

Desert Tracks

Publication of the Southern Trails Chapter
of the Oregon-California Trails Association

December 2018



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*Publication of the Southern Trails Chapter of
the Oregon-California Trails Association*

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Table of Contents

From the Editors 1
News from the Trail 2
Pat Kuhlhoff Obituary 2
Reviews
 Three Western Fantasies (Hill):
 Trail of Lightning by Rebecca Roanhorse 3
 ChupaCabra Meets Billy the Kid by Rudolfo Anaya 3
 The Ballad of Buster Scruggs by Joel and Ethan Coen 4
 The Other Slavery by Andrés Reséndez (Peters) 5
 Ethnic Cleansing and the Indian
 by Gary Clayton Anderson (Lawrences) 6
 The Conquest of Texas
 by Gary Clayton Anderson (Lawrences) 7
The Modoc War (Dillon) 8
Oneida Stage Station Site (DeVault) 24
GLO Maps and Black Butte (DeVault) 30
STC Winter Symposium 31
Possible Oneida Station Site (Talbot) 32
Interview with Frank Norris (Lawrences) 34
Upper Emigrant Trail in Texas (Ashmore) 36
Arizona Territory Marker Rededication inside back cover

Front cover photo from *The Ballad of Buster Scruggs*
courtesy Netflix via AP

From the Editors

The 1873 Modoc War was a dramatic chapter in the history of U.S. aggression against Native Americans. The war was extensively documented in government reports, first-hand accounts, historical scholarship, and popular culture. Brian Dervin Dillon's article, "The Modoc War: Fact, Fiction, and Fraud," examines both the key events in the conflict and the representations of the war in various media. In doing so, he attempts to sift fact from fiction. An archaeologist and past Sheriff of the Los Angeles Corral of Westerners, Dillon is a fifth generation Californian with Gold Rush ancestors. We welcome him to these pages.

Historians and enthusiasts who study the Butterfield Trail generally have a good idea of where the trail and the stations that lined the route are located. However, some of the station sites have not as yet been clearly identified. The exact site of the Oneida Butterfield Stage Station, the stop along the old stage route between the Blue Water Stage Station and the Sacaton Stage Station in Arizona, remains a subject of controversy. In this issue, Tracy DeVault asserts that his research has led him to believe that the most likely site is where trail researcher Ron Smith has located it. Dan Talbot is not convinced, however, and in October he took us to what he believes to be the correct location. The precise route of the pioneer trails in Texas is also a subject of current research. Tom Ashmore's article, "Upper Emigrant Trail Revisited," explores where he thinks the west Texas trail crossed the Concho River.

Frank Norris has been a historian with the National Park Service (NPS) since the 1980s. He has served as a trails historian for over a decade. Our interview with Norris begins with his early background, his interest in history, his education, and his beginnings at the NPS. We then focus on his work with the NPS National Trails Intermountain Region, which includes the efforts underway to make the 3,000-mile Butterfield Overland Trail a National Historic Trail.

The books reviewed in this issue include Gary Clayton Anderson's *Ethnic Cleansing and the Indian: the Crime that Should Haunt America*. This book gives a broad survey of the violent impact of western expansion on Native Americans from the colonial era to the late 1800s. We also review Anderson's earlier book, *The Conquest of Texas: Ethnic Cleansing in the Promised Land, 1830-1875*, which provides a case study of the "culture of violence" that existed

in Texas and throughout the West. Meticulously researched and ambitious, Anderson's books make a significant and controversial addition to the recent historiography of western expansion and are sure to excite debate. In addition, our friend Alan Peters reviews *The Other Slavery* by Andrés Reséndez, who asserts that the slavery of Indians, which predated and outlasted the African slave trade, decimated the Native American populations in North America.

We include reviews by Walter Drew Hill of two novels and a movie that contain frontier fantasy elements. *Trail of Lightning*, by Santa Fe speculative fiction writer Rebecca Roanhorse, is set in Dinétah, the former Navajo reservation where supernatural characters share the land with humans after a climate apocalypse has destroyed most of the earth. Hill also reviews Rudolfo Anaya's *ChupaCabra Meets Billy the Kid*, a young-adult novel about a chupacabra (a monster that sucks blood) and Rosa Medina, a social worker from Los Angeles who has returned to her family home in New Mexico to write a novel about Billy the Kid. Finally, Hill reviews the Coen brothers' newest movie, *The Ballad of Buster Scruggs*, an anthology film comprised of six stories that depict the adventures of cowboys, outlaws, and settlers on the American frontier.

In the June 2018 issue of this publication, we included a report on the rehabilitation of the Arizona Territory marker at Navajo Springs. A re-dedication ceremony was held on October 6 of this year; we include photos from the event on the inside back cover.

The mid-winter symposium of OCTA's Southern Trails Chapter will be held in Albuquerque on February 21-23, 2019. (See the announcement on page 31.) Registration forms and the meeting agenda can be downloaded from the chapter website southern-trails.org.

Those of you who know Bill and Penny Anderson, editor-publishers of the *California Territorial Quarterly*, will be glad to learn that they are among the survivors of the Butte County Camp Fire.

We dedicate these pages to Pat Kuhlhoff, a leader in historic trail preservation, who died recently in Santa Fe.

Deborah and Jon Lawrence

News from the Trail

David Miller reports that he and Jack Smith have installed several signs (photo below) across Oklahoma designating the Beale Wagon Road. This trail, which Lieutenant Edward Fitzgerald Beale laid out in 1858, ran from Fort Smith, Arkansas, through Oklahoma, New Mexico, and Arizona, to California.



R.D. Keever of Austin, Arkansas, reports that he was a member of the cast of the 1997 docudrama *Rough Riders* that we reviewed in the June 2018 issue of *Desert Tracks*. In the photo below, Keever poses with cast member Sam Elliott.



The August 19, 2018, issue of the *Los Angeles Times* reports on the exploration of what is believed to be the lost city of Etanoza near present-day Arkansas City, Kansas. The site was home to perhaps 20,000 people between 1450 and 1700. The archaeologist in charge, Donald Blakeslee of Wichita State University, believes that this was the site visited by Coronado in his quest to find Quivira. The article can be found online at www.latimes.com/nation/la-na-kansas-lost-city-20180819-htmlstory.html.

The December 3, 2018, issue of the *Albuquerque Journal* reports that recent archaeology has uncovered the first evidence that the Coronado expedition attacked the village of Kuaua, at the Coronado Historic Site in Bernalillo, New Mexico. Evidence includes metal crossbow arrow points, musket balls, and chain mail fragments. The article can be found online at www.abqjournal.com/1253018/site-yields-evidence-of-coronados-expedition.html.

Pat Kuhlhoff, 1944-2018



Pat Kuhlhoff, a leader in the movement to preserve the National Historic Trails, died on November 20 of this year. Born in Cincinnati, she studied to be a teacher and worked in the dental industry. She moved to Santa Fe, New Mexico, with her husband Eugene Kuhlhoff in 1989. She worked to promote historic properties and educate the public about New Mexico's history by giving tours for the Palace of the Governors and serving as a docent for Rancho de Las Golondrinas. She was a long-time member of the Old Spanish Trail Association and the Santa Fe Trail Association. In the November 15, 2015, issue of the *Santa Fe New Mexican*, she was recognized as the city's "Perfect Ambassador." She will be sorely missed by all who knew her.

Three Western Fantasies

Trail of Lightning

Rebecca Roanhorse

New York: Saga Press, 2018.

ISBN 978-1-5344-1350-4.

287 pages. Paperback, \$16.99.

Apart from Roger Zelazny's *Eye of Cat*, I know of no examples of science fiction/fantasy novels that involve Native American protagonists. *Trail of Lightning*, by a new novelist, Rebecca Roanhorse, is a recent example of this genre. Set in post-apocalyptic Arizona, *Trail of Lightning* is the first of a three-part series involving a young Navajo woman, Maggie Hoskie. Maggie has supernormal clan powers that have been enhanced by her training under the tutelage of the supernatural being Monster Slayer: she is a supreme killer of both natural and magical beings. A family in Lukachukai hires her to find and rescue their daughter, who has been captured by a human-eating ogre.

After killing the creature, Maggie meets Kai, a young Navajo man whose clan powers include the ability to heal the seriously wounded. Together they realize that the ogre has been created by witchcraft, and they set out to find the witch who is responsible. In the process, they meet up with the mythical being Coyote, the Trickster, who eventually convinces them that Monster Slayer is the one behind the witchcraft. After several incidents where large numbers of the ogres destroy villages and are then destroyed by Maggie and her companions, they meet up with Coyote, Monster Slayer, and a large number of ogres at Black Mesa for a final showdown.

Rebecca Roanhorse is an Ohkay Owinga/African American lawyer married to a Navajo artisan. Mixing Navajo mythology with magic that is characteristic of science fantasy, *Trail of Lightning* is fast paced and well written. Despite a high level of violence, the book creates empathy for Maggie, who trusts no one and who is deeply concerned that her aptitude for violence is leading her towards evil behavior. The reader is carried along by this conflict, by the action and the plot, and by the exposition of Native American culture. I recommend the book.

ChupaCabra Meets Billy the Kid

Rudolfo Anaya

Norman: U. Oklahoma Press, 2018.

ISBN 978-0-8061-6072-6.

172 pages. Hardback, \$24.95.

The chupacabra is a blood-sucking monster of recent Hispanic legend. In *Curse of the ChupaCabra* (UNM Press, reprint 2013), Rudolfo Anaya introduced the main character, Rosa Medina, who battles the monster and drug traffickers in Mexico and Los Angeles. In a second book, *ChupaCabra and the Roswell UFO* (UNM Press, 2008), Rosa learns that a secret government agency called C-Force has mixed the DNA of the chupacabra with that taken from aliens who crashed in Roswell in 1947. The hybridization has created powerful monsters called "Himits." Rosa helps two allies, Marcy and Nadine, to put a temporary stop to this mad scientist scheme by blowing up the C-Force laboratory in Roswell, but not before Marcy has downloaded the alien and chupacabra genome onto a flash drive.

ChupaCabra Meets Billy the Kid opens in Puesto de Luna on the Pecos River in eastern New Mexico, where Rosa is spending the summer working on a novel about Billy the Kid. Frustrated that she can't understand the heart of her main character, she makes a deal with Marcy (who is now dwelling on a UFO with the "Bretheren") to follow a space-time wormhole into 19th-century Lincoln County to meet Billy. In return, she endeavors to protect the flash drive from Satyr, an advanced Himnit who survived the explosion of the C-Force laboratory. C-Force reports directly to the U.S. president who, if Satyr obtains the flash drive, is crazy enough to create a whole army of Himnits. Rosa proceeds to ride with Billy through all stages of the Lincoln County War.

Anaya's novel gives a reasonable synopsis of the Lincoln County War. In the process, Rosa learns to appreciate Billy's motives and gets to know his *compadres*. She comes to a deeper appreciation of her Hispanic ancestors, many of whom were Billy's friends and many of whom were robbed of their patrimony by the Santa Fe Ring. One of the rewards of the novel is that it has considerable content concerning the lifeways and folklore of Hispanic New Mexicans. As the action hurtles towards Billy's death in

Fort Sumner, Rosa contemplates the nature of time, nature, and spirituality. She worries whether she will be able to return through the wormhole to the 21st century as well as whether she will be able to stop the evil designs of C-Force.

While Anaya's novel suffers slightly from an excess of philosophizing, this reader enjoyed the book.

The Ballad of Buster Scruggs

Written and directed by Joel and Ethan Coen

A Netflix Release.

Runtime: 132 minutes.

The Ballad of Buster Scruggs is a series of six stand-alone tales about the American frontier. Some of the stories function as parodies of the representations of the Old West in popular culture, others are straightforward tellings of frontier tales, albeit with surprises, and others venture into the macabre and supernatural. The common themes that thread the stories together are violence and the uncaring rugged wilderness of the western frontier.

The movie opens with a shot of an old, green, hard-covered, lavishly illustrated book of western stories titled *The Ballad of Buster Scruggs and Other Tales of the American Frontier*. Each segment of the film is introduced by flipping the pages to a new chapter. The first tale is a parody of the classic Hollywood and comic book Western. It features Buster Scruggs, a singing cowboy gunslinger sporting all-white duds and a goofball smile. In a bar full of outlaws, he is refused whiskey, and within seconds he shoots everyone in the place. Buster then faces a newcomer who guns him down. The newcomer is now the latest "fastest gun in town." The second story, "Near Algodones," features a would-be outlaw who tries to rob a remote bank and is out-smarted by a well-armed bank teller. He escapes hanging by sheer luck and is rescued by a trail boss on a cattle drive. Ironically, he is strung up later in the day for rustling livestock.

In the third story, "Meal Ticket," the mood darkens. A legless, armless man orates from his mobile stage in remote frontier towns every night. The passages he recites come from well-known literary texts, some of which, like Shelley's "Ozymandias" and the story of Cain and Abel, comment

directly on the brutality and the vanity of human greed. The orator works for a money-grubbing, heartless traveling salesman who takes advantage of him and then disposes of him when he finds a more profitable sideshow act.

The fourth episode, "All Gold Canyon," is based on a 1904 short story by Jack London. A solitary old-timer prospects for gold in an Edenic valley, but just as he discovers a vein of gold, he is shot in the back by a black-clad thief. This event makes a connection to the Cain and Abel theme of the third episode. The movie also reminds us bluntly that the sublimity of nature is contaminated by man.

The longest tale, "The Gal Who Got Rattled," will be of most interest to those interested in the pioneer trails. A young woman and her brother join a wagon train bound for Oregon. The brother dies of cholera, leaving his sister dependent on the good will of the wagon train members. The movie gives a reasonable representation of the day-to-day practicalities of Oregon Trail travel, including money and employment, land ownership in Oregon, the fear of Indians, and the potential dangers for a woman who travels alone. After she agrees to a marriage proposal, the woman wanders away from the train, where she is approached by hostile Indians. The wagon master comes to her rescue. I leave the ending as a surprise for the reader.

The last episode, "The Mortal Remains," takes place inside a stagecoach, where five travelers talk about their past lives and their opposing perspectives, including their judgments of each others' motives. When an Irishman and an Englishman reveal that they are harvesters of souls, the passengers, like the film viewer, think that this means that they are bounty hunters. But as the stage arrives at its destination, it is evident that the travelers have arrived at the gates of the underworld. The film's ending harks back to the first episode where, after Buster Scruggs is murdered, he receives a pair of angel wings; as he begins to sing, his spirit ascends to heaven.

While many readers may find the tone of the Coen brothers' film to be dark, I recommend the movie highly as a thoughtful, amusing, and often compelling set of fantasies of the Old West.

Walter Drew Hill

The Other Slavery: The Uncovered Story of Indian Enslavement in America

Andrés Reséndez

Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2016.

ISBN 978-0-547-640983.

Xvi + 431 pp. Hardcover, \$30.00.

When we reflect on the United States' legacy of slavery, most of us think of the African slaves who were transported to North America to work in the Deep South. In *The Other Slavery*, Andrés Reséndez explores the enslavement of Native Americans. According to Reséndez, although there were two-and-a-half million to five million Indians who were victims of the slave trade, there are barely two dozen books on the subject. While Native Americans had enslaved each other before the arrival of Europeans, Reséndez argues that Europeans transformed and expanded the practice, allowing it to spread from the Caribbean to Mexico and then to the American Southwest.

The Other Slavery opens in the Caribbean with an examination of the enslavement of Indians by the Spanish. The practice was initiated by Christopher Columbus, who sent four caravels with 550 Natives back to Europe to be auctioned off in Mediterranean markets. Although the extinction of Indians is usually credited to the diseases introduced by Spaniards, Reséndez argues that their declining numbers was in large part due to a combination of slavery, overwork, and starvation. Within 60 years of the arrival of Columbus, the Caribbean islands were depopulated. Although Spain's monarchs outlawed Indian slavery, the owners of Indian slaves ignored or bypassed these laws by replacing slavery with institutions that supported bondage, including *encomiendas*, *repartimientos*, and debt peonage.

The narrative turns next to Mexico. In 1519, Hernán Cortez imported the *encomienda* system from the Caribbean. Spanish colonists subsequently acquired tens of thousands of slaves. During Mexico's gold rush in the 1520s, the demand for slaves rose. Because the crown forbid the use of *encomienda* Indians for mining, mine owners relied on *cuadrillas*, work gangs composed of non-*encomienda* Indians. In 1552, the Spanish crown declared that Indians could be compelled to work in the mines as long as they were paid – which led to debt peonage. Reséndez asserts that conflicts, such as the 1680 Pueblo Revolt, were

triggered in part by the ongoing capture and enslavement of Indians from New Mexico who were sent to the silver mines of Mexico in the 1540s and the 1550s.

The book then focuses on the American Southwest where indigenous people were already enslaving each other. Comanches and Utes established “horse empires,” allowing them to dominate and capture nearby Indians. The Comanches traded Indian captives – often Apache – as well as stolen livestock to Comancheros (Hispanic traders in New Mexico) who sold the captives to Hispanic families. The captives served as unpaid servants in New Mexican households. Similarly, Utes preyed upon the Paiutes, capturing and trading the latter to the Spaniards. Later, the Mormons established a system of indenture that allowed them to become “guardians” of Indians for 20 years. When the Mormons first came, there were 20,000 Indians in Utah, but within 50 years, the practice of indenture had reduced the number to 2,500.

Finally, Reséndez discusses the enslavement of California Indians which, although it had existed prior to the coming of Europeans, was transformed and routinized during the Mexican era and then inherited by Americans after the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. Andrew Kelsey and Charles Stone, who were murdered by Pomo Indians in 1849, were excessively brutal to their slaves, but Reséndez argues that they were able to openly mistreat their captive Indians because slaving was common throughout the region and there was an active slave market. Slavery not only flourished during the gold rush, but it was supported by legal statutes. The 1850 Act for the Government and Protection of Indians effectively legalized Indian slavery and debt peonage in California.

A professor of history at the University of California, Davis, Reséndez refers to his book as a “hybrid work of synthesis and original research.” Although there is no bibliography, the book is carefully researched and has an approachable style. A broad, detailed, and sobering portrait of Indian slavery from the 15th-century Caribbean to 19th-century California, *The Other Slavery* evidences the pervasiveness, resilience, and the magnitude of indigenous slavery in the Americas. It is important reading for anyone interested in our nation's history.

Alan Peters

Ethnic Cleansing and the Indian: The Crime that Should Haunt America

Gary Clayton Anderson

Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2014.

ISBN-9780806151748.

ix + 462 pp., notes, bibliography, index.

Paperback, \$19.95.

Between 1492 and 1900, the population of the Indigenous people in what is now the continental United States fell from approximately 5,000,000 people to less than 250,000. While this decrease was in large part a result of epidemic diseases, thousands of Indians died in wars of conquest led by Europeans and their American successors. The massacres, the policies of assimilation, and the dispossession of land have led certain scholars of Native American history to claim that the Indians were victims of genocide. In *Ethnic Cleansing and the Indian*, Gary Clayton Anderson argues that the term “genocide” should be applied only to cases where there is intentional, concerted, and prolonged attempts to kill people because of their national, ethnic, racial, or religious identity. Since there never was a sustained and intentional state policy to exterminate Indians, Anderson thinks that the experience of American Indians was not one of genocide. Based on the 2002 Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, which makes distinctions between war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide, Anderson believes that the concept of ethnic cleansing, which he defines as the forced deportation of populations, best characterizes the process used to deprive Indians of their lands.

The reduction of Indian lands from 2.3 billion acres in 1492 to 150 million acres in 1887 and 48 million in 1934 was motivated by the desire of settlers – farmers, ranchers, miners, entrepreneurs, etc. – for more territory. According to Anderson, the process of “settler sovereignty” played a major role in removing Indians from their land. Violent encounters were the norm, and massacres and war crimes were not uncommon. In the face of this, Indians agreed to deceptive treaties that involved removal from traditional territories and reduction of their land base; these treaties were soon violated, leading to even greater dispossession, and ultimately to confinement on small reservations. Many citizens, army officers, and government officials opposed such maltreatment of the Native Americans. However, even among those in favor of a “peace policy,” there was a

prevailing opinion that the Indians should be assimilated to American society and live as individual farmers on small plots of land. Such an approach was, in effect, a kinder, gentler version of ethnic cleansing.

To make his case, Anderson provides a lengthy and thorough chronological treatment of Indian/White encounters from the time of Columbus through the Wounded Knee massacre in South Dakota in 1890. Starting with Native America at the time of contact, the book proceeds to discuss early European settlement, including land policies and conflict with Indians during the colonial period. Following the American Revolution, the federal government frequently supported policies of relocation, and Anderson explores many removals, such as the Trail of Tears, where Indians were forced to migrate from their homelands to undesirable locations. The book then focuses on the trans-Mississippi West during the 19th century. Here Anderson covers such events as the treatment of Indians in Texas, the California gold rush, the Overland Trails, the Minnesota-Dakota War of 1862, the Indian wars of the Great Plains, and the resistance by the Utes and Apaches in the Southwest. Anderson emphasizes that, despite the fact that many Indians were killed, the objective was not extermination, but ethnic cleansing of specific regions: removal of the Indians and subsequent white settlement.

Because Anderson covers such an enormous period of history, he is only able to give a cursory treatment of specific events, such as the Apache Wars. Nevertheless, he provides an excellent overview of the history of the Indian/White encounters. With an emphasis not on battles but on policy and process, the book displays great depth in its treatment of the role of settlers, paramilitary groups, government officials, and army personnel in carrying out the violence and in executing the policies that led to dispossession of the land and lives of the Indians. Based on extensive research of American military and Federal archives and rich in facts, the book compels the reader to confront the painful reality of American Indian policy and its impact.

Ethnic Cleansing and the Indian is a valuable contribution to the scholarship on the treatment of Native Americans and is sure to promote discussion about the anti-Indian violence and the dispossession of the Native Americans’ land.

Deborah and Jon Lawrence

*The Conquest of Texas:
Ethnic Cleansing in the Promised Land, 1820-1875*

Gary Clayton Anderson

Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2005.

(New in paperback, 2018.)

ISBN 978-0-8061-3698-1.

494 pp. Paperback, \$26.95.

In *The Conquest of Texas*, Gary Clayton Anderson explores how the legacy of conquest shaped ethnic and national identities in Texas, beginning with the arrival of the first settlers to Stephen F. Austin's colony in the 1820s. Although Tejanos (native Mexicans), Indians, and Anglo-Texans all participated in the culture of violence, Anderson argues that from the 1820s through the 1870s, Anglo-Americans gradually endorsed a policy of calculated ethnic cleansing to rid Texas of Indians. The distinction here is the *removal* of Native Americans, not their *extinction*. In *The Conquest of Texas*, Anderson argues persuasively that the greed for land, lawlessness, and racism of Anglo-Texans spawned the brutality that has heretofore been attributed to Indian predation. He asserts that the Anglos justified this cleansing with a "Texas Creed" that sanctioned their racism and promoted violence as a way to make Texas exclusively Anglo. According to Anderson, the "aggressiveness of Texans, their martial mentality and penchant for violence, their individualism and deep-seated racism, and their lust for profit made conflict with Indians almost inevitable" (41).

Prior to the arrival of Anglo Americans, there was a large population – 30,000 or more – of Indians in Texas. The tribes included Caddos, Wichitas, Lipan Apaches, Comanches, and a host of smaller groups. The Mexicans were concentrated in a few cities such as San Antonio and Nacogdoches. Their population of perhaps 4,000 was too small to disrupt the Indian societies, so the overall situation was relatively peaceful. This state of affairs ended in the 1820s with the arrival of Anglo-American colonists, who started pressing in on the Indians' ancestral lands.

The book moves chronologically through fifty years of events that illustrate the brutality of Texas history after the Anglos' arrival. Rich in detail, Anderson presents conflict after conflict in which Anglos – settlers, politicians, and Army personnel – expelled Indians from their land. From Sam Houston's failed efforts to negotiate Indian territories

within the state, to the Council House Massacre which caused the Comanches to become bitter enemies of the Texans, to the efforts to create small reservations in the west central region, to the final expulsion of the remaining Comanches in the Red River Wars, the book gives a blow-by-blow survey of the history of Indian removal in Texas.

The primary means for pushing Indians off their lands was the formation of militia units called "rangers." These began to operate as early as the 1820s in the Austin colony. Anderson's portrayal of the legendary Texas Rangers marks a departure from the view imprinted through literature, film, and historical scholarship, which portrays them as heroic and bold, endowed with fortitude and endurance. Anderson depicts them as vigilantes, motivated by the desire to plunder and murder, who attacked sleeping villages and killed men, women, and children. Many ranger units were organized and led by land developers, some of whom belonged to the Texas legislature and so could promote their often unsanctioned actions politically. By pushing the Indians off the land, the developers could profit by opening frontier property for settlement. An important factor in the violence was that newspaper editors enhanced the public's fear of Indians with exaggerated accounts of Indian depredations. The resulting public hysteria led to increased pressure on the politicians to eradicate the Indians.

For those who read Anderson's recent book *Ethnic Cleansing and the Indian* (reviewed in this issue), *The Conquest of Texas* can serve as a highly detailed case study. Indeed, as the more recent book argues, the processes of ethnic cleansing were not at all unique to Texas, but prevailed throughout the United States. Anderson's frontal attack on the Texas historiography – Anglocentric narratives which romanticize the process of settlement – also can be easily extended to the historical treatment of western expansion in the nation at large.

Gary Clayton Anderson's *The Conquest of Texas* enriches our understanding of 19th-century Texas history. While some critics will doubtless find it one-sided, Anderson's extensive historical research and interdisciplinary approach make the book readable for the general public as well as for scholars in the fields of Native American studies and Texas history.

Deborah and Jon Lawrence

The Modoc War: Fact, Fiction, and Fraud

Brian Dervin Dillon

Introduction

I grew up with the Modoc War. My father, historian Richard H. Dillon (1924–2016),¹ became fascinated with it before I was born and published on it repeatedly over a 40-year period. I tagged along on research trips to northeastern California and adjacent southern Oregon during the late 1950s and early 1960s, following my dad as we walked the same ground as did the victors and the victims of the most tragic and unnecessary of our country's Indian Wars. Dick Dillon's first professional publication as a budding historian in 1949 was on the Modoc War.² He returned to it in 1959 by editing a book-length eyewitness account by W. H. Boyle, *Conduct of the Modoc War*.³ In 1970 he included a mini-biography of Captain Jack, the tragic Modoc protagonist of the 1872–73 conflict, in his best-selling *Humbugs and Heroes*.⁴ Later that same year my father published a chapter entitled "Lost River Raid" within a rare and hard-to-find compendium volume.⁵ Three years later, *Burnt-Out Fires: California's Modoc Indian War* commemorated its 1973 centennial.⁶ I was flattered that this book was dedicated to me. *Burnt-Out Fires* was followed in 1983 by a revisit to the topic within the pages of *North American Indian Wars*,⁷ and then in 1989 by a magazine article entitled "The 'Inevitable' Modoc War."⁸ For 45 years *Burnt-Out Fires* has been assigned reading in anthropology, history, and ethnic studies classes, so I am not alone in considering it the best volume ever written on the conflict. The book's lasting success comes from my father's insights into the motivations, strengths, and weaknesses of both sides, white and Indian. This was the natural result of his studying anthropology as well as history at the University of California, Berkeley, in the 1940s.⁹ Other authors, before and after my father, have written about the Modoc War. Their work ranges from excellent to execrable.¹⁰

Meanwhile, after many years of prehistoric field research all over California and in four other countries, literally "from Alturas to Honduras," I found myself back in northeastern California, both doing archaeology and teaching it (Figure 2).¹¹ By this time, the opposite of my father, the anthropological historian, I was also researching, writing, and teaching as much history as anthropology.

Thirty years after first following my father to the land of burnt-out fires, I was there once again, walking in his footprints.

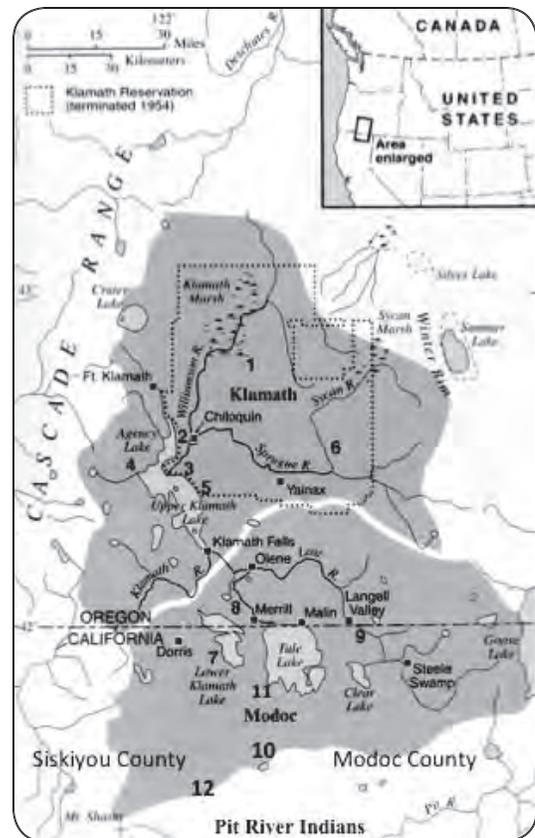


Figure 1. Modoc territory in northeastern California and southern Oregon, separated from Klamath lands by a thin white line. Boundaries were always fluid. At the time of the Modoc War, all California Modoc territory lay within Siskiyou County.

Numbered Locations: 1: Klamath Marsh; 2: Agency Lake; 3: Lower Williamson River; 4: Pelican Bay; 5: Klamath Falls; 6: Upland; 7: Lower Klamath Lake; 8: Lower Lost River; 9: Present State Boundary; 10: Medicine Lake Volcano; 11: Lava Beds National Monument; 12: Harris Mountain.

fom Stern, 1998: 447. Additions by B.D. Dillon, 2015. courtesy of the Smithsonian Institution.

The Land of Burnt-Out Fires

Northeastern California was and still is the state's empty quarter, retaining its lowest population density. Its people's past history and present attitudes are quite different from the rest of the state to the south.¹² Much of the country on the Oregon/California/Nevada border takes the form of a



Figure 2 . The author giving his Modoc War lecture to a California Department of Forestry class in one of his favorite northeastern California classrooms at Grass Lake, Siskiyou County.
photo by Dan Foster, 2003

lunar landscape of old lava flows interspersed with large, shallow lakes. The Indians called the volcanic wasteland, part of it now Lava Beds National Monument, the “Land of Burnt-Out Fires.” Locals said that when the winds blew from the south, Lower Klamath, Tule, and Goose Lakes “got up and moved into Oregon,” but when they blew from the north, the lakes “went back home to California.” Modoc territory (Figure 1) in pre- and proto-historic times lay on a north-facing slope of the Cascade Mountains in what is now northernmost California and southernmost Oregon. The Modoc high country lay at the south end of that range, their low country at its north, on both sides of the present-day state border.

The south end of Modoc tribal territory, in California’s northeastern Siskiyou and northwestern Modoc Counties, is an unforgiving land. City slickers routinely get lost in it, and old timers in its few towns reminisce about 4th of July picnics getting snowed out. But it was a land rich in resources for those who could unlock its natural secrets. Ringing Medicine Lake Volcano were a dozen obsidian flows, exploited by the Modocs and their neighbors for the natural volcanic glass used for projectile points and other tools.¹³ Outside Modoc territory to the east, yet still exploited by them, were other places in the Warner Mountains where rare and highly-prized red obsidian was found.¹⁴

Northeastern California today still offers the best deer and antelope hunting within the state, while the northern flats near the great lakes, some recently drained, remain rich in

migratory waterfowl. The lakes, and the streams that feed them, were once full of fish and provided other resources highly prized as staples by the pre- and proto-historic Modocs, including camas root, lily bulbs (*wocus*), tules or bullrushes, and aquatic insects. The uplands were also particularly rich in this last, forgotten resource; the annual grasshopper harvest was a time of travel throughout the southern high country.¹⁵

In the Modoc high country, surface drainage is all but nonexistent. The few springs scattered over hundreds of square miles can be found once the game trails leading right to them are discerned. Near each spring are prehistoric archaeological sites, not close enough for their ancient inhabitants to have spooked the game animals that came to drink every dawn and dusk. Even today in game-rich and people-poor Siskiyou and Modoc Counties, once you discover the game trails you can then find the adjacent prehistoric hunting blinds (Figure 3). These blinds were positioned by ancient Indian hunters on lava fingers that game trails skirt around. Deer seldom look up while on the trail and prehistoric hunters, who understood this, lay in wait to ambush the animals from behind the artificial walls made of piled natural lava boulders. Invisible from below, these walls were and still are indistinguishable from the underlying natural lava flows.¹⁶



Figure 3. Prehistoric hunting blind on a lava finger overlooking a game trail, eastern Siskiyou County, California, in the transition zone between Modoc and Pit River territories. Brent Rankin, of Dillon’s field archaeology crew, stands inside the blind. Compare this prehistoric example with the historic one in Muybridge’s 1873 photograph (Figure 10).
photo by B. D. Dillon, 1995



Figure 4. Ice cave in eastern Siskiyou County, near the fluid boundary between the Modocs and Pit River Indians. In summer, the temperature difference between the cave interior and the surface can be as much as 80°F. Jeff Hamilton, of Dillon's archaeological field crew, stands near the entrance. This ice cave, the only reliable source of water for miles around, is ringed with prehistoric sites. The Modoc's use of ice caves for concealment during the 1872-73 Modoc War was the logical outgrowth of hundreds of years of prior familiarity with them.

photo by B. D. Dillon, 1994

Because of the porosity of the lava cap in the Modoc uplands, ice caves (Figure 4) remain the sole dependable source of water in many areas. Ice caves are places where subterranean lava tubes have suffered localized roof collapses. Lava tubes were formed eons ago when flowing, molten lava cooled differentially, a hotter thin stream remaining viscous within a more rapidly-hardening, cooler, outer sheath. When the molten lava ran out, its passageways solidified into natural, underground tunnels. The most remarkable of these lava tubes in eastern Siskiyou County is a nearly-straight line more than 20 miles long and is visible from space. Despite midsummer surface temperatures in excess of 100°F, inside the ice caves frozen puddles remained.

While archaeologically surveying many thousands of acres throughout the Modoc high country, I learned how its prehistoric residents found such water sources. At dawn, small birds dart through the woods, flying towards the nearest ice cave for their morning drink. Later in the day, yellowjackets in flight also serve as guides to ice caves, where they escape the noonday heat and find scarce water. In one spectacular case, I recorded a faint, prehistoric Indian footpath across a cinder field aimed directly at an almost-invisible ice cave; the path vanished only upon reaching the hardpan lava surrounding the cave.¹⁷

Ethnohistoric Background

Anthropologists have debated for more than a century whether the very small Modoc tribe was more Californian in its outlook and traditions or culturally more similar to Plateau tribes to the north. The earliest serious study of the Modocs was by Stephen Powers, California's first ethnographer.¹⁸ Powers visited them the same year that the war broke out, and published his description of the Modocs while they were still en route to exile in Oklahoma. His account is a dated mix of subjective disapproval of specific Modocs coupled with an objective defense of their culture. Powers believed that the Modocs had seceded from the much larger Klamath tribe and that the two existed in a kind of "big brother vs. bullied little brother" relationship.

The next objective ethnographic study was by Sam Barrett, California's first-ever anthropology Ph.D.¹⁹ Barrett combined his study of the Modocs with that of their northern linguistic kin, the much larger Klamath tribe, again linking these two Indian groups together. A. L. Kroeber, the founding father of California anthropology and Barrett's mentor and professor, believed that the Modocs were culturally non-Californian, and omitted them from his monumental *Handbook of the Indians of California*.²⁰ Kroeber's student, Robert F. Heizer, again omitted them from his California volume in the *Handbook of North American Indians* series more than 50 years later.²¹

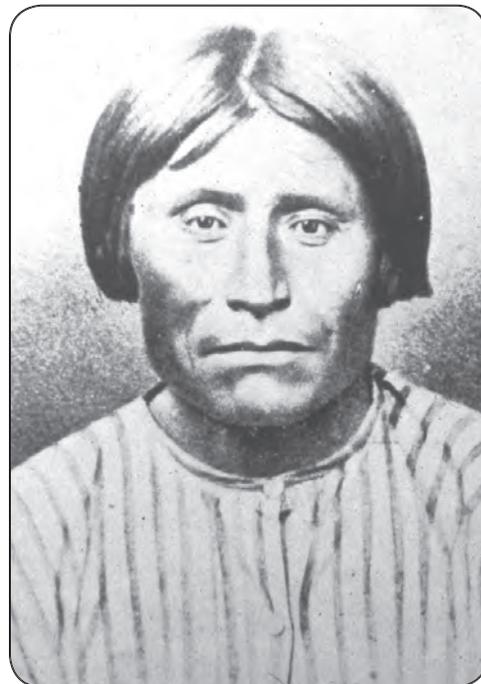


Figure 5. Kintpuash, or Captain Jack, the most tragic figure of the Modoc War. *photo by Louis Heller, courtesy National Archives*



Figure 6. Captain Jack's family. Left to Right: his young wife Lizzie, his sister Mary, his old wife, and his young daughter. Note traditional basketry hats.

photo by Louis Heller; courtesy National Archives

This notwithstanding, the only full-length, stand-alone, ethnography of the Modocs, appearing 38 years after Kroeber but 15 before Heizer, makes a strong case for their inclusion within the California culture area.²² The best, albeit brief, recent review of Modoc culture appeared in the *Handbook of North American Indians*, once again locating them within the Plateau cultural camp.²³ The Modocs had a history of hostility to some of their Pit River neighbors to the south²⁴ and made annual slave-raids into Pit River territory. They also were frequently at odds with their Klamath relatives to the north. The cultural similarities between these two Indian peoples are undeniable, but unlike Powers, I consider them akin to distant cousins, not rival older vs. younger brothers. The Modocs lived on a number of cultural frontiers, both protohistorically and historically. They remain resistant to anthropological pigeon-holing.

The Modocs were one of the smallest of all California tribes. Their largest winter village contained only 14 communal semi-subterranean houses and but a single sweat lodge. By the time of the Modoc War, disease and murder had reduced the Modocs to no more than 250 people. Twenty years earlier, in the 1850s, the Modocs had killed all whites trespassing through their territory, isolated prospectors and emigrant parties alike. Indian-haters like Ben Wright had retaliated by hunting down and shooting any and all solitary Modoc men, women, and children, and by wiping out entire villages. The most famous of all Modocs (Figure 5) was Kintpuash or Captain Jack. His own father was killed by whites in one such massacre. Constant warfare forced the abandonment of traditional Modoc settlements so that by the end of the 1850s many old camps and villages, where the Indians would have been sitting ducks and easy prey for vengeful whites, were now permanently deserted.

After a decade of strife, relations improved considerably. The surviving Modocs now made their peace with the handful of white ranchers that had settled in their territory. Many Modoc men, including leaders like Captain Jack, worked as cowboys or timber cutters for these ranchers, while some whites took Modoc wives.²⁵ The Modocs now demonstrated a remarkable adaptability and a willingness to acculturate. This was facilitated by the comparatively low population density of northeastern California in the 1860s. Here, unlike other parts of the state, the Indians were not submerged under a tidal wave of whites, so there was an unusual degree of give and take. And here the Modocs also found a few white friends willing to defend them.

Causes of the Modoc War

Of all the Indian conflicts of the 19th century, California's Modoc War was perhaps the one that could have most easily been prevented. California Indians, compared to the Apache of the Southwest or the Comanche of the Southern Plains, were generally peaceful and inoffensive. Yet any Native American group would fight if pushed too far, and no American Indians fought so effectively with so few warriors as the California Modoc. For half a year, 53 Modocs held off U.S. Army forces that outnumbered them, at first 10-to-1 and later 25-to-1.²⁶ They were never defeated militarily. The Modoc War was the single most

costly Indian war ever fought on the North American continent. The Modocs inflicted 25 times the number of casualties on their white adversaries than they suffered themselves.

The Modoc War was caused by bureaucrats whose ethnocentric stupidity created a conflict that need not have occurred. Indeed, after the war's end, General John M. Schofield, commander of the Pacific Military Division, wrote that the "Indians . . . [were] driven to war by injustice and outrage."²⁷ Most 19th-century urban Americans believed race to be the most important variable in Indian-white relations. Blinded by this preconception, they assumed that all Indians were alike and that all were inferior and incapable of "civilized" behavior. Therefore, they had to be treated as if they were willful and errant children. Over the past century, however, more and more Americans have come to accept the most basic anthropological fact: that race (simple biology) is essentially meaningless. Instead, it is culture, the language, traditions, and beliefs embedded in daily life that defines the group. American Indian tribes are no more culturally similar to each other, just because they are of the same race, than are Norwegians to Sicilians. Unfortunately, only a comparatively small number of 19th-century frontier whites in direct contact with Indian peoples recognized the significance of cultural distinctions between different Native American groups. They knew that misunderstanding such distinctions could be fatal and mean the difference between peace and war. Many of the white settlers living in close proximity to the Modocs appreciated just how willing their Indian neighbors were to make a new accommodation to them, and just how much they had done so over a comparatively short time. Unfortunately, most government authorities remained ignorant of this important fact. Instead, they forced the Modocs into their own intractable and unchanging mental stereotype.

For centuries the Modocs had moved back and forth between the lands which after 1850 became the new state of California and the neighboring Oregon Territory. A border meaningless to the Modocs and to all of their Indian neighbors took on increasing significance to politicians and Indian agents both out west and in Washington. Even as most Modocs were adapting to the new mixed economic and cultural reality of 1864 California, a poorly-conceived decision of the Lincoln administration, preoccupied

with defeating the Confederacy after more than three years of Civil War, was made to force them out of the state entirely, moving them to a reservation in southern Oregon. Because white government officials lumped all Indians together by race, regardless of cultural differences, they could not imagine that this bureaucratically simple solution might generate intertribal conflict. Most Modocs moved voluntarily, only to find that they did not have their new land all to themselves. Instead, three different Indian groups – California Modocs, Nevada Paiutes, and Oregon Klamaths – were all thrown together onto a single reservation, a kind of mini-Oklahoma Indian Territory way out west. At the best of times these three Indian peoples observed an uneasy truce, staying out of each other's way, but now two left feet had been forced into a single right shoe already containing a right foot, and conflict was inevitable. Had geographically separate reservations been created for each different Indian group, there never would have been a Modoc War.

Only weeks after the end of the Modoc War, Stephen Powers wrote that "imbecility reigned" on the Klamath Reservation.²⁸ It had been created out of traditional Klamath territory, and the Modocs from the south and Paiutes from the east came to be despised as interlopers by the Klamaths with prior claim to the land. Facing, and losing, constant confrontations with the more numerous Klamaths, most Paiutes drifted back to Nevada. Many, but not all, of the Modocs under Kintpuash also took the path of least resistance: they jumped the reservation, returned to California, and went back to work for their white friends on the cattle ranches. But Indian agents cannot justify their existence without Indians, so the Modocs were forced back to the reservation at the end of 1869. When Kintpuash protested renewed Klamath abuse to the Federal agents, he was not listened to but was threatened with jail. In response, Captain Jack and a small band of Modocs left the Klamath Reservation a second time. They were now determined to fight if ever evicted from California again.

A Greek Tragedy in Northern California

The Army was mobilized at the end of November 1872 and sent to round up the errant Modocs and herd them back north. This time, shots were fired and both Indians and whites were killed. After fighting and beating troops on

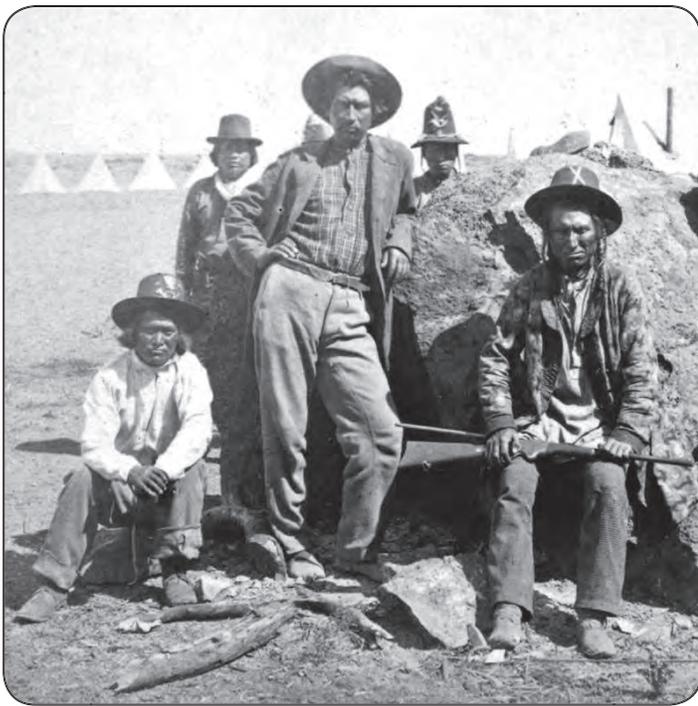


Figure 7. Donald McKay, the half-Cayuse chief of scouts during the Modoc War, standing at center with some of his Warm Springs Indian scouts. Loa-Kum Ar-Nuk at right, Tahome at left, Sisson Jim at left rear. Eadweard Muybridge photo, Tule Lake Army camp, 1873, originally one of a stereo pair.

from the Bradley and Rulofson "The Modoc War" series, No. 1623, originally entitled "Donald McKy, the celebrated Warm Spring Indian Scout and his chief men"

courtesy of the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley

open ground, Captain Jack and 52 other warriors holed up in the natural fortress of the Lava Beds, where they were besieged for six months. They hid out in ice caves, all but invisible to the bluecoats, periodically emerging to ambush unwary soldiers and officers. The Modocs used whatever firearms they could scrounge, Indian children scavenging those cartridges abandoned by wounded soldiers at night. Jack and his warriors reloaded centerfire ammunition with percussion caps for primers and scrap metal for bullets. Ranges were so close that they sometimes threw rocks to conserve their scarce ammunition. The Modocs targeted officers, leaving enlisted men leaderless and confused. San Francisco Presidio artillerymen and dismounted cavalry, serving as temporary infantry, were easy targets for Modoc snipers. Wounded soldiers, crawling to safety over the lava, abraded all the skin away from their kneecaps, revealing bone. The Modocs could not be starved out, for they slipped out at night to rustle cattle, driving them back underground as rations "on the hoof."

Five troops of dismounted U.S. Cavalry, plus infantry, artillery, and volunteer units fought against the Modocs. The most photogenic participants were the U.S. Indian Scouts (Figures 7 and 10). Forty warriors from northern and central Oregon were recruited from the Warm Springs Reservation. This reserve had been created in central Oregon in 1855 to receive the Wasco and Tenino Indians. The Teninos' linguistic relatives were the Walla Walla, Klikitats, Umatillas, Yakimas, and the Nez Perce. The Wascos were a Chinook people from the Columbia River.²⁹ The leader (Figure 7) of the Modoc War Indian Scouts was Captain Donald McKay (1836-1899), the half-Cayuse, half-Scots son and grandson of Astor Fur Company traders. His stepmother was Chinook, so he grew up at least trilingual. McKay later learned several other Indian languages and was in great demand as an interpreter and peacemaker between nominally hostile tribes. Before fighting the Modocs he had scouted against the Bannocks, Shoshones, and Paiutes.

The Modoc War began in November of 1872. Throughout much of 1873, it was front-page news on papers across the United States (Figure 8).³⁰ It attracted international attention as well: Queen Victoria followed it in the *Illustrated London News*. American and European newspapers sent reporters to cover the conflict. The U.S. Army even commissioned its own official photographer – a very strange man with the fake name Eadweard Muybridge – to record the campaign.³¹ Since the war had become a stalemate by the time Muybridge got up to the lava beds, few Modocs were available to photograph. Consequently, Muybridge made many exposures of McKay's Indian scouts, falsifying one such photo (Figure 10) for sale to the gullible public as a "Modoc Brave on the War Path."³² The lava boulder defensive walls prominent in photographs by Muybridge and others had been adapted to modern warfare from prehistoric models, the hunting blinds already familiar to the Modocs and their neighbors for centuries (Figure 3). After five months of stalemate, peace talks were held. Now the Modoc War took on elements of classical Greek tragedy. Up to this point, public sympathy was almost entirely on the side of the Modocs, and any unfair treatment at the bargaining table would probably not have withstood public scrutiny. Captain Jack, by now tired of fighting, was willing to stop. Unfortunately, he was ridiculed by hotheads in his band and goaded into murdering the chief U.S. negotiator,

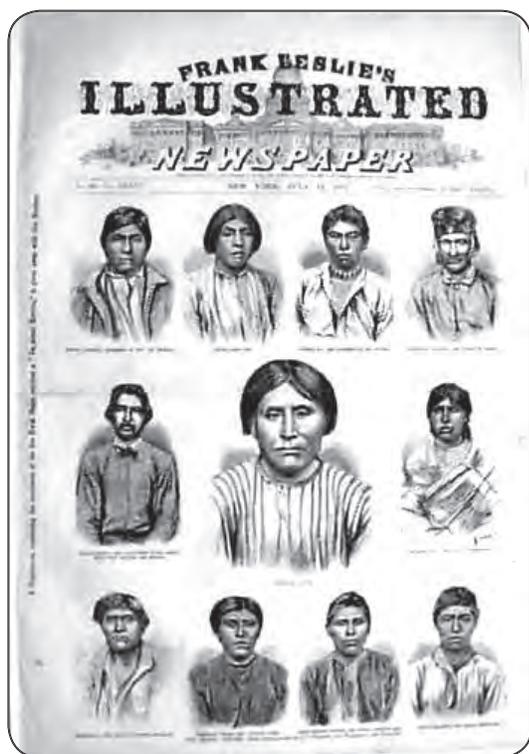


Figure 8. The Modoc War was front-page news, coast to coast, and beyond. On July 12, 1873, the Modocs made the cover of a special issue of *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*.

competitor in San Francisco, where they were offered for sale at Watkins' famous Montgomery Street Studio and Gallery. Unfortunately, *all* of Heller's photographs (Figure 11) of Indians now bore the incorrect legend "Modoc Indians, Prisoners Under My Charge" signed by Captain C.B. Throckmorton, 4th U.S. Artillery, not just the first one for which the affidavit was originally written.³⁵

The Modoc War gave the U.S. Army its worse black eye since the Civil War and caused President Grant to lose his temper in a most terrible way. Ulysses S. Grant is usually given very high marks for his treatment of American Indians. He cut through red tape to create long-overdue reservations and recognized Indian claims that other presidents, before and after, ignored. But Grant had mixed feelings about California, where his own personal nadir had been reached and his pre-Civil War military career fizzled out 20 years before. Now, Canby's death spelled doom not just for Kintpuash but for the entire Modoc tribe. Outrage over his friend's murder pushed Grant, who could have provided justice to the battered and beleaguered California Indians, over the edge. His ire was fed by an even angrier William Tecumseh Sherman. With a vindictiveness deeply

General Edward Canby. This took place at the peace tent erected to formalize the cessation of hostilities. Jack's female first cousin Toby Riddle (Figure 12), married to a white man and serving as an interpreter, saved the life of another white negotiator at the risk of her own.³³ Canby, the only U.S. general ever killed by American Indians, fell on April 11, 1873, and the war sputtered on for another month and a half.³⁴ Betrayed by his own followers, Captain Jack finally surrendered on June 1, 1873.

Fact, Fiction, and Fraud

Muybridge was not the only photographer of the Modoc War, just the best known. Even more productive was Louis Heller, especially after the Modoc surrender. Heller was from Yreka and, unlike Muybridge, he did not fake his photographs. Even so, his desire that the public know their authenticity has had lasting consequences right up to the present day. Heller persuaded an Army officer to sign an affidavit that one of his photographs of Modoc prisoners was in fact of the same combatants the American military had fought for the preceding half-year. Heller sold many of his photos to Carleton Watkins, Muybridge's primary



Figure 9. Defeated Modocs pose for photographs on their way to exile in Oklahoma. Left to right: Scarface Charley, Bogus Charley, Hooker Jim, Long Jim, and Shacknasty Jim.
courtesy of the Oregon Historical Society



Figure 10. One of the first in a long line of photographic, literary, and cinematic Modoc War frauds. Another view of Loa-Kum Ar-Nuk (from Figure 7), one of Donald McKay's U.S. Army Warm Springs Indian Scouts with his Army-issue Spencer Carbine behind an artificial lava rock barricade. This famous "front line" photograph is a fake, carefully posed by Edward Muybridge, who was motivated by greed. One of a stereo pair, it was No. 1426 of Bradley and Rulofson's "The Modoc War" series and intentionally mislabelled by Muybridge as "A Modoc Brave on the War Path" to boost sales.

courtesy Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley

regretted later, Grant let his wishes be known: the Modoc murderers should quickly face a tribunal and then be hung. Ironically, the most blood-thirsty of the Modocs, who first provoked Captain Jack and then betrayed him to the Army, would be spared.

Black Jim, Boston Charley, Schonchin John, and Captain Jack were executed on October 3, 1873. Two more Modocs, Barncho and Slolux, also sentenced to death, were only pardoned while facing their own freshly dug graves, a reprieve of almost unimaginable calculated cruelty. Both were then sent off to Alcatraz as prisoners of war. But the most horrible part of the tragedy came when the four hanged Modocs were decapitated and their severed heads were sent back east to the U.S. Surgeon General. The Modoc skulls eventually joined hundreds of others from dozens of different tribes on shelves and in drawers at the Smithsonian Institution in our nation's capital.³⁶ President Grant ordered the Modoc tribe banished from California. The 153 Modoc prisoners (Figure 9) – men, women and children, all chained together – were hauled in wagons from Fort Klamath, Oregon, to the railhead in Redding, California. Here they were locked into four railroad boxcars

without adequate food, water, or sanitation facilities and sent halfway across the country. On November 16, 1873, they emerged from their rolling prison in Baxter Springs, Kansas. They were so hungry they ate a steer finally provided them as rations *raw* rather than waiting for it to be cooked.³⁷ Chained up again in freight wagons, the California Modocs finally arrived at their place of exile in the northeastern corner of Oklahoma.

The Modoc had the sad distinction of being the only American First People forcibly removed to the Indian Territory from the Pacific – all others had been sent there from the Southeast. The Modoc "Trail of Tears" was from west to east, the reverse of that suffered earlier by the Cherokee, Choctaw, Chickasaw, Creek, and Seminole. With the war over, the Modoc leaders hanged, and the tribe exiled to Oklahoma, the defeated Indians were ironically honored with the name of the newest California county. The new Modoc County incorporated part of their homeland. The new county had been split off from gigantic Siskiyou County, and most people wanted it to take the name of the martyred U.S. Army peacemaker, General Canby. But, there was so much debate over the form the new county should take and what to call it,



Figure 11. Louis Heller's photograph of Donald McKay flanked by his two Warm Springs scouts who brought in Captain Jack on June 1, 1873. Heller correctly identifies all three in his caption at immediate left, but once the photo was sent to San Francisco, Carleton Watkins added the incorrect statement taken from a completely different photo (fine print at far left), thinking that this would enhance its credibility. Instead, the two contradictory captions have confused historians and pseudo-historians for the past 140+ years.

courtesy Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley

that “Modoc,” originally a cynical submission, was in fact adopted. So, in 1874, Modoc County became the California county with no actual Modocs living within its borders. President Grant had banished the tribe, but not the name.

Meanwhile, California’s own literary liar, Joaquin Miller (Figure 13), rushed a completely fabricated book into print in 1873 in London. The book was mostly ghost-written in England by Prentice Mulford (1834-1891), a New York state expatriate and former California gold miner who had never been to northeastern California, much less ever seen a Modoc. Entitled *Life Among the Modocs*³⁸ and bad enough to verge on nauseating, it capitalized upon the Modocs’ notoriety as reported in the London newspapers. Miller (1837-1913) represented himself as an expert on the tribe but wouldn’t have known a live Modoc if he saw one. He intentionally mis-labeled California Indian groups just to boost sales of his fiction³⁹ and naive historians ever since have been hopelessly confused and misled by him.⁴⁰ Comparing any and all of Miller’s writings about California Indians with 145 years of scientific ethnology leads any objective reader to conclude that they are complete fabrications.⁴¹ Miller lived with an Indian girl, almost certainly Wintu, at Soda Springs on Squaw Creek, a short distance south of where the town of McCloud would be built a half-century later.⁴² In April of 1857 Miller joined the Fall River Valley Campaign against the Pit River Indians.⁴³ After a number of pitched battles, women and children prisoners were claimed as unpaid “servants” by some of the white volunteers while the male Pit River Indian captives were simply lynched.

In 1858 Miller abandoned his Soda Springs cabin, his Indian wife, and his baby daughter. He traveled throughout the West, the East, and Europe, eventually becoming a London celebrity. Connoisseurs of wild and wooly poetry, who preferred their adventures to be invented as opposed to actual, lionized Miller. Remarried to a white woman, who, like his earlier Indian wife, he later abandoned, Miller went back to Siskiyou county, found the half-Wintu daughter he had discarded, took her with him to San Francisco, and then gave her away to a friend. Miller claimed to have been a white chief of the Modocs but he made up everything he ever wrote about California Indians. He changed tribal affiliations and locations at whim and he

conveniently omitted the murderous episodes he had taken part in. He decided that it was more romantic to have his Indian wife, magically changed from Wintu to Modoc, die at the hands of evil white settlers. In fact, she was alive and well, remarried to a more responsible white man, James A. Brock. Mrs. Brock lived to a ripe old age without ever speaking again to the mendacious inkslinger who first abandoned her then killed her off literarily. Joaquin Miller’s “historical” writing was as phony as his first name. Even so, today back-to-nature urbanites and Mount Shasta mystics revere him as a champion of the Indians when, in actuality, his personal behavior towards them was uniformly irresponsible and occasionally homicidal.⁴⁴

Joaquin Miller was not the only one to transform the Modoc War from historical fact to sensationalistic fiction. In 1874 Donald McKay formed a stage show with the Warm Springs Scouts and took it on the road throughout the eastern United States. Ghost-written novelettes with titles like *Daring Donald McKay: or Last War Trail of the Modoc* kept him in the public eye. McKay’s ghost-written biography appeared in 1887; during his final years (Figure 14), he sold snake oil. Other false “histories” of the Modoc War continued to appear until Jeff Riddle, the son of Toby Riddle and her husband Frank had had enough. In 1914 Riddle’s *Indian History of the Modoc War* attempted to set the record straight.⁴⁵

Meanwhile, on their Oklahoma reservation, mortality was high, and by 1880, after only six years, more than a third of the Modoc exiles had died. Many of the survivors, bowing to the inevitable, took English names. Shoknosta (or Shacknasty Jim – Figure 9) changed his nick-name to a surname: his offspring became the James family. Slolux became George Denny. Other Modocs took names as diverse and ironic as Robin Hood and U.S. Grant.⁴⁶ With Oklahoma statehood in 1907, the eastern Modocs were free to return to Oregon’s Klamath Reservation. Some did, but most refused to live where their long tragedy had begun.

Conclusion

Has America learned anything at all from the Modoc War? If so, it is taking a very long time. Only three years later, George Armstrong Custer again underestimated Indian adversaries at the Little Bighorn, but instead of paying

for this mistake with a six-month stalemate, tendered his own life. Another three years later, in 1879, the U.S. government, oblivious to the lessons of the Modoc War, chose race over culture yet again and moved Paiutes onto the Warm Springs Reservation, unnecessarily creating a climate of conflict between traditionally hostile groups. Despite the dawn of anthropological awareness in postwar America, the fundamental concept that culture always trumps race still eluded those who could most effectively influence American attitudes. The Modoc War, already misrepresented by the fabrications of photographers like Muybridge and writers like Joaquin Miller, now had such early frauds compounded by Hollywood during its “horse opera” period. A misbegotten 1954 screen epic loosely based on the 1872-73 conflict was a romance filmed against the red sandstone backdrop of Arizona, not the black lava of northeastern California. In standard Tinseltown fashion, all Indians were played by non-Indians, mostly Italians. Alan Ladd starred as President Grant’s emissary “McKay,” magically transformed from half-Indian to lily-white, while a young Charles (Buchinsky) Bronson, Hollywood’s favorite Lithuanian “Indian,” portrayed the evil Captain Jack, dressed up like a Chiricahua Apache.⁴⁷

Jeff Riddle, nine years old at the end of the Modoc War, lived until 1941. The last Indian survivor of the conflict was Jennie Clinton, who as a young girl had scavenged U.S. Army ammunition from bluecoat casualties to take, under cover of darkness, to Captain Jack and his warriors. Very old and completely blind, she died in 1950, one year after my father began publishing on the Modoc War.⁴⁸ Brave and resilient in the face of almost unimaginable adversity, the Modocs struggled and survived long after less strong-willed or less adaptable Native Californian groups were steamrolled into oblivion. President Grant’s 1873 wish came true in California, at least for a while, yet the Modocs still exist in not one, but three places. Their western branch has been centered in Independence, Oregon, since the 1954 termination of the Klamath Reservation, while their eastern one remains in Oklahoma. A few independent Modocs still live in California and celebrate an annual reunion with their Oregon and Oklahoma kin, to which Pit River and other local Indians are also invited. This takes place at Medicine Lake Volcano, the spectacular landmark that once divided California tribes but now unites them.

Even today, the Modoc War offers an important anthropological lesson to all Californians and Americans: conflict, war, death and disaster might just be the inevitable result of choosing the simpler variable (race) over the more complicated one (culture) when different people confront each other. Many white Americans, if not yet their government, are finally beginning to comprehend that American Indians are *not* all the same. *Burnt-Out Fires* remains in print more than 40 years after its first appearance,⁴⁹ and history still walks around upright in Modoc and Siskiyou Counties. Some years back, I worked on a ranch where the martyred Indian leader Captain Jack had been employed as a cowboy for the present owner’s grandfather six score years earlier.⁵⁰ I and many others believe that Captain Jack’s spirit still inhabits California’s empty quarter and will do so until the end of all time. The Modocs, one of the smallest of all American Indian tribes, still cast one of the largest shadows over us all.

Acknowledgments

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Notes

1. Richard H. “Dick” Dillon was first published at age eleven. He was a productive historian for so long that three spurious R.H.D. obituaries appeared while he was still alive, simply

because their internet-addicted authors could not imagine that anybody publishing as long as he had (81 years at the time of his death) *and* who was *not* reachable by e-mail might still be living. For legitimately post-mortem R.H.D. obituaries, see B. D. Dillon 2016a, 2016b.

2. *Costs of the Modoc War*: R.H. Dillon, 1949.
3. *Conduct of the Modoc War*: R. H. Dillon, 1959.
4. *Humbugs and Heroes*: R. H. Dillon, 1970a.
5. "Lost River Raid": R. H. Dillon, 1970b.
6. *Burnt-Out Fires*: R. H. Dillon, 1973.
7. *North American Indian Wars*: R. H. Dillon, 1983.
8. "The "Inevitable" Modoc War": R. H. Dillon, 1989.
9. The Anthropological Historian: Richard H. Dillon began at the University of California, Berkeley, as a 17-year-old in 1941, taking anthropology and geography classes in addition to those in history. The Berkeley interdisciplinary approach pioneered by A.L. Kroeber, H.E. Bolton, and Carl Sauer profoundly influenced his thinking and writing. My father's attitudes and approach were not unique: while at Berkeley his good friends and fellow culture-historians were Cliff Kroeber, Bernard "Bunny" Fontana, and cultural geographer John Thompson. They referred to themselves as the "four Musketeers," and recognized no boundaries between anthropology, geography, or history.
10. Other Modoc War Writings: These began to appear only a year later (USHR 1874). Jeff Riddle's *Indian History* (1914) followed after four decades. When my father first began his research, the most recent Modoc War book was Payne's "us vs the savages" *Modoc Renegade* (1938). Later treatments ranged from thoughtful, through pedantically pompous, to insipid. One of the best is Murray's (1959) volume, which appeared the same year as my father's edited *Conduct* volume. Thompson (1971) locates historically mentioned



Figure 12. Toby Riddle, Captain Jack's first cousin, shortly after the Modoc War. Completely fluent in both Modoc and English, she managed to navigate the rocks and shoals of Indian-white relations for many years. An unsung heroine of the Modoc War, she was a peacemaker who saved the life of a commissioner in the Peace Tent during Canby's murder. At her urging, her son Jeff Riddle wrote *The Indian History of the Modoc War* in 1914, hoping to correct 40 years of fantasy, outright lies, and misinterpretations about the conflict.

courtesy National Archives.

locations on modern topographic maps, now standard practice for all historic archaeologists, while Utley and Washburn (1977) offer a splendid review of the conflict. Johnston's (1991) *Devils Backbone*, however, is pure fiction. Irish military protagonists fight the Modocs, who appear as mounted Plains warriors in Buffalo headdresses. Apparently, Johnston's heroes Donegan and O'Rourke must fight every Indian tribe in western America; in 1991, it was simply the Modocs' turn. Garing's well-researched and thoughtful five-part (1995a, 1995b, 1995c, 1996a, 1996b) review of the Modoc War integrates information from all contemporary sources, including the Murray and R.H. Dillon books. Quinn's (1997) pseudo-historical book, its title a conscious paraphrasing of my dad's, is embarrassingly bad. Quinn invents dialogue and stuffs it into the mouths of historical figures as if he were writing a comic book without pictures. Unlike Johnston's fiction, Quinn's writing masquerades as objective history. Cothran's (2014) book lambasts the sensationalistic fabrications that began to appear immediately after the conflict and are still appearing. Cothran must be applauded for this exposé, but his motivation for doing so is an unfortunate left-turn into pink revisionist territory: he accounts for post-Modoc War fictional blather as the result of an evil capitalist conspiracy. The best recent works on the Modoc War are by Cheewa James (2008, 2013, 2015), the great-granddaughter of Shacknasty Jim. A compelling writer and eloquent public speaker, she is uniquely qualified to comment upon the Modoc War from the Modoc point of view. Finally, 2017 saw two very different Modoc War books published. The first, Jim Compton's *Spirit in the Rock*, is a well written and moving revisit to the tragedy of 1872-73. (See also the Lawrences' recent (2018) interview with Carol Arnold, the author's wife and editor.) The second, Robert McNally's *The Modoc War: A Story of Genocide at the Dawn of America's Gilded Age*, claims that the Modoc War

“is little known today” and a “forgotten story.” Little known? Forgotten? Only by those ignorant of the 145+ year history of scientific ethnology in California and the 90+ years of formal anthropological teaching and publication at the University of California on the very same subject that only the “genocide” crowd thinks it discovered by itself. This book’s title is problematic on two counts. No resident of Siskiyou or Modoc county, white or Indian, past or present, believes that any such “Gilded Age” ever existed amidst the conifers and lava flows of their homeland. Secondly, the “genocide” buzzword should be reserved for the very rare situations where one group of people, at all levels of society and government, sets out to eliminate a different group of people and succeeds. The Modoc War was racially motivated, at least in part, and massacres and senseless murders occurred on both sides. But not all whites in California, nor in America, were committed to rendering the Modocs extinct. My father was a 21-year-old American combat soldier. After being wounded in action in

1944, he helped liberate a Nazi death camp in Germany in 1945. He was therefore qualified to evaluate genocide from a completely different perspective than ivory tower theoreticians. I asked him more than 40 years ago if he thought that the Modoc War was a case of genocide, and he said “probably not,” since there were almost as many whites who supported and defended the Modocs before, during, and after the conflict as tried to crush them. And, any attempt at rendering the Modocs extinct ultimately failed: the Modocs still exist, after a fashion, in three different places today. Both my father and I have had many conversations with Modocs, Pit River Indians, and other California First People when the “g” word came up. On several occasions he and I have been asked, tongue-in-cheek, “do I look extinct to you?”

11. Teaching in northeastern California: For 17 years I taught archaeology and history to every registered professional forester in California, Nevada, and from many other western states and even foreign countries. Some of my students were

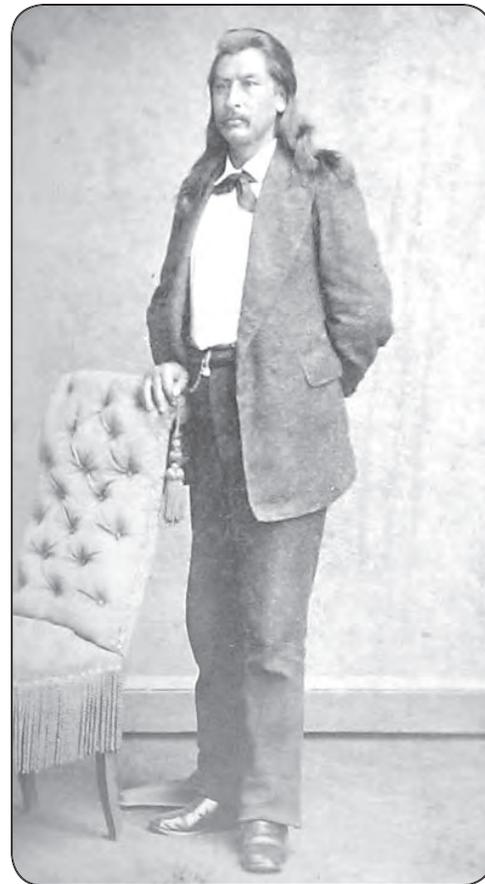
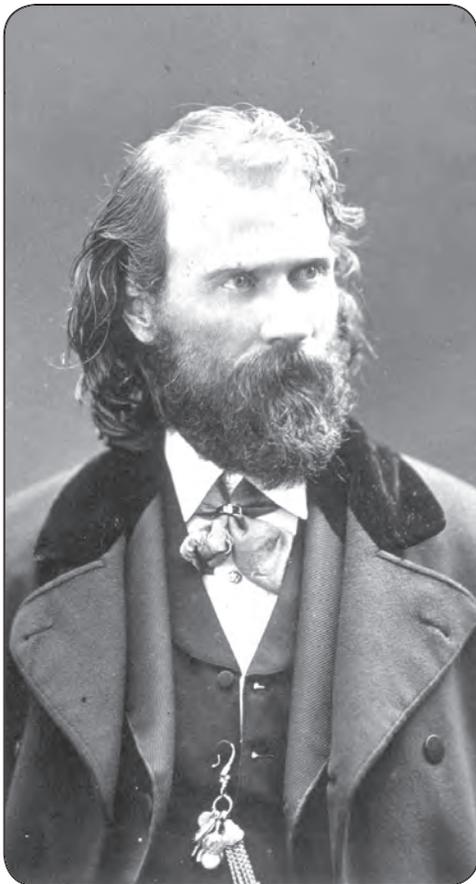


Figure 13 (Left): Cincinnatus Hiner Miller’s fraudulent 1873 *Life Amongst the Modocs* capitalized on the international notoriety of the Modoc War: it was as phony as his nom de plume “Joaquin.” Bradley and Rulofson photo, circa 1873. Figure 14 (Right): Donald McKay on the show-biz circuit. Indian Scout McKay acted out fictional recreations of the Modoc War, then sold snake oil to a gullible American public.

Photo from his *carte de visite*. both photos courtesy of the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley

- Indians from local tribes; some were federal, state, county, and municipal employees. Instruction was through the enlightened aegis of the California Department of Forestry, the creation of Daniel Foster. My lectures took place in the mountains and forests, often on the actual archaeological and historic sites where the past events and cultural patterns being discussed had taken place.
12. State of Jefferson: Since 1941, residents of Modoc and Siskiyou Counties have threatened to secede from California. The plan, not entirely in jest, was to join with neighboring counties in southern Oregon and northwestern Nevada to form the 51st American state of Jefferson. After dying a natural death, the idea was revived by those disturbed by goings-on in the “People’s Republic” to the south once the Hippie movement gained momentum. More recently, the separatists have reversed polarity, and at least some of them now are anti-government dope growers. Many California archaeologists, anthropologists, historians, and even some Indians go along with the movement, mostly as a gag.
 13. Medicine Lake Volcano Obsidian: B.D. Dillon, 1994; 1996b.
 14. Warner Mountains Red Obsidian: B.D. Dillon, 1998.
 15. Grasshopper Flat is in the Medicine Lake-Harris Mountain high country of Siskiyou County, one of the most beautiful spots on the planet. The name “grasshopper” recalls the summer insect harvest by Modoc, Pit River, and other northern California tribes (B.D. Dillon, 1996c).
 16. Prehistoric Indian Hunting Blinds: B.D. Dillon, 1995a; 1996c.
 17. Prehistoric Indian Footpaths, Ice Caves: B.D. Dillon, 1994; 1995a; 1996c.
 18. Modocs “Descended” from Klamaths: Powers, 1873; 1877.
 19. Modocs Lumped with Klamath Indians: Barrett, 1910.
 20. Modocs Omitted from *Handbook of California Indians*: Kroeber, 1925.
 21. Modocs Omitted from the California Volume, *Handbook of North American Indians*: Heizer, 1978. I was an undergraduate and then a graduate student of R.F. Heizer at U.C. Berkeley while he was editing his various books on the disgraceful treatment of California Indians by whites. I had many discussions about this topic with him.
 22. Modocs Included as a California Cultural Group: Ray, 1963. This study still cuts against the grain of most California anthropologists, as would any book using the pejorative adjective “primitive” in its text, much less in its title.
 23. Modocs Lumped with Klamaths Once Again: Stern, 1998.
 24. Pit River Indians: On several occasions I have had the pleasure of working with Pit River Indians in Siskiyou, Shasta, Modoc, and Lassen Counties. Pit River Tribal offices have been in Burney, California, for many years. Visitors are asked to call its occupants “Pit River Indians” rather than “Achumawi” or “Atsugewi” as Kroeber called them at U.C. Berkeley and in his 1925 *Handbook*. The first name is accurate for only one of a dozen separate Pit River tribelets, the second is a group not considered part of their own family. This was reiterated when I was honored to teach an all-Pit River Indian archaeology class at the behest of the U.S. Forest Service.
 25. Indian cowboys and loggers are still present in some numbers in northeastern California and adjacent Oregon and Nevada. A bumper sticker commonly seen on Indian pickup trucks reads: “Hug a Logger – You’ll Never Go Back to Trees.”
 26. Fifty-Three Modocs: The exact number of Captain Jack’s warriors continues to be debated. Jeff Riddle (1914) stated that “Jack only had fifty-two warriors in all. I knew every one of them.” Since individual Modocs slipped in and out of the lava beds periodically during the long conflict, head-counts made even one day apart might be different.
 27. General Schofield: Modocs Driven to War by “Injustice and Outrage.” Quoted by R.H. Dillon, 1989: 26.
 28. Klamath Reservation, where “Imbecility Reigned:” Powers, 1877: 265.
 29. Warm Springs Reservation: Lahren, 1998.
 30. Modoc War “Front Page News:” Leslie, 1873; *New York Times*, 1873a; 1873b.
 31. Fake Name: Eadweard Muybridge (1830-1904) was born Edward Muggeridge. An 1860 stagecoach accident left him with a head injury and the reputation as a “crazy man.” One of San Francisco’s most successful photographers, his fame led to a U.S. Army commission to photographically record its Modoc campaign. A shameless self-promoter, in 1874 Muybridge went on trial for killing his wife’s lover. The California jury acquitted him, in part because of his head injury and reputation for being crazy. Former California Governor Leland Stanford paid for his defense. He is best known for his famous “running horse” photographs that presaged the invention of moving pictures. Because of these, he is celebrated as the founding father of scientific photography.
 32. Fake Photographs: Three years before faking his 1873 “Modoc Brave on the Warpath” photo (Figure 10), Muybridge faked earlier photographs to capitalize on the popularity of Bret Harte’s racist 1870 *Heathen Chinee* poem (Dillon, Dillon and Dillon: 2014: 19-20). Muybridge, consequently, was not

- only a founding father of scientific photography but also of Hollywood's perverting historical fact into sensationalistic fiction, and of dressing up white people to portray non-whites. Muybridge's fraudulent "Modoc Brave on the Warpath" photo lives on. It presently graces the cover of the latest reprint of Murray (1959).
33. Riddle vs. Riddell: Toby Riddle (1848-1920) was well liked by Indians and whites. Fritz Riddell (1921-2002), a founding father of California archaeology and distant kin to the Riddles of Modoc War fame, was also my friend (B. D. Dillon, 2014: 138).
 34. Canby, the only U.S. General Ever Killed by Indians: George Armstrong Custer had the (temporary) rank of Brevet Major General only during the Civil War. When killed at the Little Bighorn, he was a lieutenant colonel.
 35. Heller's 1873 "McKay and two Indians" Photo: One of these mislabeled stereo photos (Figure 11) also bears the independent legend: "Donald McKay and Jack's Capturers." Familiar as the cover art for Quinn's (1997) fictional Modoc War book, the identities of the two Indians flanking Donald McKay have confused historians and pseudo-historians for many years, but, fortunately, neither Indians nor anthropologists. In 1873 Heller took many exposures of Indians, and some of his photographs do indeed show Modoc prisoners of war, but not this one. Jeff Riddle (1914: 112) identified the two men as Toplash to McKay's right, and Winnishet to his left, terming them his "right hand men." Conclusive evidence is also internal to the photograph itself, for after their surrender Modoc men were given short, Prince Valiant-type haircuts (cf: Figures 5, 8, 9) while the U.S. Army's Warm Springs Scouts, conversely, retained the common Plateau hairstyle of high frontal roach or pompadour flanked by side braids, familiar from photographs of that most famous of all Plateau Indians, Chief Joseph of the Nez Perce. There is absolutely no doubt that Heller's "McKay and two Indians" photograph (Fig. 11) shows him with the two Warm Springs scouts who brought in Captain Jack as a prisoner on June 1, 1873. A wonderfully well-illustrated comparison of the Modoc War photographs of Heller vs Muybridge by Palmquist (1977) is still ignored by many historians and book publishers.
 36. Severed Heads: While the U.S. Government would like to forget this appalling act of inhumanity, it is common knowledge throughout northern California and southern Oregon. During decades of research on multiple occasions my father had Indian skulls offered for inspection. Every one was reputed to be "the head of Captain Jack." One day two skulls – one adult and the other juvenile – were represented as Captain Jack, both "man and boy." The most reprehensible example resided in the waiting room of an Oregon dentist, who had sawed the top off an Indian skull and set it atop a table for use by his patients as an ashtray.
 37. Starving Modoc Prisoners: James, 2015.
 38. *Life Amongst the Modocs*: Miller, 1873; later editions published in America. When asked about his contemporary competitor, Bret Harte said that Joaquin Miller was "a complete stranger to the truth." My father noted that "[a] hundred years ago Miller's reputation as a liar was almost as great as that of a poet" (R.H. Dillon, 1970a: 248).
 39. Historians Gulled by Joaquin Miller: Hoover, et al, 1990: 445.
 40. More Writers Bamboozled by Miller: Zanger, 1992; Guilford-Kardell, 1994: 83.
 41. Joaquin Miller Biography: Marberry, 1953.
 42. Joaquin Miller's Cabin Site: In the 1930s, my uncle Jack Dillon (1915-2001) used to fish here during lunch breaks while working at the McCloud River Lumber Company (B.D. Dillon, 1995b). Ivory tower historians and pseudo-historians are confounded by the fact that there are no fewer than three different "Soda Springs" many miles apart in both Shasta and Siskiyou Counties. They routinely confuse them, further compounding the historical and geographical errors swirling around Miller.
 43. The Pit River Indian War: B.D. Dillon and Gorenfeld, 2017.
 44. Joaquin Miller Unmasked: B. D. Dillon, 1995b: 49-54; 1996a; 1996b: 65-76; 1996c.
 45. *The Indian History of the Modoc War*: Riddle, 1914.
 46. Modoc Acculturation in Oklahoma: James, 2008.
 47. Modoc War Movie: *Drum Beat*, despite its title, which conjures up images of big-band music and swing dancing, was indeed inspired by the Modoc War. My father and I both remain innocent of any exposure to it.
 48. Last Indian Survivor of the Modoc War: James, 2015.
 49. *Burnt-Out Fires Redux*: The book is currently offered by The Write Thought, publishers in Sanger, California.
 50. Living Connections to the Modoc War: B.D. Dillon, 1998. Like my father, I too seem unable to leave the Modoc War alone, having published two short articles on it (B.D. Dillon 2015a, 2015b) recently during the same year.

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Butterfield's Oneida Stage Station

by Tracy DeVault

The Oneida Station of Butterfield's Overland Mail Company lay north of Tucson between the Picacho and Sacaton Stations. In his book on the Butterfield Trail,¹ Gerald Ahnert locates the Oneida station in Section 35 of Township 5 South, Range 7 East with geographic coordinates 32.9435,-111.6095.² In February of 2013, Richard Greene and I decided to check out this location. Although Ahnert declares that he "visited the site and found a large debris field of material from the late 1800s" (73). Richard and I did not find any artifacts or debris typical of a stage station site there. After a second visit to the site, we decided that there had never been a stage station or any other historic structure at the location given in Ahnert's book.³

So, will the real Oneida Stage Station please stand up?

I reviewed what was known about the location from early documentation. Three items were of use. The first was a military report by Lieutenant John B. Shinn.⁴ In 1862 Shinn was traveling south over the main road from Fort Barrett (Pima Villages) to Tucson. Since the mid-1840s, this road had been used by emigrants, the stage companies, the military, and many other travelers. Shinn left Fort Barrett with a company of 87 men and 153 animals. Traveling with Shinn's company was a wagon with a wheel odometer.⁵ Shinn was careful to record the distances between important points along the route. He left Sacaton at 4:20 p.m. on the afternoon of June 2, 1862. Regarding the route from Sacaton to the Oneida Stage Station, Shinn writes:

. . . Road leaves the river⁶ and sweeps around from the southeast by south to south by east, with gradually ascending slope to summit, five miles and a quarter between mountain spur and detached peak on left, two miles of road dusty, then soil changes from the alkali dust of Gila River bottom to mixture of sand and gravel, very hard and quite smooth. From summit, Casa Grande in sight on desert to left and the Picacho straight ahead south by east thirty-one miles; desert continues to Oneida Station; road continues good; at eight miles gravel replaced by hard alkali clay; vegetation, mesquite, greasewood, and cactus; no water or grass on road; wood plenty and sufficient for cooking near Oneida Station, which

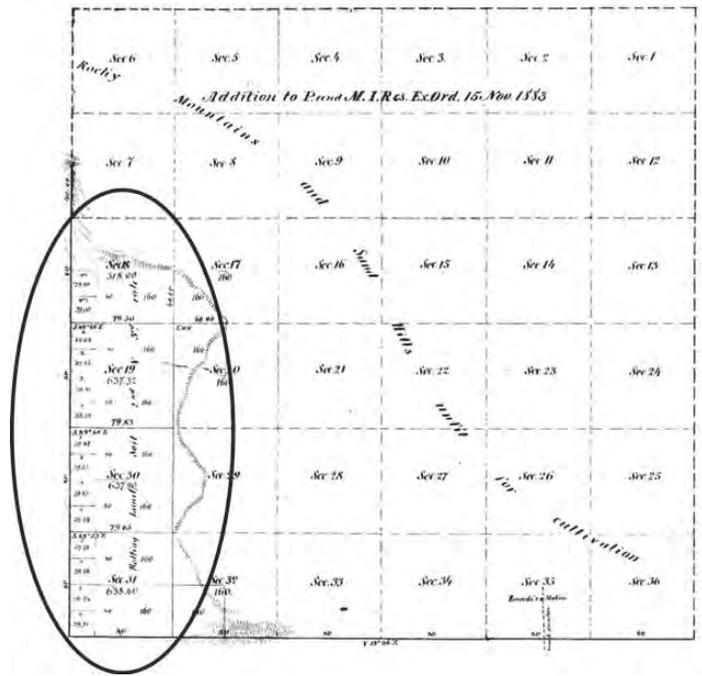


Figure 1. 1868 GLO map for Township 5 South, Range 7 East. The section lines enclosed in the oval are the only section lines surveyed in 1868.

is on the left; well on the right of road; depth, twenty-nine feet, with five feet of water; encamped there at 7.45 p.m.; train all in ten minutes later.

One hundred and seventy-five buckets (equal to 700 gallons) was taken from the well, at the rate of ten gallons per minute, apparently without diminishing the supply. The water is excellent, cold and sweet; the best this side of Fort Yuma; arrived and departed during the night; found no grass near station; eleven miles and one-tenth.

The approximate route of the early wagon road from the Sacaton Station to the Oneida Station is well known. Lieutenant Shinn's distance measurement, 11.1 miles, places the Oneida Station within Township 5 South, Range 7 East (T5S, R7E).

This location leads us to the second piece of important information, the General Land Office (GLO) survey maps with its accompanying field notes for T5S, R7E. The first survey of T5S, R7E was made in 1868 (see Figure 1).⁷ The first thing to notice is that in Section 35 a segment of the old road from Tucson to Sacaton along with a symbol for the Oneida Stage Station (spelled "Honneda's" on the GLO map) are shown. Let's have a closer look at Section 35 (see Figure 2).



Figure 2. T5S, R7E, Section 35.

Notice that the GLO mapmaker shows the road from Tucson to Sacaton as a dashed line. I do not recall having seen a GLO map with a road shown as a dashed line. This suggests that the person drawing the GLO map knew where the road crossed the township boundary but did not have any idea of the route north

of the crossing. Notice also that the symbol for the station is shown as being west of the road, whereas Lieutenant Shinn's report gives it as east of the road.⁸

I'm going to digress here a moment to discuss GLO survey maps and their accompanying field notes. GLO surveys can be useful to trail mappers and other historians if one understands their origins and limitations. GLO survey maps are not the primary source for the information shown on them. When a survey was conducted, the survey party walked the section lines and recorded their findings in a book. These books are generally referred to as field notes. In addition to recording the exact locations of corner markers and half-section markers, surveyors recorded other findings such as important geographic features (creek crossings, etc.), structures, and road crossings. Important features that were observable by the surveyors but were not close to the section lines were sometimes mentioned in the field notes, but their exact locations were not surveyed or recorded.⁹ Field notes are the primary source of the information shown on GLO maps. At some later time a mapmaker would draw the GLO township map based on the information in the field notes. The Arizona office of the Bureau of Land Management has made all the GLO maps for the state available on a set of four compact discs. The underlying field notes for these maps are often a challenge to locate, but they are definitely useful to the serious researcher.

In my search for the Oneida Station, I was able to download the field notes for the 1868 section line survey for T5S, R7E from the BLM's national website.¹⁰ They are

contained in field note book R0615. The notes reveal that only the section lines bordering Sections 18, 19, 30 and 31 were surveyed in 1868. Still, the mapmaker did show a stage station in Section 35 and something led him/her to place it there. A close examination of the GLO map makes it clear that the township line on the southern border and a portion of the township line on the western border of T5S, R7E were also surveyed in 1868.¹¹ In general, township line surveys were conducted and recorded separately from section line surveys. In order to track down the field notes for the township lines that were surveyed in 1868, I phoned Daniel Maxey, a surveyor who works in the Phoenix, Arizona, office of the Bureau of Land Management. After some problems with errors in the indexing system, Maxey was able to locate the field notes for the township line survey. The specific notes for the township survey that runs along the southern border of T5S, R7E are contained

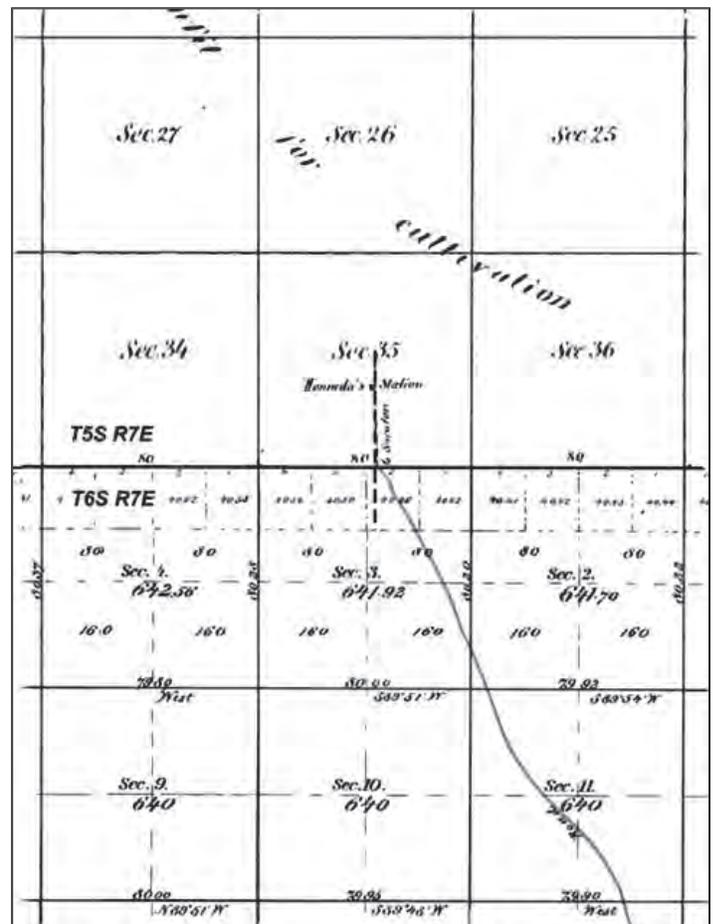


Figure 3. Composite map showing six sections from the 1868 GLO map for T5S, R7E placed above six sections from the 1888 GLO map for T6S, R7E. Note the abrupt and highly suspect change in direction as the road from Tucson crosses the township boundary.

in Book R1505. The survey notes for that portion of the township line that runs below Section 35 are shown on pages 65 and 66. There we found the following note:

45.50¹² Road from Tucson to Sacaton bears north & south. Honneda's station bears north about 30.00 chs. dist.

This note is clearly the source for the mapmaker's placement of the stage station symbol and dashed line shown on the GLO map. The mapmaker ended the road in the middle of the section. Had the other three sides of Section 35 been surveyed in 1868, we probably would have known where the road crossed out of the section and we would have a better idea of the route of the road through the section. The surveyor's estimate of 30 chains distant from the southern township line puts the station about 2,000 feet north of the township boundary – a long way for an accurate eyeball estimate. It is important to note that the surveyor stated the distance north of the township boundary as “about 30.00 chs.” I have never seen the term “about” associated with any measurement that was actually surveyed. I would characterize the surveyor's note as a generalized observation and not as an accurate description of the location of the stage station.

The southern boundary of T5S, R7E is also the northern boundary of T6S, R7E. Figure 3 is a composite of six sections taken from the 1868 GLO map for T5S, R7E and placed immediately above six sections from the 1888 GLO map for T6S, R7E. The map shows that coming from the south, the road from Tucson is generally heading northwest. Then, just as the old road crosses the township boundary, it is shown making an abrupt 45-degree turn to the right (north) and heads straight north into Section 35. Now this terrain is flat as a pancake. Most trail mappers will tell you that early wagon roads did not make abrupt direction

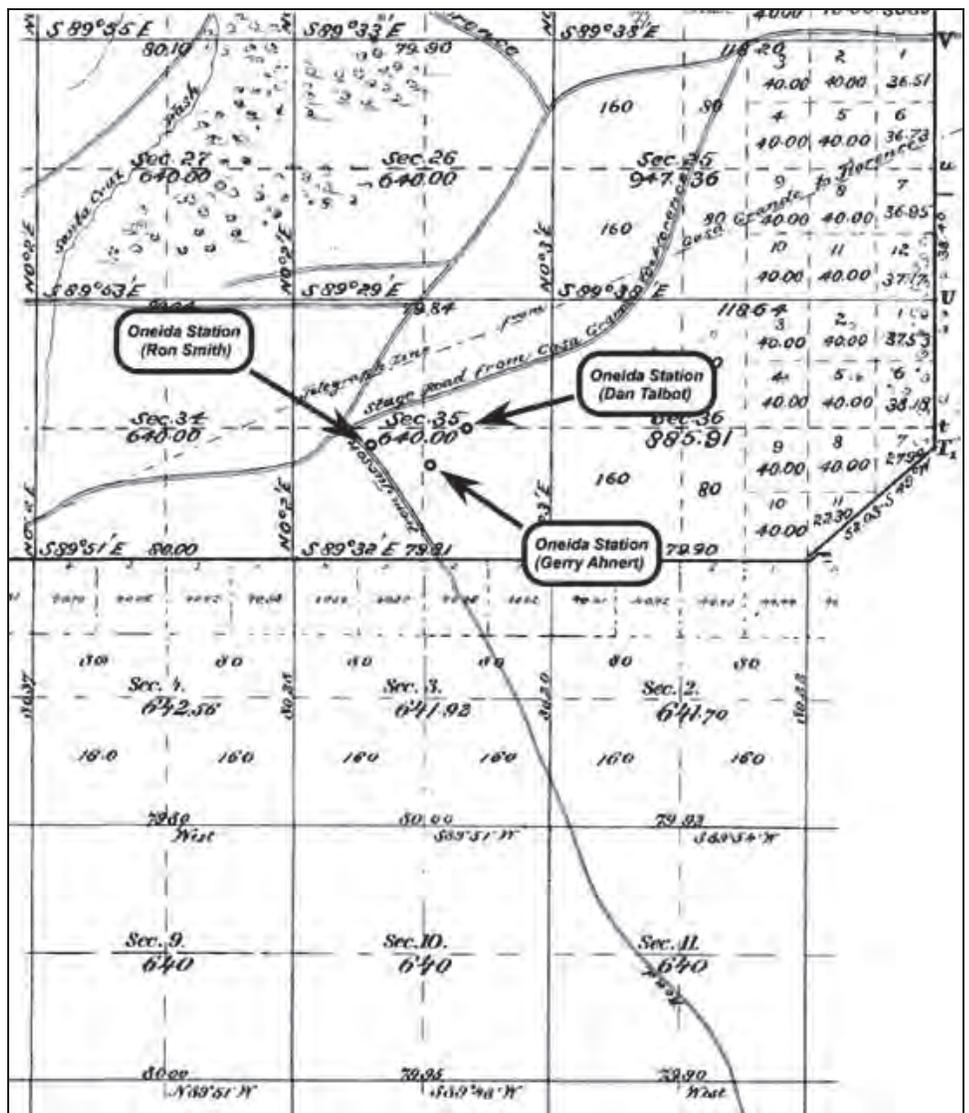


Figure 4. Composite map showing six sections for the 1891 GLO map for T5S, R7E placed above six sections from the 1868 GLO map for T6S, R7E. The road from Tucson to Sacaton crosses the township boundary and continues northwest until it intersects the Casa Grande-to-Florence road.

changes for no reason. This makes this abrupt turn to the right highly suspect. Also, the abrupt turn occurs exactly at the township boundary. The road was opened decades before the survey: at the time it was opened, there was no reason for an abrupt turn at that location. Finally, if we are to believe the 1868 GLO map, the dashed road is shown going due north from at least a quarter mile below the southern township line. However, we see from the composite map that the only point the two roads have in common is the township line crossing.

Figure 4 covers the same area that is shown in Figure 3, but the 1868 survey map has been replaced by the later

1891 survey map for the same township. In 1891, much of the rest (but not all) of the section lines in T5S, R7E were surveyed. This later survey did cover the section lines that border Section 35, and it gives us better information on the routes of the roads through that section. The picture now becomes clearer and more believable. The early wagon road approached the southern boundary of T5S, R7E heading in a northwesterly direction. After crossing the township boundary, it continued northwest along the east side of an unnamed drainage.

In addition to the GLO maps and Shinn’s survey report, another piece of important information (also mentioned in Ahnert’s book) is the fact that the Oneida Stage Station did not disappear after the Overland Mail Company (Butterfield) moved to the central route. When the railroad reached Casa Grande, a stage route was established between Casa Grande and Florence. Ahnert states that the Oneida Stage Station became a stop on this route as well. The 1891 GLO map clearly shows the stage road from Casa Grande to Florence passing through Section 35. This map does not show a station symbol. But by using the crossroads location as a guide, it can be seen that the station was most likely located farther west and a little farther north of where it is shown in the 1868 survey.

My next step was to contact Gerald Ahnert to ask about the large debris field that he states he saw at the site and to have him explain how he had determined the geographic coordinates for the station given in his book. Although we were unable to arrange a joint visit to see the debris field, he did explain that he had analytically calculated the coordinates of the stage station from its position as shown on the 1868 GLO map. The location was not obtained by using a GPS receiver to record the location of the debris field.

I then contacted Dan Talbot, who has also been looking for the Oneida Stage Station. Dan took several of us to a site in the same section (T5S, R7E, Section 35) where there was a debris field full of many early artifacts. However, there is no evidence for an early adobe structure and all the artifacts that I saw could have come from as late as the early 1900s. Dan, however, assured us that he had found artifacts there that could be dated from the mid-1800s.

Finally I checked with Ron Smith. Ron has spent well over

two decades poking around Butterfield Station sites. Ron said he was quite sure he had discovered the Oneida site. In December 2016, Ron Smith and Norm Wisner took Mike Volberg and me to the site. Ron’s location was close to the unnamed drainage and also close to where the 1891 GLO map shows the junction of the Tucson-Sacaton Road with the Casa Grande-Florence Road. His site has everything you could want. The first thing we saw was a large, low dirt mound. Close inspection revealed that this had once been an adobe building with pieces of the original adobe bricks still preserved in the mound. There is a modern ranch road running on the east side of the unnamed drainage that is probably right on top of the old wagon road. The

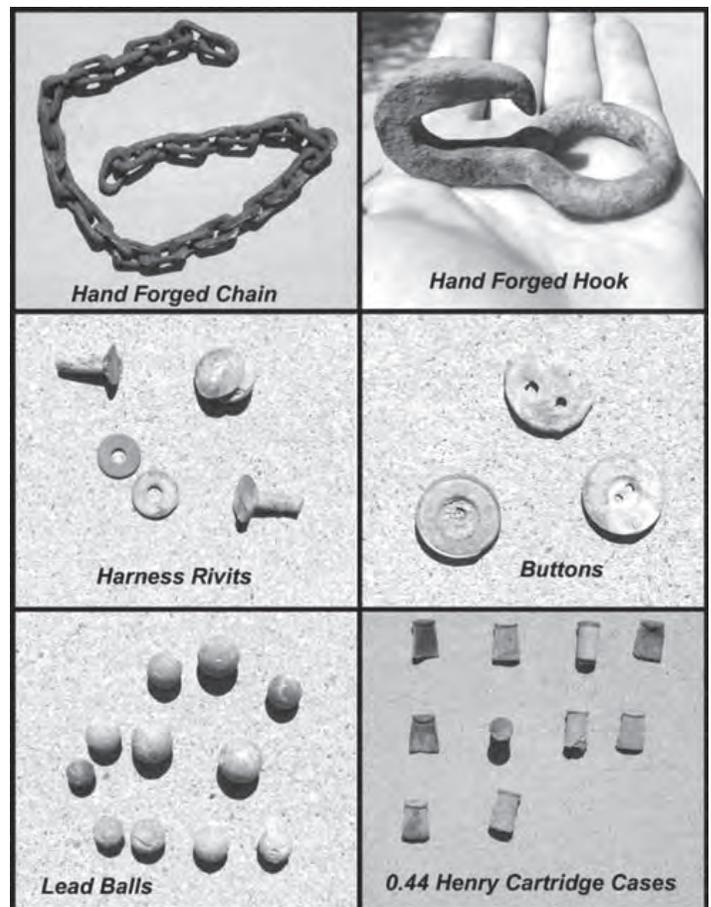


Figure 5. Sample of the artifacts found at the Oneida Stage Station site located by Ron Smith.

melted adobe mound is just east of this road, right where Lieutenant Shinn reported it to be. On the west side of the ranch road is a depression that appears to have once been a hand-dug well. This, too, is right where Lieutenant Shinn reported it to be.

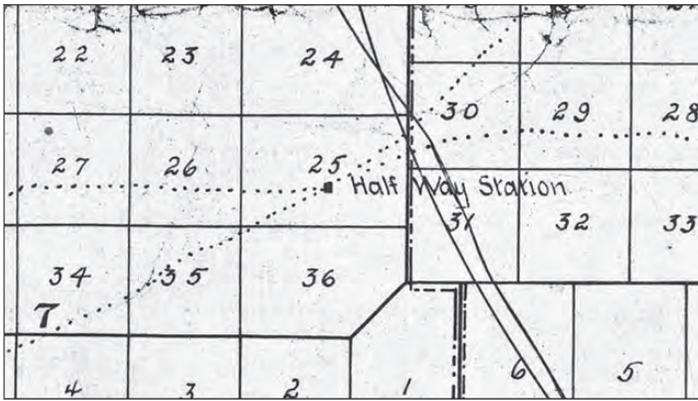


Figure 6. A small piece of the 1908 Pinal County map showing the location of Half Way Station.

Although the Ron Smith site has been picked over, there were still artifacts to be found. In a fairly short time, Mike Volberg found a cartridge case from a 0.58 caliber, rim fire, trap-door Springfield rifle. These were the first metallic cartridges used in converted Civil War rifled muskets. The 0.58 caliber version of the trap-door Springfield was not successful and was only used for about a year (mid 1865 to mid 1866). They are very rare – the Trail Turtles have only found a few of these cartridge cases in their 25-plus-years of mapping early wagon roads. This cartridge case dates Ron’s site to at least as early as just after the Civil War.

Since Ron first discovered the Oneida Station site, well over a hundred artifacts have been located there. While it is hard to precisely date a site from the artifacts alone, most of the artifacts found at Ron’s site appear to have come from the second half of the nineteenth century. Included in the artifact collection was a Civil War era Minié Ball, which dates the site even earlier than the post-Civil War date implied by the 0.58 caliber cartridge case. Figure 5 shows just a few of the many artifacts found at this site.

One curious thing is that none of the artifacts can be positively dated to after 1874. For instance, between 1874 and 1892, the Trapdoor Springfield rifle, chambered for the 45-70 cartridge, was the standard issue rifle

for the U.S. Army. The Trail Turtles have found numerous 45-70 cartridge cases on trails and at historic sites around the Southwest. However, so far not a single 45-70 cartridge case has been found at the Oneida site. The 50-70 cartridge, predecessor of the 45-70, came out in 1867. Five 50-70 cartridge cases and two unfired 50-70 cartridges were found at the Oneida site.

Not all of the questions regarding the Oneida Stage Station site have been fully researched and fully answered. One possible explanation for the lack of 45-70 cartridge cases may be that the Oneida Stage Station ceased operation before 1874. A 1908 map for Pinal County clearly shows the old stage road from Casa Grande to Florence. This map does not show anything at the Oneida Station site (Section 35), but it does show a station called “Half Way Station” located about a mile and a half northeast in Section 25. It seems likely that at some point Half Way Station replaced Oneida Station. Figure 6 is a small piece of the 1908 Pinal County map showing the location of Half Way Station. Another mystery still to be researched is that of a small cast bell (7 cm high and 8.5 cm diameter at the bottom) that was found at the Maricopa Wells Station. Pieces of a very

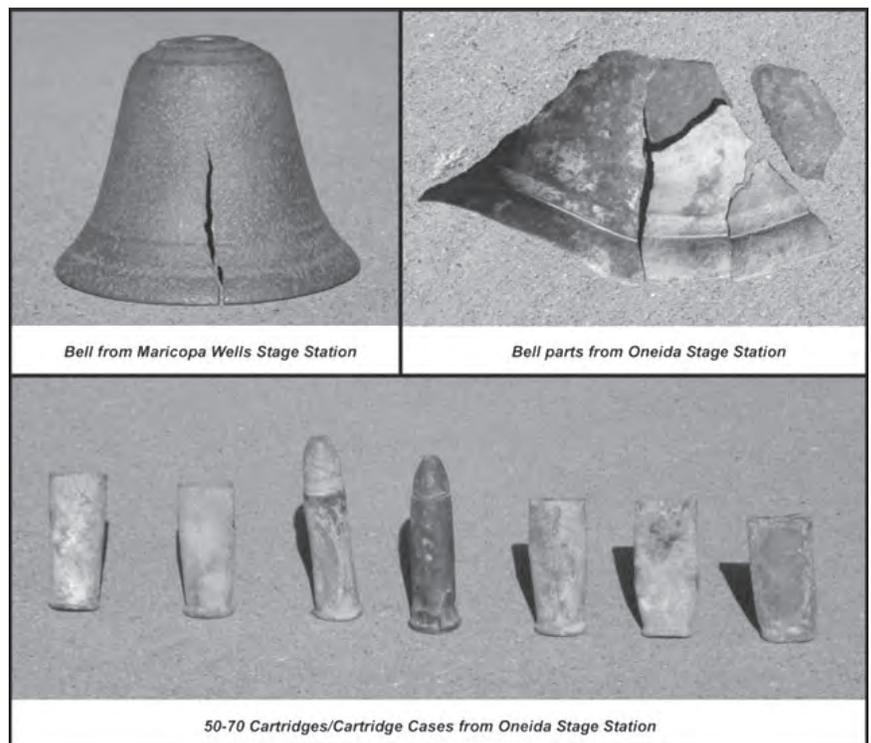


Figure 7. Bell from the Maricopa Wells Station and bell parts, as well as 50-70 cartridge casings from the Oneida Station.

similar, albeit slightly larger, bell were found at the Oneida Station site. It is not known if or how these bells were used in the operation of Overland Mail Stations. However, given that two very similar bells were found at two different Overland Mail Station sites, it is likely that they were in some way involved with the operation of the stations. Figure 7 shows the bell, bell parts, and the 50-70 cartridges/cartridge cases.

Given all this information and analysis, it is my opinion that Ron Smith's site marks the real location of the Oneida Stage Station. I look forward to the results of further investigations of the site.

Endnotes

1. Gerald Ahnert's *The Butterfield Trail and Overland Mail in Arizona, 1858 - 1861*, New York, Canastota Publishing Company, was published in 2011. His earlier book, *Retracing The Butterfield Overland Trail Through Arizona, A Guide to the Route of 1857 - 1861*, was published in Los Angeles in 1973 by the Westernlore Press.
2. In his 2011 book, Gerald Ahnert refers to these coordinates as the station's "GPS location." However, as discussed in the text, Ahnert determined this location analytically and not with a GPS receiver. Therefore it is more accurate to use the term "geographic coordinates."
3. Richard Greene and I carefully searched an area enclosed in a circle with a radius of 50 meters and centered on the coordinates given in Gerald Ahnert's book. Within this circle we found no evidence of mid-1800s habitation.
4. The War of the Rebellion, Special Orders, No. 15., Headquarters Column From California, Tucson, Ariz., June 16, 1862.
5. See Norm Wisner's article, *Measuring America: Wagon Wheel Odometers*, in the June 2018 issue of *Desert Tracks*.
6. This would be the Gila River.
7. There is a note shown at the top of the township map that says this township was added to the Pima and Maricopa Indian Reservation in 1883. This note was obviously added subsequent to the original drawing of the township map.
8. In *The Butterfield Trail and Overland Mail in Arizona*, Gerald Ahnert suggests that the stage road ran on both sides of the station, but on the topo map shown in his book, he shows the road where Lieutenant Shinn placed it, on the west side of the station.
9. It is generally believed by those members of the Oregon-California Trails Association (OCTA) involved in mapping emigrant wagon roads that GLO maps are only accurate along the township lines and section lines, where the surveyors actually walked. The location of roads and features shown within the field of a section are generally not considered accurate. I have seen no studies, published or not, that have shown otherwise. My article, "Using General Land Office Surveys to Locate Early Wagon Roads" (*Desert Tracks*, January 2018), explains in detail why the locations of roads and other features shown on GLO maps are problematic. Yet another example of the inaccuracies of GLO maps is given in the article titled "Black Butte" that is printed on pages 30-31 of this issue.
10. The United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management maintains a website that contains important General Land Office Records. These records include GLO maps for many townships and the field notes for a very limited number of section line surveys. <https://gloreCORDS.blm.gov/default.aspx>.
11. On GLO maps, section lines and township lines that are shown as solid lines mean that those lines were surveyed during the survey represented by that GLO map. Section lines and township lines that are shown as dashed lines were not surveyed at that time.
12. The number refers to the number of chains from the starting point to where a corner stone was placed or to where a particular feature was observed. Each chain is 66 feet long. In this case the surveyors were walking east along the township line and the starting point was the southwest corner of Section 35.

Black Butte: An Example of Errors in GLO Maps

by Tracy DeVault

For mapping old trails, General Land Office (GLO) survey maps are accurate only along the township and section lines, but they are less reliable inside the sections. Relying solely on GLO maps can lead to numerous routing errors and to inaccurate placement of features. The following is an excerpt from a paper written by Donald J. Blakeslee that was originally published in the *Overland Journal* (V8, n3, 1990, 30-32). It was later incorporated into OCTA's Mapping Emigrant Trails (MET) manual.

While the survey notes are usually reliable, the maps generated from them require careful interpretation. Maps of each township were drawn, not in the field, but in a regional office and by someone other than the original surveyor. This person used the survey notes to draw the map, but this involved marking the known points along each section line and then connecting the dots in a reasonable manner. What this means is that the maps are precise only along section lines and that they are less reliable elsewhere. At times, the survey notes make reference to features away from the section lines, and they may locate them with greater or lesser precision. The only way to determine this is to refer to the notes rather than to the maps.

For those interested in documenting the routes of early wagon roads, Blakeslee's entire paper is worth reading. My experience suggests that Blakeslee's criticism of GLO maps, especially when it comes to the routes of early wagon roads, is too temperate. The fact is that GLO mapmakers only had the township/section line crossings to guide the placement of the early roads. I have seen examples where roads were drawn connecting two section

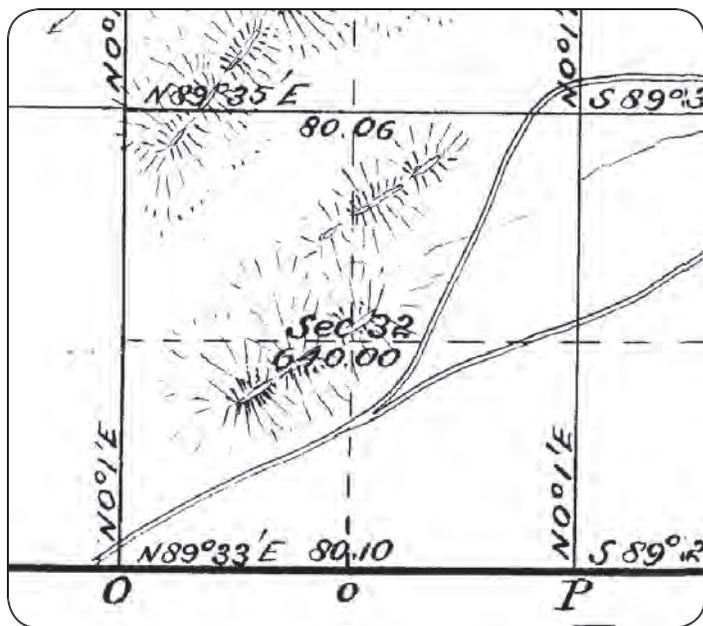


Figure 2. Section 32, Township 5 South, Range 7 East, from the 1892 GLO survey map.

line crossings that were not even on the same road. In the best of cases, the meanderings of roads across the sections were just guesses.

A good example of the problem is the GLO map for Black Butte. This is a prominence rising almost 350 feet above the flat desert floor. It is entirely contained within Section 32 of Township 5 South, Range 7 East (T5S, R7E), the same township as the Oneida Stage Station. Figure 1 is a photo of Black Butte taken from about a half-mile distant. It is clear that no one would try to put a wagon road over any part of Black Butte when it would be a simple matter to just go around it.

Figure 2 shows Section 32 taken from the 1892 GLO survey map for T5S, R7E. The map shows two separate, narrow ridges fully within the section and a third ridge encroaching into the northwest corner of the section. The map also includes a wagon road entering from the southwest corner of the section. The road splits about midway through the section with one branch exiting near the northeast corner while the other branch exits at about the midpoint of the section's eastern boundary.

Figure 3 shows the same section taken from a U.S.G.S. Topographic map. Note that Black Butte is shown much more prominently on this map than on the GLO map.



Figure 1. Black Butte. photo by the author

Also, while the range in the northwest corner of the section is visible, Black Butte is the only range or prominence shown within the field of the section. Using a technique known as “georeferencing,” I superimposed the route of the road from the 1892 GLO map onto the topographic map. It is apparent that the map maker, not knowing the full extent of the prominence known as Black Butte, inadvertently displayed the upper branch of the road crossing directly over the ridge.

This example makes it clear that sole reliance on GLO maps can lead to routing errors and mistakes in the placement of geographic features.

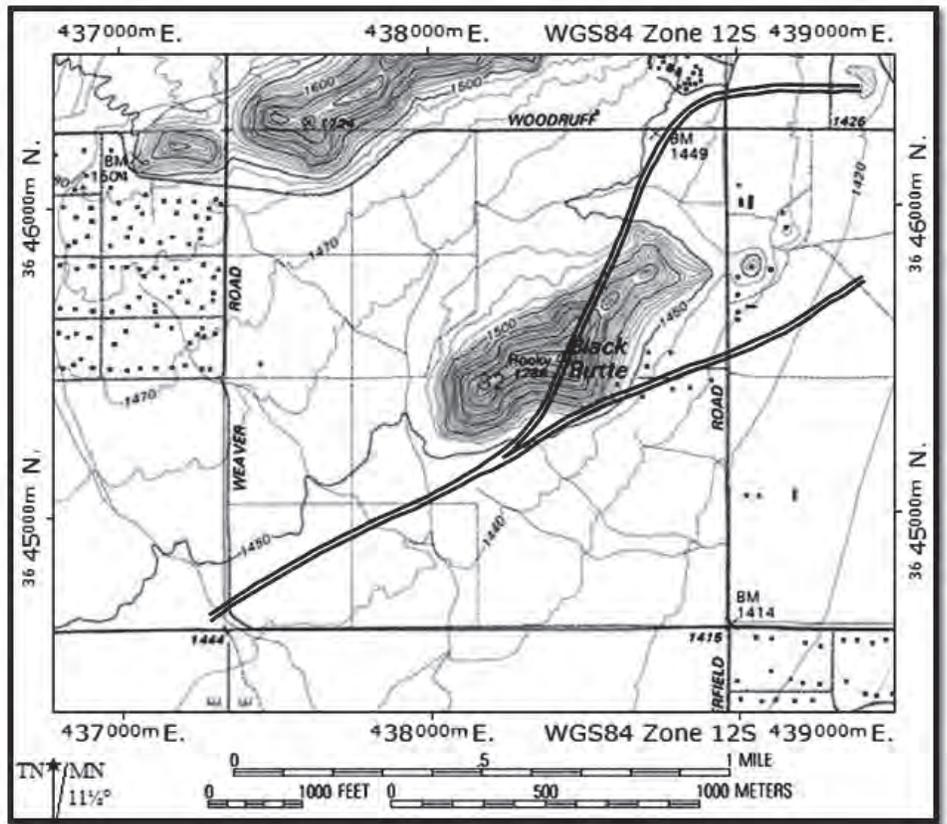


Figure 3. USGS topographic map for Section 32, Township 5 South, Range 7 East. The wagon road shown on the 1892 GLO map has been superimposed on the topographic map.

OCTA Southern Trails Chapter Winter Symposium

February 21-23, 2019

Hoffmantown Church, 8888 Harper NE, Albuquerque, NM

On Friday morning, February 21, the symposium will feature a presentation by Harry Buchalter of U. New Mexico titled “Pathways to New Mexico: Stories of Jews in the Land of Enchantment.” In addition, Aaron Mahr, Superintendent of the NPS National Trails Intermountain Region, will speak on the efforts to obtain National Historic Trails recognition for the Southern Emigrant Trails.

A chapter business meeting will be held in the afternoon.

Aaron Mahr will give an after-dinner talk titled “Historic Homes along El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro.”

On Saturday, February 22, there will be an all-day field trip, with participants travelling to the historic Gutierrez-Hubble House, Old Town Albuquerque, Petroglyph National Monument, and the International Balloon Museum.

After dinner, historian Ron Stewart will give a talk titled “Elephants, Camels, Black Ant People, Oh My!”

On Sunday, February 24, those volunteering to help the OCTA 2019 Santa Fe Convention will travel to Santa Fe to visit sites relevant to the upcoming convention.

The registration form, information on accommodations, and the meeting agenda can be downloaded from the Southern Trails Chapter website southern-trails.org.

A Tour to the Oneida Stage Station with Dan and Geri Talbot



Figure 1. Geri and Dan Talbot, standing in the debris field at the proposed station site.
photo by the Lawrences

Dan Talbot is a Southern Trails Chapter member. He began doing trail research in Arizona in 1963, shortly after he moved to the state from Salt Lake City. He began by exploring Mormon Battalion sites, the first of which was in the vicinity of Pima Butte.¹ Later he branched out to explore Butterfield Overland Mail sites. His research led to publication of his book *A Historical Guide to the Mormon Battalion and Butterfield Trail* (Tucson: Westernlore Press, 1992). On a recent trip to southeastern Arizona and in conjunction with Tracy DeVault's article on the Oneida Station in this issue, we asked Dan to show us the place where he thinks the station was located.

On October 25, 2018, we met Dan and his wife Geri in Coolidge, Arizona, and they graciously led us to the proposed location (Figure 1). A birds-eye view of the area is shown in Figure 2; the site can also be located on the map given as Figure 4 in Tracy DeVault's article in this issue. The following is based on our conversation with the Talbots.

When we asked Talbot what first led him to the site, he replied, "I was at a book signing where an old-timer and his wife bought one of my books. He used a metal detector and had known about this spot for years because of artifacts, which included old coins, that he found here. He was an avid history buff and had done a lot of background research. He said he thought that the premises might be the location of a stage station, although he didn't know which one, and he could take me out to see it. So I came out here with him."

When asked what evidence convinced him that this parcel of land was where the Oneida Station had been, Talbot said that it was primarily because of all the artifacts that lie in a large debris field at this location. Indeed, while we were at the site, we observed an old harness rivet, what looked like an old military button, and fragments of crockery. Talbot explained that he had found pieces of military telegraph insulators which date to 1873. The musket ball and bottle neck shown in Figure 3 were also found in the debris field.

In addition, he pointed to the lay of the land. "If you look to the southeast, you will see Picacho Peak in the distance; the little mountain to the northwest is Thin Mountain.² It is known that the trail went in a straight line between those two mountains. This site aligns perfectly with that line. Also, the station was used long after the Butterfield era, and



Figure 2. Goggle Earth bird's-eye view of the vicinity of the Oneida Station site. The location specified by Gerald Ahnert is indicated at the bottom on the left; the site preferred by Talbot lies above it. The well seen near Talbot's location (Fig. 4 below) lies in the upper left. Traces of the trail from Casa Grande to Florence are pinpointed on the right middle.



Figure 3. Musket ball and bottle neck found at the site.
photos by Dan Talbot



pioneers. Using Google Earth, Dan showed us where the Butterfield trail lay both north and south of the Oneida Station site. He pointed out the visible traces of the old road from Casa Grande to Florence, and how they crossed the line of the Butterfield trail in the vicinity of what he believes to be the site of the Oneida station.

Deborah and Jon Lawrence

it was supposed to lie where the Butterfield road crossed the road to Florence. If you look at this site on Google Earth, you can see traces of the road going to Florence from Casa Grande.”

We pointed out that Gerald Ahnert³ believes that the Oneida Station was at a different location.⁴ Talbot replied, “The Oneida Station was on the Florence Road, and Ahnert’s suggested site is south of that. Furthermore, there is no debris at Ahnert’s proposed site. I think he is wrong. Ahnert is a good friend of mine and I don’t want to argue with him, but I think this is definitely the place.”

Another reason that Talbot gave for choosing this location over Ahnert’s is that there is an old hand-dug well (Figure 4) at the site that possibly dates to the Butterfield era. The well is about 100 yards from the debris field, but Talbot explained that it was not uncommon for Butterfield employees to have to haul water to a stage station from a nearby spring or well.

According to the Talbots, because the site is on private property, most people haven’t associated the location with the Oneida Stage Station. The owners subdivided the land and put it up for sale, but it didn’t sell, so they took the sign down. Talbot doesn’t take a lot of people to this location because he doesn’t want the owners to put up “No Trespassing” signs. “If someone buys this land, the site will be covered with houses.”

Later, the Talbots invited us to their home, where they displayed artifacts from Dan’s trail research as well as memorabilia from their ancestors, who were western

Endnotes

1. Pima Butte, elevation 1,660 feet, is a summit eight miles north of present-day Maricopa, Arizona.
2. Forty-five miles north of Tucson, Picacho Peak is a prominent landmark close to Highway I-10. Thin Mountain is a peak in the Sacaton range, near Casa Grande, Arizona.
3. Ahnert, Gerald. *The Butterfield Trail and Overland Mail in Arizona*. New York: Canastota Press, 2011.
4. Figure 4 in Tracy DeVault’s article in this issue shows Ahnert’s location as being about a quarter of a mile southwest of Talbot’s proposed location.



Figure 4. The well at the proposed station site.
photo by the Lawrences

An Interview with Frank Norris



Frank Norris is a National Park Service historian working in the National Trails Intermountain Region office in Santa Fe, New Mexico. He was the author of the significance statement for consideration of the Butterfield Overland Trail as a National Historic Trail. Norris's article "Butterfield Overland Trail" on page 15 of the January 2015 issue of the *Desert Tracks* is based on this report. Norris stays connected to trail organizations by attending field trips and symposia. In the following, Norris gives written answers to the questions (in italics) we had submitted to him via e-mail. – *The Editors*

How did you get involved with the National Park Service? What aspects of your education and previous employment prepared you for your role as an NPS historian?

During the early 1980s, I was a historian living in San Diego, but working at a job that was substantially less than ideal, with no prospects for improvement any time soon. At that time, seasonal Park Service applicants could apply for a job at any two units in the system. I filled out the forms but didn't get a job at either one of them, so I called both places and asked if I could volunteer there. One of them – Custer Battlefield – said yes, and I spent a wonderful summer in Crow Agency, Montana. I loved it. Two years later, the San Diego job was worse than ever. I'd always wanted to go to Alaska, so I applied for a seasonal job at the Klondike Gold Rush National Historic Park in Skagway. Loved it even more. I lived and worked there for several years, and eventually got lucky and snagged a permanent job in Anchorage. I've been with the Park Service ever since.

What did you work on for the NPS prior to the Butterfield Trail project?

I have worked with the trails office (National Trails Intermountain Region) since early 2008. The office helps administer nine different national historic trails, including Santa Fe, Oregon, Old Spanish, and the Trail of Tears. My colleagues and I are constantly on the lookout for new, different, and better ways to tell the story of these nine trails, and our goal is to ensure that the trail history is accurate, fair, and meaningful to a wide variety of trail users.

Because our office looks after so many trails – and because no other trails office manages more than one – we're often called on to respond when Congress requests a trail evaluation study. A congressional bill passed in early 2009 resulted in our office being asked to write the Butterfield Overland Trail study, and it also requested that we write a similar study about the Chisholm and Western cattle trails, plus a third study – quite complex – asking us to evaluate which of more than 70 additional routes related to the Oregon, California, Mormon Pioneer and Pony Express trails should be added to the National Trails System.

In your historical work, do you primarily rely on the work of other historians or do you mostly rely on your own original research?

When it comes to trail histories, many studies have been published that provide a general historical overview. Relatively few of these studies, however, are based on credible primary source material, and also rare are historical studies that contain a substantial field component. It goes without saying that I heavily rely on the work of historians that have preceded me. I could care less if a historian has a university degree – but I care greatly that they're careful and accurate in gathering their information. I like to keep in touch with historians of all types, some of whom chase down a new wagon-rut site on the weekends for the sheer love of it, and others whose idea of fun is looking at old newspapers on microfiche. I try to fit in some original research from time to time, but it doesn't happen all that often.

What is the current status of the effort to have the Butterfield Trail become a National Historic Trail? How will your historical research on the Butterfield Trail directly impact the interpretation and management of the route?

The Butterfield Overland Trail study, I'm glad to say, has been completed. Both the NPS's Washington office and the Interior Secretary's office have approved it, so its fate now lies with Congress. The historical research that went into the trail's special resource study brought forth the notion – which to me is self-evident – that the trail is nationally significant, that it fulfills all of the requirements demanded by the National Trails System Act, and that it represented a cutting-edge transportation mode that helped bind the nation together during the years that immediately preceded the outbreak of the Civil War.

What is your current position and what are your responsibilities? Are you working to add more trails to the NPS network of national trails?

I currently serve as the head of the trails office's history team. Angelica Sanchez-Clark, who has worked with me for four years, is also a history team member, while several other trails office staff – Lee Kreutzer, Mike Taylor, and Mike Elliott – are cultural resources team members who really know their history. It's the history team's job to encourage historical research and writing to better preserve, protect, and interpret these historic trails, to ensure that this research is made available to a large audience, to make sure that interpretive materials (such as brochures and waysides) are historically accurate, and to strive to reach out to ensure that the point of view of a broad variety of audiences – Native American, black, Hispanic, and others – is reflected in what our office writes and distributes.

All trails office staff enjoy working with the trails on a day-to-day basis. We do not, however, advocate to add more trails to the National Trails System. In the case of the Butterfield Overland Trail and the other studies that we have conducted in recent years, it's our job to apply the National Trails System Act criteria in the most objective way possible. That analysis revealed that the Butterfield Overland Trail, for a number of verifiable reasons, fully

qualifies to be a national historic trail. The upcoming months or years will determine when, or if, Congress will see fit to authorize the Butterfield Overland Trail as a national historic trail.

What are your favorite / most rewarding elements of your position?

I've been on the job for a little over ten years, but haven't yet seen much of anything about this job that I don't thoroughly enjoy. It's a pleasure to dig into trail history, it's a thrill to see historic sites or swales along the trails, and it's really rewarding to work with partners. What's not to like?

News Briefs

On July 11, 2018, the *Santa Fe New Mexican* reported that an exhibit on the Domínguez-Escalante Expedition is planned for spring 2019 at the New Mexico History Museum in Santa Fe.

On page 16 of its *Pasatiempo* insert for November 16, 2018, the *New Mexican* has also reported that a graphic novel titled *The True Death of Billy the Kid* has been produced by artist Rick Geary. The novel is published by NBM Publishing.

Upper Emigrant Trail Revisited

by Tom Ashmore



The Green Mounds are the two hills standing together at the left of the image. *photo by the author*

Some years back, I used Google Earth to follow the Emigrant Trail from Fort McKavett past the South Concho River and up to Dove and Spring Creek. Documentation from the 1850s indicates that a set of hills called the “Green Mounds” served as a landmark to guide the emigrants from the Dove Creek area towards the Middle Concho River:

Left out camp this morning at 6 o'clock, and rode about three miles to a small branch which crosses the trail. This was Good Spring Creek. The water was pure and very cold. Our course now is due west, occasionally diverging from it to avoid a spur of hills, or to head an arroyo. The line forming the pass in mountains and Green Mounds is due east and west. From the halfway point between Dove Creek and Lipan Creek the Twin Mountains bear east at 45 degrees.... The passage at Green Mounds rocky and broken, but did not offer much difficulty to the passage of wagons. After passing Green Mounds the country becomes rolling prairie. We fell in on the banks of the Concho, with the Immigrant Road to California, which we expected to find at the Green Mounds. It lies to the south of the Green Mounds.¹

Recently I became interested in determining where the trail crossed the Middle Concho River. I went looking for the trace and found it



From an 1852 map of Texas, showing the area of interest.

fairly quickly. As the documentation states, it passes to the south of the Green Mounds. I looked around the area and could find no other obvious traces that go all the way from the Spring Creek area to the Middle Concho River in that direction. I also followed it past the river and found that it heads west along what was to become the Butterfield Trail.

This article was condensed from the original article in the June 2018 issue of the *Concho Valley Archaeological Society Newsletter*.

1. J. E. Johnston. Reports of the Secretary of War : with reconnaissance of routes from San Antonio to El Paso. Ex. Doc. - Senate, 31st Congress, 1st Session, no. 64. Washington: Printed at the Union Office, 1850.



Trail trace from the Spring Creek area to the Middle Concho River, passing between the Lopez Peaks and the Green Mounds.

Scenes from the Re-dedication of the Arizona Territory Marker Navajo Springs, Arizona, October 6, 2018

photos courtesy John Krizek



ARIZONA TERRITORIAL GOVERNMENT

Established here December 29, 1863



During the Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln created Arizona as a separate territory from New Mexico with the Organic Act in February, 1863. The new territorial government party finally set forth from Leavenworth, Kansas, in September, on a four-month overland journey to the new territory. By the time they reached Santa Fe, it was determined that their destination would be in the central mountains area, where valuable mineral deposits were being discovered, rather than Tucson, where Confederate sympathy still held sway.

Navajo Springs was a watering stop of the Beale Road, which runs across Northern Arizona approximately where Interstate 40 runs today. It was opened for emigrant travel by Edward Fitzgerald Beale in 1857, following the route originally explored by Lieutenant Ariel Whipple and other early explorers. Heading west on the Beale Road, the governor's party—including some 60 wagons and 1,000 head of cattle—camped at Navajo Springs.

As reported in the first issue of the Arizona Miner, published at Fort Whipple on March 9, 1864:

The officers entered the Territory on the 27th of December, and the government was formally inaugurated at Navajo Springs, forty miles west of Zuni, on Tuesday, the 29th of December. At 4 o'clock p.m. the escort and citizens were assembled, and Sec'y McCormick spoke as follows: "GENTLEMEN:—As the properly qualified officer, it becomes my duty to inaugurate the proceedings of the day. After a long and trying journey, we have arrived within the limits of the Territory of Arizona. These broad plains and hills form a part of the district over which, as the representatives of the United States, we are to establish a civil government.

"At the conclusion of these remarks, Mr. McCormick hoisted the 'Stars and Stripes' and called for cheers for them, which were given with a will. . . . The oath of office was administered to Chief Justice Turner, and to Associate Justices Howell and Elynn, by Mr. McCormick.

"The following proclamation, issued by the Governor, was read in English by Mr. McCormick, and in Spanish by Mr. Read:

PROCLAMATION TO THE PEOPLE OF ARIZONA

"I, John N. Goodwin, having been appointed by the President of the United States, and duly qualified as Governor of the Territory of Arizona, do hereby announce that by virtue of the powers with which I am invested by an Act of the Congress of the United States, providing a temporary government for the Territory, I shall this day proceed to organize said government.

"I invoke the aid and cooperation of all citizens of the Territory in my efforts to establish a government whereby the security of life and property will be maintained throughout its limits, and its varied resources be rapidly and successfully developed. . . ."

According to Secretary McCormick, at the closing of the reading, "The assembly joined in singing the 'Battle Cry of Freedom', a salute of 15-gun guns was fired, and with loud cheers for the Governor and other officers, the Union, and the President, the proceedings terminated."

Unofficial reports also say that champagne appeared and the occasion was properly celebrated.

It took the party three more weeks to reach the first Fort Whipple, at Del Rio Springs, north of today's Chino Valley, where they arrived in January, 1864. The route they—and the Army detachment that preceded them—pioneered became known as the Overland Road and was a major route for emigrants and commerce from the west to the Prescott area until the arrival of the railroad in the 1880's.

In October, 1930, the St. Johns Stake of the Mormon church placed a sandstone marker to commemorate the event. Over the years, erosion, wind—and perhaps a few cattle rubbing against it—toppled the marker. In March, 2018, the Southern Trails Chapter of the Oregon-California Trails Association—with the cooperation of the Navajo Nation—look on the task of restoring the monument as it stands today.



Arizona officials photographed before leaving for the new Territory (captioned above) in 1863. Associate Justice Joseph H. Howell stands in the center. Secretary McCormick is on the far right. Standing in the foreground are the governor's secretary, U. S. Marshal Miles H. Dutton, Money Governor Albert P. Campbell, and Mr. Read. Arizona Historical Society & Public Records

OREGON-CALIFORNIA TRAILS ASSOCIATION
P. O. Box 1019, Independence, MO 64051-0119
2018
This is a part of your American heritage. Honor it. Preserve it for your children.



Yavapai County Supervisor Craig Brown, reading the proclamation originally read by Governor Goodwin in December 1863, and Navajo ranch host El Pahi.



Attendees at the re-dedication: Reba Grandrud, Ken and Pat White, Tracy DeVault, Kay Lauster, Tom Jonas, Craig and Sandy Brown, El Pahi, Richard Begay, Cecilia Bell, Kay and John Krizek, Lee Black, and John Bell.

Back cover photo: John Krizek and El Pahi stand at the marker, while Lee Black and John Bell hold up the flag, which has 34 stars as appropriate to 1863.

Southern Trails Chapter

Oregon-California Trails Association



OCTA:
The Oregon-California
Trails Association

