

By Kathleen Ann Cordes. (University of Oklahoma Press, 1999, Norman, Oklahoma, 384 pp., Photography and illustrations, maps, appendix, index. \$19.95)

The twelve American National Historic Trails, which are found in 28 of the 50 states, range from the famous (The Lewis and Clark Trail) to the infamous (The Trail of Tears). The stories they tell range from early exploration history (The Juan Bautista de Anza Trail in California) to recent civil rights history (Selma to Montgomery Trail). Kathleen Ann Cordes has put together a nicely illustrated very informative book.

The first thing I did after skimming through the book and reading the back cover was to look at the map of America's National Historic Trails,

where I was struck by two things:

- 1) The big empty area in that part of the southwest traversed by the Old Spanish Trail, and
- 2) How several of the National Historic Trails have branches, and not just one trail. For example, the Santa Fe Trail has two branches going into Santa Fe, one through Colorado, and one through Oklahoma; and the California Trail has more than five branches going into California.

Having satisfied my curiosity on two issues relating to the Old Spanish Trail, I then proceeded to explore the book. The first chapter is a good introduction to the 12 National Historic Trails, except that I would have liked to see more on the criteria used to select a National Historic Trail. Then each of the trails is covered in a separate chapter. First, the facts and figures regarding the location of the trail and logistical information for contacting or traveling to the trail is provided. Then a remarkably detailed history of the trail is presented. Following the detailed history is a description of "The Trail Today." Points of interest along the trail are described, along with a nice large-scale map of the trail. Several of the chapters include biographical sketches, such as Lewis and Clark, Bill Cody, and the Mormon Tabernacle Choir.

The only problem I had with this book is the format. The book is only 8.5 x 5.5 inches in size, with pages and pages of small print with no break. Even if it is intended as a field guide, in my opinion the subject is too big for the size of the book. I suggest that the next edition be larger, with larger print, and with more subheadings and larger and more interspersed illustrations. For history buffs and trail buffs this book is a must.

Reviewed by Nick Saines
Las Vegas, Nevada

Continued from page one

to Spanish colonial history of the Southwest. Three of his books have received awards, including the Golden Spur Award by the Western Writers of America and the C. L. Sonnichsen Book Award. He is a former Woodrow Wilson Fellow and a recipient of the Guggenheim Fellowship. The Simmons keynote will kick off a great series of OST presenters.

Another highlight of the day is an early-evening tour with light refreshments at the Hacienda de los Martinez, a living history museum operated by the Kit Carson Historic Museums. The hacienda dates to 1804, when Antonio Severino Martin (later changed to Martinez) moved from Abiquiu to Taos and began building. By the time of his death in 1827, the hacienda had grown to encompass 21 rooms enclosing two placitas. The family and hacienda figure richly in the history of Taos and the Southwest in the 19th century.

Both the Taos County Historical Society and the Kit Carson Historic

Museums are cooperating with OSTA to present the conference. Other conference speakers include Harold Steiner of Las Vegas, Nevada, speaking on *Taos to Los Angeles: Corridors of History*, and Robert Schlaer, presenting an illustrated lecture, *Sights Once Seen: Daguerreotyping Frémont's Last Expedition through the Rockies*. Steiner is author of the new book, *The Old Spanish Trail Across the Mojave Desert*, and is nominee for the presidency of OSTA. Schlaer is curator of a new exhibition at the Palace of the Governors History Museum, and author of a Museum of New Mexico Press book carrying the same title. Both men will be available for booksigning, and the books will be available for purchase (through cooperation with the Museum Press, the Schlaer book will be available at a 20% discount for conference attendees—see book review in this issue).

Adding a truly international flavor to the conference, John Sharpe, an OSTA member from Clifton, Cumbria, England, will speak on

William Workman (1799-1876): An Englishman's Place in the History of the American West. Workman lived in Taos before immigrating over OST to California, where he became an important citizen. Clifton is the hometown of the Workmans.

Three field trips will be offered concurrently on June 11. The first will focus on the Taos area; the second on Santa Fe, with a visit to the Schlaer exhibit (where Schlaer will be available to answer questions) and other exhibits at the Palace of the Governors; and the third will visit Abiquiu, possible trail crossings of the Chama River, and (depending on time and weather) Horse Lake, a camping place on OST. Both the second and third tours will visit San Gabriel, the site of Oñate's first settlement in New Mexico.

Registration materials and information about accommodations will be mailed to you in mid-April. You are urged to register and secure accommodations as early as possible because Taos is a major vacation destination in June.

SEE YOU IN TAOS JUNE 10-11, 2000!

**Old Spanish Trail Association
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