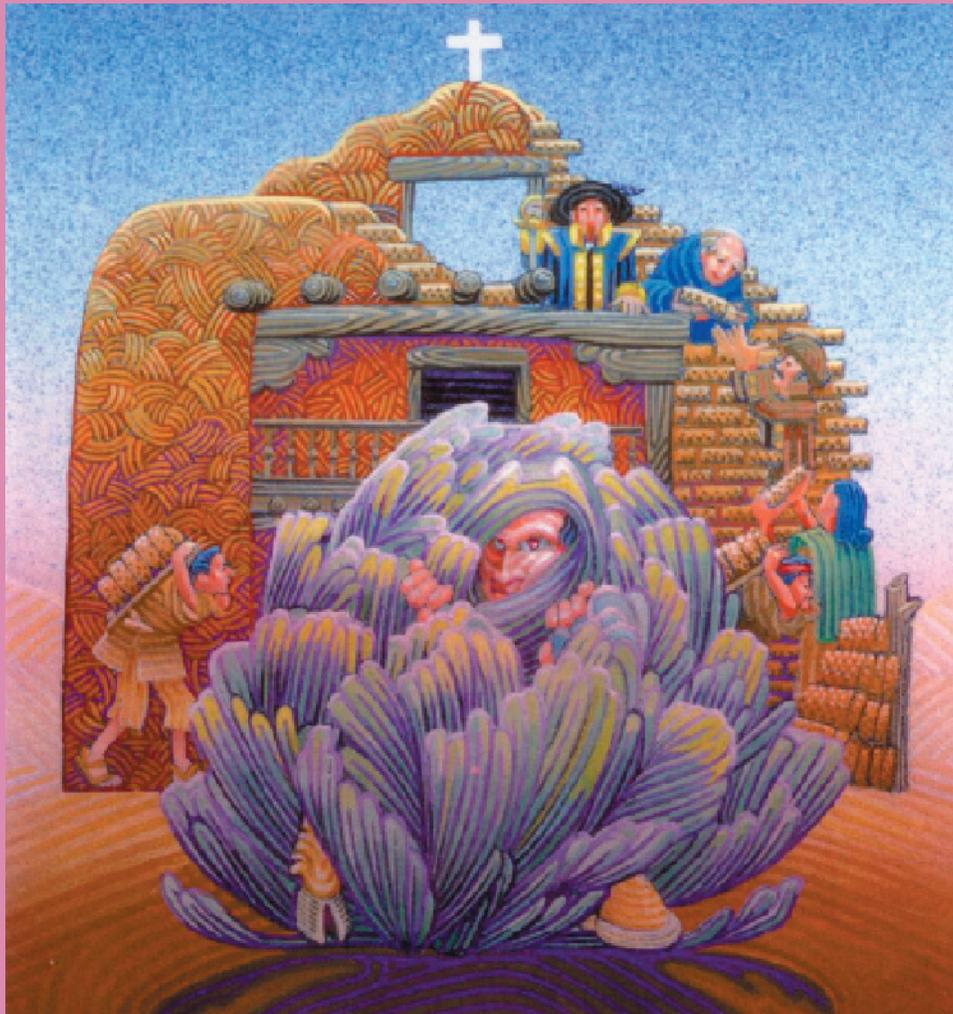


Desert Tracks

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

December 2011



Witchcraft in Abiquiu

Desert Tracks:
*Publication of the Southern Trails Chapter of
the Oregon-California Trails Association*

Past issues can be found via a link on the Southern Trails
Chapter website.

Editors: Deborah and Jon Lawrence
Submit correspondence, articles, reviews, etc. to
Desert Tracks
338 1/2 Camino Cerrito
Santa Fe, NM 87505
dlawrence@fullerton.edu
505-982-3216

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

Website: southern-trails.org
Chapter contact: dmiller1841@yahoo.com
Membership: octa-trails.org

President	David Miller
Vice President	Reba Wells Grandrud
Secretary	John Fromm
Treasurer	Jud Mygatt
Volunteer Coordinator	Nancy Nelson
Historian	Rose Ann Tompkins
Webmaster	Tom Jonas

Table of Contents

From the Editors 1
James Ward Byrkit (1931-2011) 2
Hawikku (Bode) 3
OCTA Southern Trail Committee (Eddins) 4
Book Reviews
Emigrant Girls on the Overland Trails edited by **Kenneth Holmes (Lawrences)** . . 5
Jar of Severed Hands by **Mark Santiago (Hill)** 6
New Mexico and the Civil War by **Walter Earl Pittmann (Lawrences)** 7
Witches of Abiquiu (Ebright and Hendricks) 9
Trail Turtles' Fall 2011 Mapping Trip (Greene, DeVault) 21
Water for 50 Animals (DeVault, Tompkins) Inside Back Cover

On the cover: Witchcraft in tAbiquiu. Illustration by Glen Strock.

**Rose Ann Tompkins' truck being
rescued during the Trail Turtles' Fall 2011
mapping trip. Left to right: Rose Ann
Tompkins, Richard Greene, Neal Johns.
*photo by Tracy DeVault***



From the Editors

OCTA's Southern Trails Chapter has a slate of newly installed officers. (See the masthead on the inside front cover.) Past president Albert Eddins continues to serve OCTA in his new role as chairman of a special committee created to work towards National Historic Trails status for the Southern Emigrant Trail network. (A report is given on page 4.) Many thanks are due to Albert for his excellent work as chapter president. We welcome our new president, historian David Miller, an expert on the emigrant trail through Oklahoma. Under Miller's leadership, the chapter is in a special position to further the effort to include the Oklahoma/Texas feeder trails as segments of the National Historic Trail. Thanks also go out to Shannon Perry, who is retiring as the treasurer.

On a sad note, we recently received news of the death of Jim Byrkit, an expert on the historic trails of Arizona. This issue includes an obituary for Jim that has been supplemented by Rose Ann Tompkins to include his many contributions to OCTA and to the Southern Trails Chapter. Having worked with Byrkit on an article on the Escalante expedition (*Spanish Traces*, Spring 2005), we know firsthand how knowledgeable he was about the history of the Southwest.

This fall we had the good fortune to meet historian Tom Kennedy. Currently the director of tourism for the Zuni pueblo, Kennedy has been working in the pueblo for over 15 years. We have included a brief article by Holly Bode on the ancient pueblo of Hawikku, one of the largest of the Zuni pueblos at the time of the Spanish *entrada*. The article includes information on how to contact Kennedy to arrange a visit to Hawikku and other Zuni sites.

Most Americans are aware of the infamous Salem witch trials of 1692, but the witchcraft outbreak in the Genízaro pueblo of Abiquiu that occurred seven decades later has for too long been neglected. Attorney Malcolm Ebright and New Mexico State Historian Rick Hendricks' *The Witches of Abiquiu - The Governor, the Priest, the Genizaro Indians and the Devil* is setting the record straight. Last spring,

at the San Ysidro Church in Corrales, the co-authors discussed their provocative book, the story of the reports of witchcraft occurring in New Mexico in the 1760s and the ensuing events, which led to the last major witchcraft trial in what is now the United States. An excellent history of not only the witchcraft proceedings, but the social and cultural community of Abiquiu itself, this book is enhanced (as is the article in this issue) by the illustrations of Glen Strock.

The intrepid Trail Turtles returned to southern New Mexico this fall to search for traces of the Cooke Wagon Road, the road blazed by Lt. Col. Philip St. George Cooke and the Mormon Battalion in 1846. Richard Greene and Tracy DeVault provide the reports on the mapping trip, which included inclement weather, new restrictions on access to the region, bad roads, and encounters with the Border Patrol.

The book reviews in these pages include Walter Drew Hill's appraisal of Mark Santiago's recent book *The Jar of Severed Hands*. Santiago's history concerns the treatment of the Apaches of northern Mexico and southern Arizona and New Mexico by the Spaniards during the 18th century. We have reviewed a new volume in the *Best of Covered Wagon Women* series, which focuses on emigrant girls on the overland trails. Finally, we have reviewed a new book by Walter Earl Pittman on the Civil War in New Mexico. We remind readers that 2012 is the 150th anniversary of the battles of Valverde and Glorieta. There will be several commemorative events; for information, see the website <http://www.nps.gov/peco/parknews/index.htm>.

OCTA member Harold James' new book *Bruff's Wake* is now for sale in the OCTA bookstore (<http://www.octa-trails.org/store/product.php?productid=5628>). The story of J. Goldsborough Bruff's overland journey to California during the Gold Rush, his experiences in California, and his return trip to New York by way of Panama is sure to be of interest to readers of these pages. The book includes entries from Bruff's journal and couples a number of the drawings that Bruff made while on the trail with photos that James took recently at the sites of the drawings.

Deborah and Jon Lawrence



James Ward Byrkit
1931-2011

James Ward Byrkit, a Southwest historian and a friend to OCTA, passed away in his Flagstaff home on Sunday, September 25. He was 80 years old.

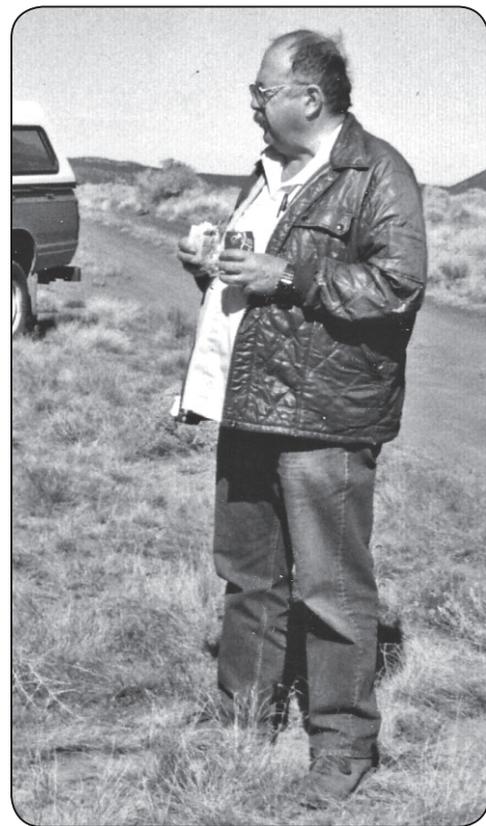
Born in Jerome, Arizona, in 1931, Byrkit served in the U.S. Army during the Korean War, earned his Ph.D. in American economic and social history from Claremont Graduate University, and was a professor of environmental studies at Northern Arizona University from 1973 until his retirement in 1996.

In his book *Forging the Copper Collar: Arizona's Labor Management War of 1901-1921* (U. Arizona Press, 1982), Byrkit provides a comprehensive account of the Bisbee deportation, a pivotal event in Arizona history. He also edited *Letters from the Southwest* by Charles Lummis (U. Arizona Press, 1989). An expert on Arizona history, Byrkit's writings include subjects as diverse as the Lost Apache Gold Mine, Pauline Weaver, and birds in Arizona's Oak Creek-Sedona area. Among his honors was recognition by the Arizona Humanities Council for his lifetime achievement in southwestern scholarship.

Byrkit had a special interest in the historic trails of Arizona and wrote articles on the Overland Road through the Kaibab National Forest, the Chavez Trail, and the Palatkwapi Trail. He focused on the many uses of the trails, from their beginnings in animal tracks, to their use by Indians, Spaniards, trappers, and settlers.

As an early member of OCTA's Southern Trails Chapter (then called the Southwest Chapter), Byrkit gave presentations at chapter meetings, led the group along the Overland Road between Flagstaff and Perkinsville and also to a little-known route to Chavez Pass. A collector of historic maps, he helped arrange Don Buck's 1993 mapping workshop in Flagstaff and went out with the participants on the Beale Road to try out the mapping techniques. In 2002, Byrkit gave a presentation at OCTA's national convention in Reno, Nevada.

Jim will be missed by his trail friends.



Byrkit on the trail.
courtesy Rose Ann Tompkins

The Ancestral Zuni Village of Hawikku

On September 14, 2011, the Desert Foothills Chapter of the Arizona Archaeological Society hosted a lecture titled *Hawikku: Turning the Zuni World* by Tom R. Kennedy on the history of the Zuni pueblo from the time of the ancestral village of Hawikku to the present.

The village of Hawikku (sometimes written “Hawikuh”) is located about 15 miles southwest of the Zuni Pueblo in northwestern New Mexico. At the time of the Spanish *entrada* into the Southwest, it was one of six pueblos in the Zuni area. In 1539, the Moorish slave Esteban, who was part of the Fray Marcos de Niza expedition, was the first non-native of the Southwest to visit this pueblo. He was killed by the Zuni. In 1540, Francisco Vasquez de Coronado followed de Niza’s trail in search of the legendary Seven Cities of Cibola, which turned out to be the Zuni-area pueblos. A brief battle ensued during which Coronado’s armies overcame the fierce Zuni resistance. According to Kennedy, evidence of this battle in the form of metallic Spanish artifacts continues to be found in the plains surrounding Hawikku. Many of these artifacts are currently housed at the nearby El Morro National Monument.

During the lecture, Kennedy discussed the historical and cultural impact of the outside world on the Zuni people from the time of the Spanish *entrada* until the present day. He stated that the Europeans turned the world of the Native American upside down, bringing an end to a long era that had largely been one of self-determination and ushering in radically different world views. Today, the Zuni struggle to protect a minority lifestyle, attempting to preserve their religious culture and their ancient rights to the local water at the same time that they deal with poverty, health, and other issues arising in a changing economy.

A former director of the Zuni Community Museum, Kennedy is the director of tourism for the Zuni Pueblo. As such, he is responsible for the development of programs that will inform and educate the general public about the Zuni people. He designs and implements tours to local archaeological sites,

including Hawikku, and he handles the administration and preservation of the fragile Spanish-era mission church of Our Lady of Guadalupe. Because Hawikku is an important cultural and historical site, his present focus is on developing a program that will ensure the long term preservation and protection of this ancestral village. (Kennedy can be contacted at Zuni Tourism Office, PO Box 339, Zuni, NM 87327. The phone number there is 505-782-7239.)

The Arizona Archaeological Society (AAS) is an independent, non-profit, state-wide organization with twelve chapters and over 600 professional and avocational members. The goals of the AAS are to foster public awareness, interest, research, and conservation of Arizona’s rich archaeological heritage, with special emphasis on protecting these scarce resources. Its members enjoy lectures, classes, hikes, and certification training in different facets of archaeology. For membership information and to find local chapter meetings in your area, check the AAS website (www.azarchsoc.org). The Desert Foothills Chapter (DFC) has been active in the Cave Creek area for over 35 years. For information about the DFC and its activities, contact Glenda Simmons at 928-684-3251 or contact the author at 602-931-6055.

Holly Bode



Atsinna, an ancestral Zuni pueblo at El Morro National Monument.
photo by Deborah Lawrence

New OCTA Special Committee for the Southern Trail

On August 8, 2011, in Rock Springs, Wyoming, OCTA's board of directors approved creation of the Southern National Historic Trail Project Committee. The charge of the committee is to pursue designation of the Southern Emigrant Trail as a National Historic Trail.

Four major trail networks – the Oregon Trail, the California Trail, the Mormon Trail, and the Southern Emigrant Trail – played a significant role in the western expansion of America in the mid-nineteenth century. While the northern trails are better known to the public, the Southern Trail played an equally important role in American trail history during the same time period. Many emigrants and gold rushers left key southern jumping-off points such as Fort Smith, Austin, and San Antonio, and followed the Southern Trail routes to California. Although it carried fewer emigrants than the northern routes, the Southern Trail was a major path for the military during the Mexican-American War. In 1847, General Kearny's Army of the West marched to California over the Southern Trail. Following Kearny's troops, the Mormon Battalion under the command of Philip St. George Cooke completed a wagon road from the United States to California. Later, the trail was used by the Butterfield Overland Mail, by cattle drives from Texas to California, and by the California Column during the Civil War.

Unfortunately, the Southern Trail is not recognized today by our National Trail System, and there is a void on the current National Trail System map in the Southwest. (For a map of the National Trail System and the Southern National Historic Trail Project, go to southernhistorictail.org and click the "Trail Maps" link.)

Just as the Oregon-California Trails Association played a major role in helping to gain national historic trail status for the three northern trails, it

will now, through this special committee, focus attention on the trail to the south. With OCTA's support, this project is sure to have a positive outcome.

The special committee is made up of OCTA members with experience and knowledge of the structural process and legislative challenges of establishing a new national historic trail. The members are Jere Krakow, Vern and Carol Osborne, Bill Martin, Bill and Jeanne Watson, David Miller, T. Michael Smith, John Winner, and Albert Eddins (Chair).

A major function of the committee will be to provide support to the OCTA chapters who are at the forefront of the project. This will include help with legislative matters, alliances with other interested organizations outside OCTA, strategic planning, coordination across chapter boundaries, preparation of consistent and uniform promotional literature, and help with fund raising. A new website dedicated to the project also is under construction: southernhistorictail.org.

In the current budgetary environment in Washington DC, it will not be an easy job to obtain formal designation of a new National Historic Trail. If you would like to get involved, please contact one of the members of the committee or the author at the address below. We are particularly interested in making contacts or obtaining access to members of Congress from Southern Trail states. At this stage, financial support is important. If you would like to make a tax-deductible contribution, please make your check out to OCTA Southern Historic Trail Project and submit it to the address below. All donors will be recognized on our website. We welcome your questions, ideas, suggestions, or comments.

Albert Eddins

7581 East Pasaro Drive
Scottsdale, Arizona 85266
aseddins@msn.com
480 686-1155

*Best of Covered Wagon Women:
Emigrant Girls on the Overland Trails*
Edited by Kenneth L. Holmes
Introduction by Melody M. Miyamoto
Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2010.
ISBN: 9780806141046.
256 pages, 6 B&W illustrations, 1 map.
Paperback, \$19.95.

Although scholarship on the writing of women who traveled the overland trails has increased significantly over the past few decades, little attention has been focused on the diaries and letters of westering teenagers. Kenneth Holmes' *Best of Covered Wagon Women: Emigrant Girls on the Overland Trails* helps to correct this oversight. Containing eleven first-person trail accounts written by girls in their teens who journeyed west in the mid-to late nineteenth century, this volume evidences the experiences of younger women, which despite their similarities differed considerably from the experiences of older female emigrants. For example, whereas older women's narratives provide details about their domestic responsibilities on the trail, only the four oldest female authors of these letters and diaries write about their chores. Because of their age, most of these young women don't mention caring for babies, cooking, or doing laundry. Instead they document other aspects of trail life.

More commonly, the girls included in this volume describe socializing. Fourteen-year-old Sallie Hester, for example, comments on a wedding and "old-fashioned serenades – with tin pans, gongs, horns and everything else that could be drummed up to make noise" (47). Instead of lamenting the friends and belongings they have left behind in the East, these girls write of the scarcity of women and the consequential good fortune of the attention they receive from young men. Sallie Hester comments: "I am too young for beaux, but the young men don't seem to think so" (49). They describe hardships like illness, difficult ferry crossings, dangerous weather, and the scarcity of grass. And, of course, they comment on their encounters with Indians. Despite their youth, these girls show that they were

well aware of Indians and carried their ideas of white racial superiority with them.

In the early 1980s, Kenneth L. Holmes began to edit and publish his collection of diaries and letters written by women who traveled overland between 1840 and 1903. His eleven-volume series is an invaluable resource of primary documents that reflect the women's experience of the journey west. An unobtrusive editor, Holmes' tried to present the women's accounts as transparently as he could. To that end, he did not correct misspelled words or add capitalization. The biographical information that is provided before each entry helps readers engage with the writer. This latest compilation in the series, *Emigrant Girls on the Overland Trails*, gives readers a new perspective on the female view. Children do not see the world in the same way as adults. Thus, by considering the children's perspective, readers are able to consider a different view of the trail experience.

Two of the entries are newly published, having appeared only in limited-distribution collector's editions of the original series. Collectively the selections span the trail era from 1846 to 1898. Consequently, they reflect the changes in cross-country travel, such as the improvement of the roads that allowed twelve-year-old Mae Stone's family to travel 25 miles a day, almost twice as fast as earlier emigrants. While scholarly analysis is not the volume's focus, the introduction by Melody Miyamoto provides contextual information for the girls' accounts. The book includes a map of the U.S. west of the Mississippi showing the states, cities, trails, rivers, lakes, and forts along the way, enabling the reader to follow the trail from the comfort of his armchair.

An important, very readable collection, *Best of Covered Wagon Women: Emigrant Girls on the Overland Trails* is a valuable resource for anyone – scholar and buff alike – with an interest in the 19th-century westering experience, women's history, or gender studies.

Deborah and Jon Lawrence

The Jar of Severed Hands: The Spanish Deportation of Apache Prisoners of War, 1770-1810

Mark Santiago

Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2011.

ISBN: 9780806141770.

264 pages, 9 B&W illustrations, 2 maps.

Hardcover, \$29.95.

Hispanic communities in the northern frontier of 18th-century New Spain were subject to ongoing Apache raiding. In response, the Spaniards developed policies and practices that gave the Apaches a choice: surrender and live on reservations known as *establecimientos de paz* (typically located in close proximity to Spanish *presidios*), or fight, be captured, and then be deported to southern Mexico. These policies were designed to end the unrelenting war and make the northern frontier less dangerous for Spaniards by removing hostile Apaches, but simultaneously there was an effort to treat the Apaches more humanely.

In *The Jar of Severed Hands*, Mark Santiago provides an overview of the relationship between the Apaches and the Spaniards, focusing primarily on the period from the 1770s to the 1790s. He shows that the application of the Crown's policies was inconsistent, with some military leaders in the northern frontier promoting peaceful settlement of the Indians, while others relentlessly pursued and attacked the Indians, sometimes the very same Apache communities that were seeking peace.

The deportation process was inherently brutal. Bound together in *colleras*, or chain gangs, by cords or chains linked through halters on the Indians' necks, the Apaches were sent on an arduous two-month trip to Mexico City. A large number of the Indians died from sickness during the journey. Efforts by Apache men to escape were met with immediate punishment, often by execution. Indeed, the title of the book is taken from an incident in 1792 where an *olla* (jar) of severed hands was sent back to the military commander in Chihuahua as proof that a group of rebellious Apaches were not allowed to escape. After arrival in Mexico City, Apache men were typically

sent as slave laborers to Vera Cruz or to Havana, Cuba, while women and children were distributed as servants to Spanish households.

The Director of the New Mexico Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum in Las Cruces, Santiago has examined a wide range of sources, published and unpublished, including both the work of other scholars and the voluminous archival materials produced by the Spanish bureaucracy. The latter include reports of the deportation expeditions, as well as the receipts for the purchase of expedition supplies.

Santiago provides a background history of the encounter between the Apaches and the Spaniards beginning from the time of contact. Starting with the history of the treatment of prisoners of war from the Middle Ages in Europe to 18th-century New Spain, Santiago traces the evolution of the new deportation policy, setting it in the context of the Southwest and northern Mexico colonial period. He discusses the various regulations issued by the Spanish bureaucracy in an effort to alleviate the conflicts with the Indians. The regulations entailed an effort to better organize the military response, for example by creating networks of *presidios*. However, it also led to a great deal of confusion as to who was empowered to carry out policy.

Following this background information, a number of deportations are treated in historical sequence. Typically, following a series of attacks on Apache villages, prisoners were congregated in northern Chihuahua or Sonora. A junior commander was then chosen to lead the *collera* to Mexico City. Santiago provides details of the journey, such as purchases, the towns visited, deaths along the trail due to illness, Apache efforts to escape, and the final dispensation of the prisoners in Mexico City, along with the filing of official reports and receipts for the journey.

The story of Apaches being marched in chains into exile and the depredations that occurred is heart rending. Nevertheless, there are numerous examples given of the Spanish efforts at more

humane treatment, as well as of the co-operation of certain Apaches with the Spaniards. And Santiago includes intriguing descriptions of the key characters involved in the deportations, such as the Irish exile Hugo O’Conor, commander of the Interior provinces in the early 1770s, and Juan de Ugalde and Jacobo Ugarte y Loyola, who were both military commanders in different parts of the northern frontier in the 1780s. The latter two worked at cross purposes, Ugarte promoting peace while Ugalde promoted outright war.

Readers will doubtless note the connection of the Spanish treatment of the Apaches to the approach adopted by the U.S. following the Civil War – herding the Indians onto reservations, hounding the uncooperative with relentless attacks, and forcing some into exile in Florida. The U.S. Apache policy also involved disagreements over policy and conflict between military commanders (e.g. Crook and Miles) over the proper approach to ending the violence.

A minor weakness in the book rests in its repetition of details (purchases, towns visited, deaths on the trail, final reports). This criticism aside, the discussion of Apache deportations is generally lacking in histories of the Southwest. *The Jar of Severed Hands* deepens our understanding of the dynamics of the relationship between Indian tribes and colonial powers in the borderlands. This book is recommended for anyone interested in southwestern history.

Walter Drew Hill



New Mexico and the Civil War

Walter Earl Pittman

Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2011.

ISBN: 978-1-60949-137-6.

127 pages, maps, photos, index.

Softcover, \$19.99.

Many people do not realize that the Civil War was fought in the Southwest, but according to Walter Earl Pittman, some of the most “dramatic scenes” of the war took place in New Mexico Territory, which in 1861 comprised what are today the states of New Mexico and Arizona.

Lieutenant Colonel Edward R. S. Canby commanded 2,600 Regular Army troops scattered throughout the territory in a number of small posts. Aware of the weak and dispirited Union forces, Major Henry Hopkins Sibley was convinced that his Confederate force of Texans could march victoriously through New Mexico, living off the land and obtaining support of New Mexico residents. The Texans would then continue on to conquer Colorado and California. Following the Battle of Valverde in February 1862, Sibley’s Confederate forces marched north to capture Albuquerque and Santa Fe, the capital city and largest town with 4,600 residents. From Santa Fe, the Confederates prepared to assault Fort Union, which guarded the Santa Fe Trail. At Glorieta Pass, the Confederates won a battle against Union forces, but a detachment of Colorado Volunteers under Major John M. Chivington simultaneously burned their supply train. Although the Confederacy won tactical victories at every major battle in New Mexico, they were forced to retreat back to Texas after the Battle of Glorieta Pass due to this loss of supplies. The battle was later referred to as the “Gettysburg of the West” because it stopped the Confederate western advance.

Much has been written about these battles, the leaders, the tactics, and the results. Walter Earl Pittman’s *New Mexico and the Civil War* offers an excellent introductory overview of the conflicts fought in the New Mexico Territory and supplements the work of such historians as Don Alberts, Jerry Thompson, and John Taylor.

A retired academic historian, Pittman points out that the Civil War in New Mexico was three-sided: it involved the Indians, the North, and the South. At the start of the Civil War, the United States abandoned its forts in New Mexico in order to focus its military campaigns in the East. Consequently, hostile Indians used the withdrawal as an opportunity to harass white settlers and travelers. Most New Mexicans, Pittman asserts, had no loyalty to either side of the Civil War.

The Civil War battles in New Mexico pitted two men against each other: Sibley and Canby. They had been cadets together at the United States Military Academy at West Point and fellow officers in the U.S. Army. A hero in the Mexican War, Sibley became familiar with New Mexico while campaigning against the Navajo Indians in the 1850s while serving under Canby. Although Pittman's character sketches of the significant commanders from each side are colorful, readers may find it difficult to keep track of the lesser known personalities in the book. A list of the characters and a timeline of significant events would have been helpful. However, the battle descriptions are quite detailed; they are accompanied by numerous maps that provide readers with a good feel for the terrain and the march routes, as well as by photographs of the battle sites as they appear today.

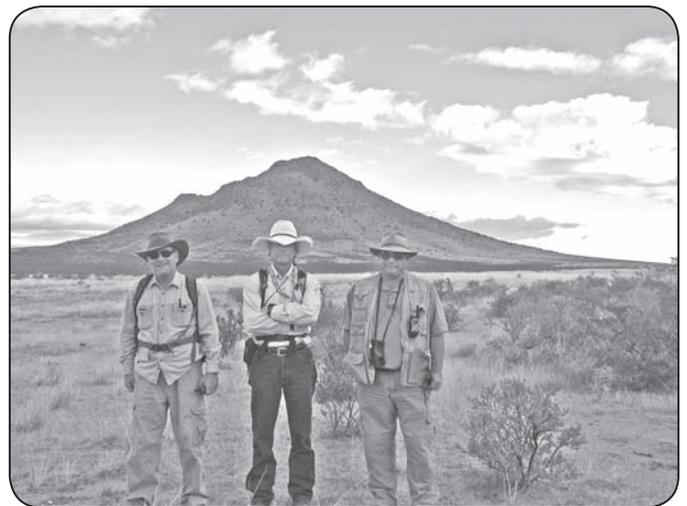
Pittman also includes many interesting stories from the New Mexico campaigns. For example, he discusses the decision of Company B of the Confederate 5th Texas Mounted Volunteers to employ lances in a mounted charge against infantry at Valverde. He describes the capture of the Valverde Battery and the skirmish at Picacho Pass between a Union cavalry patrol from California and a party of Confederate pickets from Tucson – the westernmost battle of the Civil War. One of the most memorable sketches in the book is of Louisa Hawkins Canby. Colonel Canby's wife's compassion toward the Confederate wounded was clearly in disregard of her husband's orders to destroy and hide all food, equipment, and blankets from the enemy.

In September 1862 James Carleton replaced Canby as commander of the Department of New Mexico. One of Carleton's first acts upon assuming command was to reissue Canby's order establishing martial law in

New Mexico and to create a strict passport system to distinguish loyal citizens from Confederate informants. Pittman condemns both actions as Carleton's attempts to create a police state in New Mexico. "Martial law," Pittman asserts, "was maintained through the war, although there was clearly no need for it" (116). In addition to securing the territory against another possible Confederate invasion, Carleton attempted to subdue hostile Indians. Pittman calls Carleton "imperious," "stubborn," and "not a man to admit his error." Carleton sent Colonel Kit Carson and his men against the Mescalero Apaches to relocate them on the new Indian reservation of Bosque Redondo on the Pecos River. He then went after the Navajos, ordering Carson and other officers to destroy all crops in Navajo country in order to starve them into submission. Some 8,000 Navajos surrendered and then made the "Long Walk" to Bosque Redondo, where Carleton planned to turn them into Christian farmers.

Published on the eve of the 150th anniversary of the start of the War Between the States, *New Mexico and the Civil War* is not only timely, but it is as good a summary of the war in the Southwest as we currently have. Those seeking knowledge of the Civil War in the Southwest will find *New Mexico and the Civil War* very much worth reading.

Deborah and Jon Lawrence



"No country for old men."

Left to right: Tracy Devault, Richard Greene, Mike Volberg.

photo by Judy DeVault

The Witches of Abiquiu: A Lecture and Discussion by Malcolm Ebright and Rick Hendricks

Transcribed and edited by Deborah and Jon Lawrence

The author of *Land Grants and Lawsuits in Northern New Mexico, Land Grants and the Law*, Malcolm Ebright is director of the Center for Land Grant Studies in Guadalupita, New Mexico. Rick Hendricks is currently the New Mexico State Historian. He was co-editor of the six-volume Vargas Project and the author of *The Navajos in 1705*. Hendricks and Ebright spoke at the Old San Ysidro Church in Corrales, New Mexico, on May 12, 2011. The topic of their talk was their book *The Witches of Abiquiu: The Governor, the Priest, the Genízaro Indians, and the Devil* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2006). [Numbers in parentheses in the text and endnotes that follow refer to page numbers in the book.]

Rick Hendricks

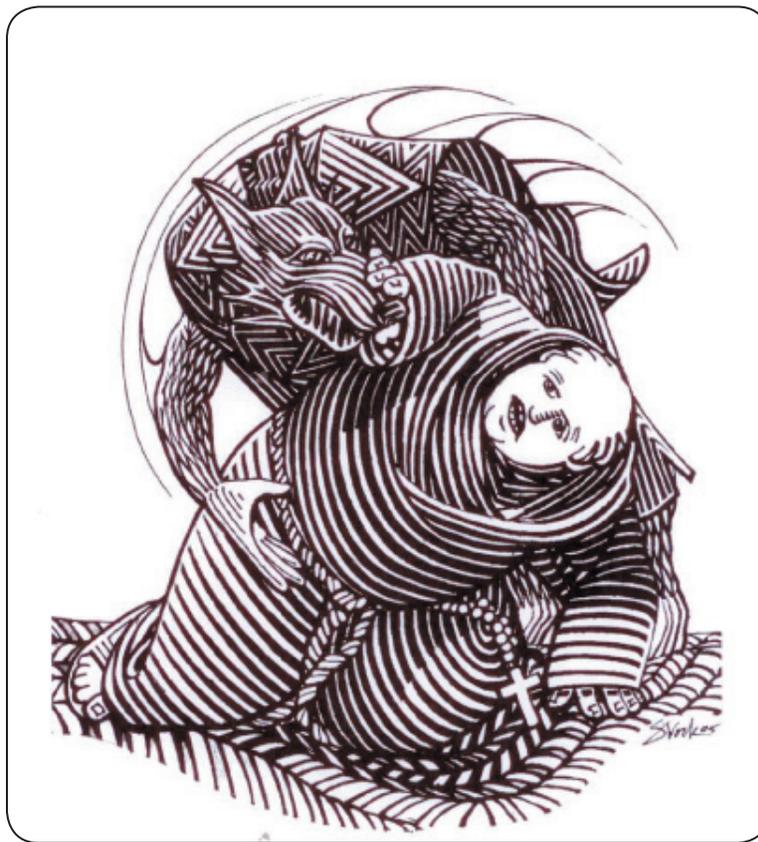
It is a pleasure to be here to discuss our book, *The Witches of Abiquiu*.

First, let me introduce the protagonist of the book, Fray Juan José Toledo. He was born in Mexico City in 1714, entered the Convento Grande de San Francisco in 1731, and in 1743 was assigned to the New Mexican mission field where he served first at Acoma. He made several trips to Navajo and Hopi country beginning in 1745. In 1756, he was assigned to Abiquiu.

Since we will be talking about witchcraft, I want to discuss some of the practices that were condemned as witchcraft in the Spanish colonial world. Certain Native American ceremonial practices were considered to be witchcraft. One that was particularly common to Abiquiu was the Turtle Dance. Another practice that was condemned as witchcraft in New Mexico was shapeshifting. For example, it was very common in New Mexico for witches to shapeshift into the form of a *tecolote*, or owl. The book describes an incident when one of the prominent witches, Vicente Trujillo, shapeshifted into a wolf and attacked Father Toldedo:

He arrived in a small swirling of dust (and apparently turned into a wolf). He attacked me, and I stopped him many times with my hands. He fought with great force, punches, and bites, although I kept him down [and] remained firmer in the saddle, holding on to the mane between both ears. (156)

There is a wonderful drawing by Glen Strock of this incident in the book on page 48.



Father Toledo under attack by a wolf.
Illustration by Glen Strock, from *The Witches of Abiquiu*.

The tradition of curing with medicinal plants was common to both Native Americans and Spaniards, and it is very significant that the healing practices of Native American, Hispanic, and Genízaro¹ *curanderos* were often condemned as witchcraft. In these practices, the use of medicinal plants and other cures were mixed with Christian rituals. Some of the herbs that were considered to have witchcraft powers were *estafiate* and *oshá*; other herbs used were juniper, *yerba*

del manso, oregano, and bloodroot. The same herb could sometimes be used either to heal or to harm, depending on the concentration and the application; blood root is one example. More generally, shamans had the power to either heal or to harm.

Clearly, the line between Native American ceremonial practices and witchcraft was blurred. An example concerns a teen-aged girl named Paula. Her parents had died and she was placed in the home of Vicente Trujillo and his wife María Tagle. These were two of the most powerful sorcerers in Abiquiu. They took Paula to a cave, where she was greeted

by various animals, including snakes and toads. Paula was told to remove the cross from around her neck and kiss the snakes and toads and then enter through a circular opening so she could learn to fly. She turned into a woodpecker and tried three times to fly to the Cerro del Pedernal. Each time she was unable to do so because her arms and legs became tired, causing her great pain. Then the animals turned into Indian men and a Spaniard. When asked to kiss the snakes and toads again on the mouth, she became afraid and started to praise the Holy Sacrament. This relapse into Christian beliefs and sacraments caused Vicente and his wife great pain, and they started howling and ordered Paula not to mention God or the Virgin Mary, but she persisted. Vicente and María were so angered that they threw her out of the cave and the next day made her leave their house. (141)

The feeling of being under attack by sorcerers and subject to malevolent witchcraft occurred historically in atmospheres of fear and conflict. That certainly describes the situation in Abiquiu in the middle of the eighteenth century. The town was under enormous pressure due to raids by Utes and Comanches.² Indeed, a raid in 1747 led to the temporary abandonment of the town.³ As we will discuss later, the situation in Salem, Massachusetts,⁴ in the 1690s had many similarities.

The first phase of the witchcraft in Abiquiu was in the summer of 1760, at which time the governor was Francisco Antonio Marín del Valle.⁵ Father Toledo reported to the governor that the devil worshipers

were preventing attempts to convert the Genízaros in Abiquiu to Christianity. They were sticking pins in dolls, using the evil eye, poisoning people, and forming pacts with the devil. There was a School of the Devil operating in Abiquiu, run by a man known as “*El Cojo*” (the cripple).

The second phase began in the spring of 1763. A young Genízaro by the name of Joaquinillo had bewitched a woman and made her ill. The civil authorities, including the new governor, Tomás Vélez Cachupín,⁶ started to take an interest and began to study how each and every bewitching was accomplished. A witch hunt, very similar to what happened in Salem, took place in Abiquiu. Informants began to point the finger at each other. These informants included Joaquinillo, who became known as “*El Descubridor*” (the discoverer). The authorities began to create lists of victims associated with each witch. In the documents, the witch’s name is in one column and the list of his or her victims is in the column beside it.

In the seventeenth century, Franciscans were interested in and committed to martyrdom, but by the eighteenth century, the Franciscans became more interested in opportunities to confront the Devil. According to Father Toledo’s report:

Judges must engage the Devil man-to-man to take from his bloody claws so many souls and deprive Him of the ancient worship that many of these sorcerers offer Him. [Those who confront the Devil] must have ardor in their breast and on occasion know how to convert themselves into a flaming volcano. Spiritual resolve, rectitude, faithfulness, prudence, impartiality, skill and knowledge are the weapons for so arduous an enterprise. An undertaking such as the present one is a field and material for many feats. What began as a battle will thus be a triumph of great difficulty. (158)

Such an opportunity presented itself in Abiquiu, where it was clear that the Devil was involved. Father Toledo knew this because of his painful feet. Every time he would leave to go hear a confession, his feet would hurt so badly that he could hardly make the trip. When he returned home, his feet stopped

hurting (149). He also revealed that in 1757 he had an unusual growth in his abdomen. He confessed that he had used a *curandera* in 1760 to help him deal with the growth (154). That was very much frowned on by the Franciscan authorities.

Father Toledo even knew which devil he was dealing with. Not only Satan but also a devil called Asmodeus⁷ was involved. He knew this because the Devil spoke through the Indians in Latin. If you know your witchcraft, you know that the Devil tends to speak in Latin. [Audience laughs.]

Phase three occurred during the winter of 1763 and 1764. It was a time of demonic possession in Abiquiu. The list of sorcerers grew to 107. In an attempt to eradicate witchcraft, exorcisms of witches and of evil places were performed. Here is an example from the book of an exorcism:

Father Toledo gathered his stole, his cross, and the Gospel of St. John and began to pray over Varela, asking whether what was occurring was God's will or something else. Fray Juan José was unsure whether he was actually dealing with demonic possession, but what happened next persuaded him that the Devil had again appeared in Abiquiu. "On hearing the words of the Holy Gospel, [Varela] went into another seizure with convulsions, screams, and howls," whereupon Father Toledo immediately grabbed his Book of Exorcisms. But before he could proceed, Varela began calling him names such as "insolent, kid goat, Mulatto." As Father Toledo began to exorcise the demon from Varela, she interrupted the rite of exorcism with her loud cries and more insults. Varela seemed possessed of superhuman strength as four men tried to hold her down with only partial success. She tried to escape "by arching her body in all directions and slipping out of her shoes with such violence [that] it was almost impossible to hold her." Varela's convulsions and her exorcism continued all night, as Father Toledo reported, "until dawn when she finally relaxed, falling on the floor still howling in [a] loud voice from time to time, just like the Indians of this land." (182)

The principal sorcerers were jailed, and most of them then confessed. Under torture — one of the few times torture was used here in New Mexico — Maria Trujillo, the wife of Vicente, revealed that she had tried to kill Father Toledo.

The final phase began in the summer of 1764, when the Inquisition⁸ became involved. By 1764 the Inquisition was not very interested in witchcraft. They disputed the Devil's involvement, and suspected something might be wrong with the priest.

The governor, who was mainly interested in bringing the witchcraft outbreak to an end, meted out mild punishments. While five of the accused died in prison, many had their sentences commuted. Some were banned from Abiquiu and placed in Spanish homes. These included Vicente, who had been charged with as many as 22 deaths. A woman known as "*La Come Gallinas*" (the chicken-eater) received a public shaming known as *vergüenza* (232). She was stripped to the waist, honeyed and feathered, and exhibited in the Santa Fe plaza for four hours. Her punishment was almost identical to the public shaming of a defendant in Mexico City in 1664. We are completely persuaded that the government was aware of the punishment that had been carried out exactly a hundred years earlier. After her punishment, *La Come Gallinas* was placed in a Spanish home for life.

Malcolm Ebright

As we delved into what happened in the Abiquiu witchcraft trials, both of us realized that there were ramifications of the story that went beyond the details of which witch did what. It was just as important as Salem, but prior to our book nobody had talked about it that much. Hence, our work brings the scholarship of witchcraft into the Southwest, but it's a completely different kind of witchcraft than in Salem.

There are three issues that the book raises that that I would like to discuss. First of all, the witchcraft trials illuminated the nature of Abiquiu and of New Mexico at that time, and in particular, how Comanche

and Ute raiding made life tenuous on the frontier and built up social pressure, like a time bomb waiting to explode. Second, the book concerns the Genízaros, who are still not understood as well as we would like. They were the ones who were the beneficiaries of the Abiquiu land grant⁹ and who were involved in the witchcraft trial. And finally, we would like to bring more attention to Governor Vélez Cachupín, who I think of as a hero. He is the one who established the land grant in Abiquiu and who resolved the witchcraft outbreak. We are hoping that *The Witches of Abiquiu* encourages more research in these areas.

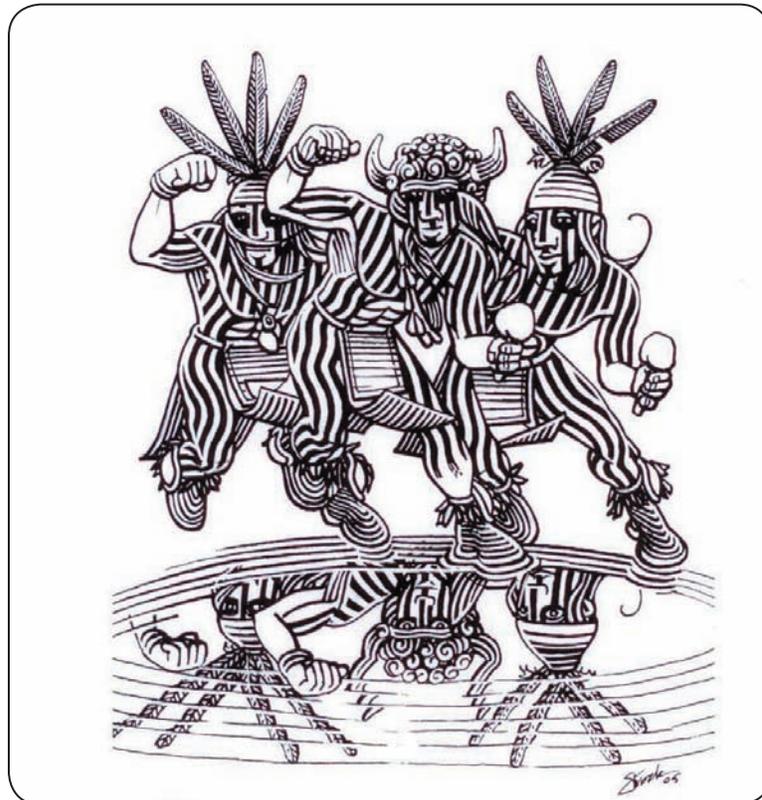
At the time, Abiquiu was on the edge of the northwestern frontier of New Mexico, and beyond it was a war zone: Navajos, Comanches, and Utes attacked the area regularly. There was a big raid in 1747 when 30 captives were taken, after which they abandoned all the settlements in the area. The residents sought permission to move back into Santa Cruz and Santa Fe. It was a real question whether New Mexico was going to be able to survive the Comanche and Ute attacks.

One of the most recent books about New England witchcraft¹⁰ discusses how Salem was subject to attacks by the Abenaki Indians.¹¹ The people in Salem never knew when an attack was going to come. They called it “being in the Devil’s snare,” where the Devil was equated with the Indians.¹² That was very similar to the situation in Abiquiu. It was a

place that was very ripe for something like witchcraft to break out.

An important difference from Salem is that the witches were not European, but were Genízaros: Indians, usually from nomadic tribes – Comanche, Ute, Kiowas, etc. – who were captured by other Indians and then sold to Spaniards as servants and who later received their freedom. They became a

huge element of the population. There are estimates that at one time, one third of Santa Fe’s people were Genízaros. After a generation or two, they lost their native languages and spoke Spanish. They were no longer living in their original culture, but neither were they Spanish citizens. Governor Vélez Cachupín was the first to grant property rights to the Genízaros. He established the Abiquiu land grant in 1754. Since the Genízaros came from many different tribes, Abiquiu was a multicultural community.



Genízaro dancers at Abiquiu.
Illustration by Glen Strock, from *The Witches of Abiquiu*.

Governor Vélez Cachupín came upon the scene more than ten years prior to the witchcraft trials. He was a young man, about 30 years old. At that time there was a Comanche crisis, and Vélez Cachupín fought a battle – called the Battle of San Diego Pond¹³– where he distinguished himself so much that the Comanches gave him the name “the boy captain” or “the captain who amazes.” The Spaniards took quite a few captives, but he released most of them. Four Indian boys were taken to Santa Fe as hostages for the return

of captives that had been taken by the Indians during the 1847 raid on Abiquiu. Vélez Cachupín took two of the least seriously wounded captives with him to the Governor's Palace. He was said to have treated them very well. When the time came for them to be released, one of them, who was happy enough to live in Spanish society, didn't want to go and remained with Vélez Cachupín (75).

I think these are telling details that testify to Vélez Cachupín's character. He was curious about the Indians and wanted to understand them. The governors prior to him would say: "There is just no way we can deal with these people; we have to wipe them out, they will destroy New Mexico." Vélez Cachupín, however, wanted to negotiate whatever middle ground¹⁴ there might be. He met with the Indians, sat down with them, smoked the peace pipe, and dealt with them on a one-to-one basis. That's why he was so successful.

When the witchcraft began under Governor Marín del Valle, everyone played hands off. Nothing was done until Vélez Cachupín arrived. He stayed in Santa Fe, and since he didn't want to become too directly involved, but he worked initially through the *alcaldes*.¹⁵

Almost all of the testimony that we examined was from the documents of either Father Toledo or of the *alcaldes*.¹⁶ They spent a lot of time going to petroglyph sites and to ceremonial sites like the Stone Lions and exorcising them (15, 190-193). At the cave where the School of the Devil took place, they imagined that the petroglyph that they saw on the wall represented contact with the Devil and witchcraft. Again, this site was exorcised. The exorcisms were not only verbal; they would physically draw crosses at the petroglyph sites, or attempt to destroy the shrines. There are petroglyph sites existing today where you can still see the crosses. So, as Rick indicated earlier, what seemed to the Spaniards to be witchcraft was often just native ceremonials or petroglyphs.

Vélez Cachupín's response to the outbreak of witchcraft was on the whole rather mild. He may,

however, have gone too far when he punished Maria Trujillo, who was one of the most recalcitrant of the witches. As Rick mentioned, she had made Father Toledo sick. As part of the proceedings, they called her to Santa Fe and put her on the rack: she was hung on a cart wheel. After eight hours, she confessed, and they began to take down her testimony, which we detail in the book (209). She said she made Toledo sick by use of Dragon's Blood. Vélez Cachupín told her to cure Father Toledo right away. This was a case where a certain amount of an herb can kill you but another amount can cure you. She applied the Dragon's Blood on Father Toledo as a poultice and it cured him.

Governor Vélez Cachupín convened a council, which is one way to get controversy to subside. The council looked at the case and then sent it on to the Inquisition, which wasn't particularly interested. So things just calmed down. The witchcraft trials were resolved without too many people being killed. In Salem 20 people were either hanged or crushed, but in Abiquiu, the only sorcerers who died were the five who died in jail.¹⁷ Of course, the people the sorcerers killed were almost all Genízaros and not well-to-do elites as in Salem. But in any case, after all the previous excitement, the end of the witchcraft proceedings in Abiquiu was an anticlimax.

Selected Questions and Answers

A (a member of the Audience): What was the structure of the trial? Was there a judge and a jury?

ME (Malcolm Ebright): The system of civil law was different. It didn't involve a jury, but it did involve a judge, who in this case was Vélez Cachupín. The local *alcaldes*, who had the authority to deal with all kinds of criminal matters, were also involved. The accused didn't have the right to have a lawyer, and there was no defense attorney. The Abiquiu trials also were complicated by the involvement of the church. It was neither completely ecclesiastical nor completely civil; it wasn't strictly a criminal matter, nor was it completely civil. They weren't entirely sure how to deal with it.

A: You mentioned that the witches confessed. Was coercion used?

RH (Rick Hendricks): Only María, Vicente's wife, was tortured. In many cases, the Genízaros were deflecting punishment from themselves when they said, "I'm a witch. Did you know that my neighbor is also a witch?"

In general, the Spanish legal system was inquisitory and accusatory more than anything else. A lot of the investigation was taking statements, collecting information, confronting someone with all of these charges. When confronted, the incarcerated would defer the charges on to somebody else.

ME: The Spanish wanted to hear a certain story. When the people in jail would say that they had new confessions, it may have been because they had figured out what the authorities wanted to hear. But as Rick said, they usually would just name someone else.

Gathering evidence was the main aspect of the trial. The feeling was that by continuing to take statements, the problem would ultimately disappear. It was the exorcisms that got things out of hand. It would have wound down sooner if it hadn't been for that. It all came to a head when Vélez Cachupín got the council together that included the major ecclesiastical figures of Santa Fe. When they examined what happened, they couldn't believe the things that Toledo had testified to. Also, at that time, a royal wedding occurred.¹⁸ It was traditional under those circumstances to pardon people, even for very serious crimes. Most of the witches who were still incarcerated were released because of the royal wedding.

A: We just had a royal wedding!¹⁹

ME: Yes, indeed. In any case, using the word "trial" to describe all this is a bit of a stretch.

A: There must have been witchcraft throughout New Mexico at the same time you are talking about. Were there other witchcraft trials?

ME: We discuss this in Chapter 6 in the book. Many of the cases involved people getting sick. It was widely believed at the time that most illnesses were caused by witchcraft.

RH: In 1764, healing was still pre-modern. There were practitioners of what we might call a precursor to modern medicine at the same time that there were many superstitions associated with healing. The church, particularly the Franciscans, tended to run behind the times. Father Toledo, for example, was trained in the scholastic tradition, even though the world was experiencing the Enlightenment. There was a lot of suspicion around the medical arts because the general belief was that if you were ill, it was either because of witchcraft, because you were being punished for something you had done, or that you had not lived in the proper way.

ME: At one point, the inquisition considered being a *curandera* to be punishable, but in New Mexico the punishment was muted because of the *curanderas'* effectiveness. They were the only healers there were. Some governors in the 1600s prosecuted witches at the very same time that they called on them for healing.

RH: Love magic was also very common in the Spanish tradition, and in the various witchcraft trials in New Mexico, it was common to hear of a woman who would cast a spell to get some man to fall in love with her. Another common occurrence was that if a man's wife accused him of being unfaithful, he would plead: "The Devil made me do it." [Audience laughs.]

Witchcraft was very widespread. With Joaquinillo's help, Father Toledo constructed a list of 107 witches who lived in an area from Taos to Oaxaca.²⁰ We include the list as an appendix to the book. Most were Indians from the New Mexico pueblos, but a number were Hispanics from villages as far north as Truchas and as far south as El Paso.

ME: Most of the Hispanic witches were from Chimayo, and many were from the same family.

That's what the Inquisition was concerned about: the Spaniards who were practicing witchcraft.

RH: The Inquisition had no authority over Indians. They didn't really care what the Indians were doing as far as that goes.

The list suggests that there was a network of witches. Although we tried, we could find no corroboration for the witches listed for the El Paso area. We'd like to know whether a network of witches really existed and whether they knew about each other, or whether it was just a flight of fancy on Joaquinillo and Toledo's part.

ME: Joaquinillo, who himself was a sorcerer, may have been operating under the above-mentioned principle that the more people he fingered, the easier it would be on him. Perhaps that's why the list is so long. Maybe they weren't all practicing witches.

A: Were the witches perceived as being the embodiment of Satan or as vessels that Satan moved into so that they could be helped and saved by exorcism?

RH: They were perceived as being possessed. For example, one of the instances that got the civil government involved was a situation where one of the witches interrupted the mass. She started speaking Latin and it was getting out of control, so the priest whipped her in front of the congregation. The whipping was an effort to get her to reform.

A: How do *you* understand the witchcraft that occurred?

RH: We made a decision early on to be faithful to the documents. We tried to interpret what is in the documents without passing a value judgment or saying that what could or could not be.

ME: Prior to our book, people talked about witchcraft as superstition. We thought that that minimized it and didn't give credit to what was in the documents.

Some scholars discuss the phenomenon as due to mass hysteria. The idea is that if there is a belief in exorcism, people will flock to be exorcised. In places where they don't believe in it, it doesn't happen. If you believe in the Devil, he will show up.

A: In Salem, most of those accused of being witches were women.²¹ How does that compare with Abiquiu?

RH: It is true that in Salem, those accused of witchcraft were mostly marginalized women, healers, often without husbands. In Abiquiu, however, the witchcraft involved a lot of men –Vicente Trujillo, for example, and El Cojo, the man accused of running the School for the Devil. There were probably as many men involved as women. It was definitely not the same phenomenon as in Salem.

ME: There are volumes of Salem scholarship that we looked at, but much of it didn't fit the situation in Abiquiu. The one book that I thought did provide a fit was *In the Devil's Snare*, which talks about Salem as being terrorized by Indian raids.

A key difference was that the women in Salem were primarily European, while the witches in Abiquiu were Genízaros. To trace the origin of the witchcraft, you have to find out what tribe they were from – Utes, Kiowas, Apaches — and what kind of traditions they had. There are some hints in the documents that they learned witchcraft from somebody from their tribe.

I think there was a spiritual aspect that was lost with the Genízaros. The Pueblos have witchcraft, that they don't talk about, where the practices are basically spiritually oriented. The Genízaros lost that. They didn't want to be Christians, but they no longer knew what they were. They had lost their own ceremonies. They were "in the middle." You see this throughout Latin America: people lost their old culture but were not part of the new culture.

A: Wasn't the fanaticism of the clergy, particularly Father Toledo, similar to that in Salem?

ME: Let me start by saying that I initially had a lot of trouble reading Father Toledo's writing. He would almost always write like he was giving a sermon. I had to wade through page upon page to try to figure out what his point was. But I ended up liking him more than I did initially, because he seemed to have so much courage.

Eventually I came to an understanding of his point of view. He was schooled in the medieval outlook on witches. He had a book that told him exactly how to deal with witches.²² The problem was that while the book did talk about Indians, it did not focus on the kind of situation that prevailed in Abiquiu, where they were attempting to Christianize the Genízaro Indians.

RH: Toledo was trained as a missionary. His pump was primed before he came to New Mexico to find witches. His book of exorcism talked about what you do when you confront the Devil, how you know which Devil it is, and so on. In his rambling, sermonesque letters he would talk about which devil he was confronting. He was definitely fanatical in that he was looking for opportunities to confront the Devil man-to-man. But he was also genuinely interested in the Indians. He was fascinated with Indian languages and he was somewhat of a linguist.

ME: Father Toledo became very sick, with a growth in his stomach that was about ready to explode. A *curandera* healed him by helping him pass the growth. Even though he had been praying and doing everything that he could, he could see that on a physical level the *curanderas* were the only ones who were going to help him. That's when he changed his attitude that illness could only be cured by faith, and he stopped thinking that it was necessary to do away with everything that was not Christian.

RH: One of the things that makes Toledo so appealing is that when he became ill and was so desperate, he had such a strong will to live that he reached out to what to him would have been an anathema, a *curandera*. She performed something similar to the psychic surgery that they do in the

Phillippines²³ to help him with his ailment. The fact that he was willing to do that contributed mightily to his change in attitude.

Malcolm mentioned a tribunal that reviewed the case and then sent it to the Inquisition. There was a lot of suspicion that was cast upon Toledo. In a certain sense, he had gone native – he had embraced native healing. I'm sure he felt that his prayers had contributed mightily to the cure, but the fact was, he could identify a particular folk healer who had cured him.

ME: Toledo's attitude changed. Before, he was going by the book, and the book was very specific. In a situation where he didn't have that much support – he was pretty much by himself in Abiquiu – the book was a rock that he could hold on to. He probably had the ailment because of something that was put in his food, and it was one of the Genízaros who was the cook. His faith that he could Christianize them was not working. So he went native, and that was his strength.

A: Isn't it really a case where the priest, as a representative of the dominant culture, was imposing on the colonized subjects?

RH: Quite the contrary. The priest got himself into a position where he was not dominating anyone. In order for him to survive, he had to give up some of his own culture. The Native culture subsumed him. That's why he is an interesting person. True, he had tried to impose on the Genízaros – for example, whipping them, the typical thing that you would expect from a colonial overlord – but it didn't work for him. He was the only Spanish person around. He was surrounded by his little library, he was isolated, and he didn't understand what was going on. His predecessor had been killed by witches,²⁴ he had been studying very diligently about witches, and then he found himself surrounded by them. The only way he could get out of his illness was to take a walk on the wild side. This was something that he had been trained not to do. He was not in a position to impose anything; he was overcome by the culture he found himself in.

A: How well did the Genízaros speak Spanish? They were accused in Spanish, but if they were speaking Kiowa, Ute, then they may have not understood the questions. When they were confessing, did they know what they were confessing to?

RH: The *lingua franca* in that part of the frontier was probably Ute rather than Spanish. Language definitely was an issue.

ME: The priests were poorly versed in the Indian languages. There had been a big move to get the priests to learn the native languages, but they just couldn't get any priests to do that. Vélez Cachupín thought that you couldn't Christianize the Indians unless you could communicate with them. This was especially important in matters of confession.

RH: Franciscans had a policy, which made sense to them, to move priests from mission to mission every three years or so. Unfortunately, New Mexico was incredibly rich linguistically with the various Pueblo languages, not all of which are mutually intelligible, and with Apache, Ute, and Navajo. Very few priests stayed anywhere long enough to master a language. It was a criticism leveled at them periodically by all of the civil authorities. If they don't know the language, how can they teach them? They taught with picture cards, rudiments of language. Imagine trying to convey the elaborate concepts of Roman Catholicism with just a few words and pictures. So, yes, communication was a factor.

It was a linguistic soup. There was a trading language, which on the northern frontier was Ute, there was Spanish, and there were all the different Pueblo and Plains Indian languages. It was also a cultural soup. Genízaros came from Plains Indian tribes with different cultural and religious practices. It used to be fashionable to say that Genízaros were "de-tribalized" Plains Indians. When they began researching it more carefully, they found that the Genízaros were self-identifying with a particular Plains Indian tribe, at least initially. They weren't de-tribalized as far as they were concerned. They may have been removed from the culture, removed

from the language, removed from the traditions, but they still had some affinity with their tribe of origin. Genízaros from the same tribe even tended to seek each other out as marriage partners. However, while first generation Genízaros would say, "I'm a Kiowa," they tended to lose that tribal affiliation quickly. A few generations down the road, they wouldn't be able to say what they were.

You can still see the mixture of cultures today in Abiquiu. It is a community that has two faces: an Indian face and a Spanish face. Throughout their history they have debated back and forth which they are.

ME: Two days ago, Abiquiu celebrated the 257th anniversary of its founding. They are still doing their Genízaro dances. They have two feast days: one for their Indian heritage and one for their Spanish heritage. They are still debating how much they are Spanish and how much they are Indian and whether they should become an Indian pueblo.

A: I grew up with witchcraft. My father was born in Mora and my mother in Ojo Feliz. My father told me stories about fireballs.

ME: We have done readings and book signings in different places, and in most places in New Mexico no one questions the fact that there is witchcraft – with the exception of in Los Alamos. [Audience laughs.] In Abiquiu, someone said, "I am a witch." In Las Vegas, a woman talked about seeing balls of fire. Everybody knows that fireballs are one of the ways that witches transport themselves. I was interviewed on the radio in Mora, and as I was talking about balls of fire the interviewer said that he remembered seeing them as a kid. I started interviewing *him*: How many did you see? How close did you get? He said that he was torn between fear and curiosity. That is something we tried to get across in the book: Abiquiu, in the mid-1700s, was torn between fear and curiosity.

RH: Everywhere we have spoken – other than Los Alamos – someone has shared with us an authentic

New Mexico witchcraft story. I had a friend who grew up in Mora. As a little boy, when they drove by Abiquiu, his grandmother would lean over and tell him in Spanish, “That’s where the witches are.” It’s a real part of the culture.

Although I am a skeptic, I would like to relate that when I was researching the book, I ran across an illustration of the torture of a witch by the name of Ann Hendricks in Amsterdam in 1571. She was possibly an ancestor.

ME: Vélez Cachupín, who died within a year after the witchcraft trial, may have been another victim of witchcraft. I don’t think that many people got past Maria Trujillo: she must not have liked it very much when the governor hung her from that wheel.

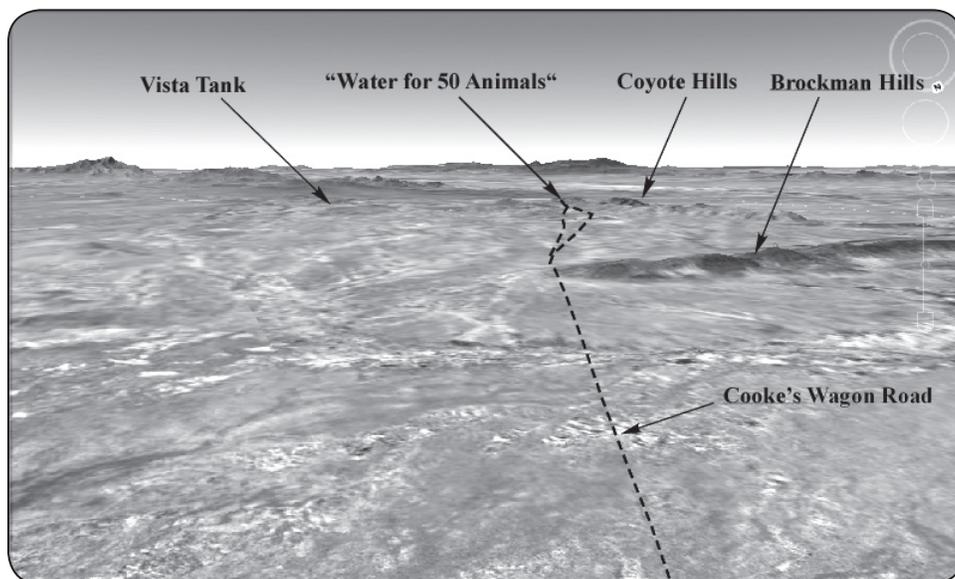
Endnotes

1. Genízaros, who are the topic of Chapter 2 of *The Witches of Abiquiu*, were Native American slaves who served as house servants, as shepherders, and in other capacities in Spanish households in the Southwest. For a discussion of Indian slaves in New Mexico see David J. Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America*, 126-129, and James Brooks, *Captives and Cousins*, 121-142. See also Doris Avery’s “Into the Den of Evils: The Genizaros in Colonial New Mexico.”
2. Between 1700 and 1747, Utes and Comanches were allied in raiding northern New Mexico for food and captives. The Spaniards were dependent on the Pueblos in their campaigns against the Ute/Comanche depredations. For a history of the Utes and Comanches in the early 18th century, see Ned Blackhawk’s *Violence Over the Land*.
3. In 1747, a band of Utes attacked Abiquiu. A number of the village’s inhabitants were killed and the survivors moved temporarily to Santa Cruz. However, Abiquiu was resettled soon afterwards, and by 1748, it contained 20 families. See Stanley Noyes, *Los Comanches*, 37-38.
4. The Salem witch trials, held between February 1692 and May 1693, were a series of hearings before county courts to prosecute people accused of witchcraft in the counties of Essex, Suffolk, and Middlesex in colonial Massachusetts. For an interesting discussion of the Salem witch trials, see Mary Beth Norton’s *In the Devil’s Snare: The Salem Witchcraft Crisis of 1692*. See also Gretchen Adams’ *The Specter of Salem: Remembering the Witch Trials in Nineteenth-century America* and Paul Boyer and Stephen Nissenbaum’s *Salem Possessed: The Social Origins of Witchcraft*.
5. Francisco Antonio Marín del Valle was the colonial governor of New Mexico from 1754 to 1760. Father Toledo requested permission from Marín del Valle to torture El Cojo, but the governor basically ignored the request.
6. Tomás Vélez Cachupín was the colonial governor of New Mexico between 1749 and 1754 and from 1762 to 1767.
7. Asmodeus is a king of demons, mostly known from the deuterocanonical Book of Tobit. He is mentioned in some Talmudic legends, for instance in the story of the construction of the Temple of Solomon. One of the seven princes of Hell, Asmodeus is the demon of lust and responsible for twisting people’s sexual desires.
8. The Inquisition was first introduced into the Americas in 1517. Beliefs that ran counter to Catholicism, including sorcery, superstition, and folk healing, were considered heresy. For an examination of the Inquisition’s presence in New Mexico, see John Kessel’s *Kiva, Cross, and Crown*, Chapter 5.
9. Governor Velez Cachupin made 17 land grants during his two terms as governor, including the Abiquiu Genízaro grant. The Abiquiu grant is the only grant made exclusively to Genízaros. In the early 1700s, the Abiquiu area was populated primarily by Spaniards who received small land grants where they settled. However, Ute and Comanche raiding caused the temporary abandonment of Abiquiu in 1747. When Viceroy Revilla Gigedo learned of the town’s abandonment, he ordered that Abiquiu be resettled. This resulted in two land grants: one in 1751 made to seven Spanish heads of families and thirteen Genizaros, and the other, a Genízaro grant made in 1754 by Governor Tomás Vélez Cachupín. See *The Witches of Abiquiu*, Chapter 5.
10. Mary Beth Norton’s *In the Devil’s Snare: The Salem Witchcraft Crisis of 1692* offers a new explanation of the Salem witch trials, assigning central importance to fears caused by the Second Indian War. She uses a dual narrative of war and witchcraft to examine and link the progress of frontier disorders, particularly the colonists’ defeats at the hands of the Wabanaki, to the development of the crisis.
11. The Abenaki are one of the five Algonquian tribes of the Wabanaki Confederacy. Banding together in response to Iroquois aggression, these tribes – the Abenaki, the Penobscot, the Maliseet, the Passamaquoddy, and the

- Mi'kmaq – each retained their own political leadership, but collaborated on broader issues such as diplomacy, war, and trade.
12. Richard Slotkin's *Regeneration through Violence* connects the slaughter of Mercy Short's family during the 1690 French and Indian attack on Salmon Falls, Maine, and her own captivity, redemption, and subsequent engagement in witchcraft in Boston. According to Slotkin, New England Puritans had perceived Indians as devils and devil worshipers for decades; it was not until the series of social crises preceding the Salem outbreak that accusations arose that witches began meeting with the specters of Indians.
 13. On November 11, 1751, Governor Velez Cachupin and his troops engaged the Comanches in the Battle of San Diego Pond, leaving more than 100 Comanche dead and 53 men, women, and children taken prisoner (74-77). His courage and compassion during and after that battle won him great respect among the Comanches, Utes, and Apaches, and he was able to negotiate peace with the nomadic tribes in the province. When he left the post of governorship in 1754, he recommended to his successor, Marín del Valle, to treat the nomadic Indians fairly and to engage in personal diplomacy with them in order to maintain the peace. Marín del Valle ignored this advice, with the consequence that near the end of this administration, Comanches attacked the town of Taos and killed many Spaniards and carried off 50 or so women, with a loss of nearly 50 Indians (80).
 14. The term "middle ground" was adopted by Richard White to describe the peaceful relations between, and the cultural adaptations among, the Indians of the Great Lakes region and European (especially French) frontiersmen between 1650 and 1812. The term is often used more broadly to describe the interactions of trade and the peaceful accommodations between people of disparate cultures. See White's *The Middle Ground*.
 15. Several alcaldes were involved. In April 1763, Juan Pablo Martín – who at that time was the alcalde of Abiquiu – began the process of questioning those accused of witchcraft, starting with Joaquinillo. Shortly thereafter, the Genízaros of Abiquiu requested that Carlos Fernández, the alcalde of Santa Cruz de la Cañada, carry out the investigation. Apparently the Genízaros were more comfortable testifying in front of him; consequently he was able to elicit detailed information from the accused sorcerers. During the third phase of the witchcraft proceedings in 1864, the investigator was Manuel García Parejas, who had been appointed recently as alcalde of Abiquiu. He helped Father Toledo carry out the exorcisms of petroglyphs and other sites.
 16. Many of the primary documents used by Ebright and Hendricks are housed in the Pinart Collection of the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley. Other sources are located in the Archivo General de la Nación in Mexico City.
 17. In the Salem witch trials, nineteen victims were hanged, one crushed to death under the weight of stones, and at least four died in prison awaiting trial.
 18. The Prince of Asturias' marriage to his cousin, the Princess of Parma, gave the alleged sorcerers an opportunity to receive amnesty from Governor Vélez Cachupin.
 19. Prince William of Wales married Catherine Middleton on May 6, 2011.
 20. During the witchcraft proceedings, a Genízaro informer, Joaquinillo, *El Descubridor*, led Alcalde Carlos Fernández, the governor, and other officials, to places considered to be sites of devil worship. He also helped Father Toledo prepare a list of the accused witches and sorcerers. See *The Witches of Abiquiu*, 139 and Appendix A, 262-268.
 21. For a discussion of the role and position of women in seventeenth-century Puritan New England, see Reis's *Damned Women: Sinners and Witches in Puritan New England*. See also *The Devil in the Shape of a Woman* by Carol Karlsen. Karlsen argues that the many of the victims were "inheriting women" and consequently socially vulnerable in a patriarchal culture.
 22. The book referred to is *Itinerario para párrocos de indios* by Alonso de la Pena Montenegro, the Bishop of Quito. It was first published in 1663.
 23. Psychic surgery is a procedure typically involving a healer who appears to make an incision in the patient using only his bare hands. Then he supposedly removes pathological matter and after which there seemingly is a spontaneous healing of the incision. This form of healing first appeared in the Spiritualist communities of the Philippines and Brazil in the mid-1900s.
 24. Father Toledo's predecessor, fray Félix Ordoñez, died at Laguna Pueblo shortly after leaving his post in Abiquiu in 1756. Paula accused Vicente Trujillo and his wife María of killing Father Ordoñez by witchcraft (143).

Bibliography

- Adams, Gretchen. *The Specter of Salem: Remembering the Witch Trials in Nineteenth-century America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008.
- Avery, Doris Swann. "Into the Den of Evils: The Genizaros in Colonial New Mexico," Master's Thesis, University of Montana, 2008.
- Blackhawk, Ned. *Violence Over the Land: Indians and Empires in the Early American West*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006.
- Boyer, Paul and Stephen Nissenbaum. *Salem Possessed: The Social Origins of Witchcraft*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1974.
- Brooks, James F. *Captives and Cousins: Slavery, Kinship, and Community in the Southwest Borderlands*. Williamsburg, Virginia: University of North Carolina Press, 2003.
- Ebright, Malcolm and Rick Hendricks. *The Witches of Abiquiu: The Governor, the Priest, the Genizaro Indians, and the Devil*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2006.
- Griffiths, Nicholas. *The Cross and the Serpent: Religious Repression and Resurgence in Colonial Peru*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1996.
- Karlsen, Carol F. *The Devil in the Shape of a Woman: Witchcraft in Colonial America*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1987.
- Kessell, John L. *Kiva, Cross & Crown: the Pecos Indians and New Mexico, 1540-1840*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1986.
- Mills, Kenneth. *Idolatry and Its Enemies: Colonial Andean Religion and Extirpation, 1640-1750*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997.
- Norton, Mary Beth. *In the Devil's Snare: The Salem Witchcraft Crisis of 1692*. New York: Random House, 2002.
- Noyes, Stanley. *Los Comanches*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1993.
- Perry, Mary Elizabeth and Anne J. Cruz. *Cultural Encounters: The Impact of the Inquisition in Spain and the New World*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991.
- Reis, Elizabeth. *Damned Women: Sinners and Witches in Puritan New England*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997.
- Riley, Carroll L. *Kachina and Cross: Indians and Spaniards in the Early Southwest*. Provo: University of Utah Press, 1999.
- Slotkin, Richard. *Regeneration Through Violence: the Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600-1860*. Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1973.
- Weber, David J. *The Spanish Frontier in North America*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1992.
- White, Richard. *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1991.



Aerial view of the section of Cooke's Wagon Road explored during the Fall 2011 Mapping Trip.
courtesy Tracy DeVault

Trail Turtles' 2011 Fall Mapping Trip

by *Richard Greene*

with contributions by *Tracy DeVault*

The Trail Turtles' plan for this trip was to revisit the section of Cooke's Wagon Road between Soldiers Farewell Hill and Playas Lake, New Mexico. We wanted to extend in both directions the section of Cooke's road we mapped on the last trip. (See accompanying map and textbox.)

While the group was successful in finding more trail in the Coyote Hills area, the weather turned for the worse so we quit earlier than planned. Our confidence in the location of the trail between Soldiers Farewell and Playas Lake has increased significantly.

Trail Turtles attending this mapping trip were Tracy and Judy DeVault, Richard and Marie Greene, Brock and Levida Hileman, Neal and Marian Johns with their dog Dixie, Rose Ann Tompkins, Charles Townley, Mike Volberg, and Ken and Pat White.

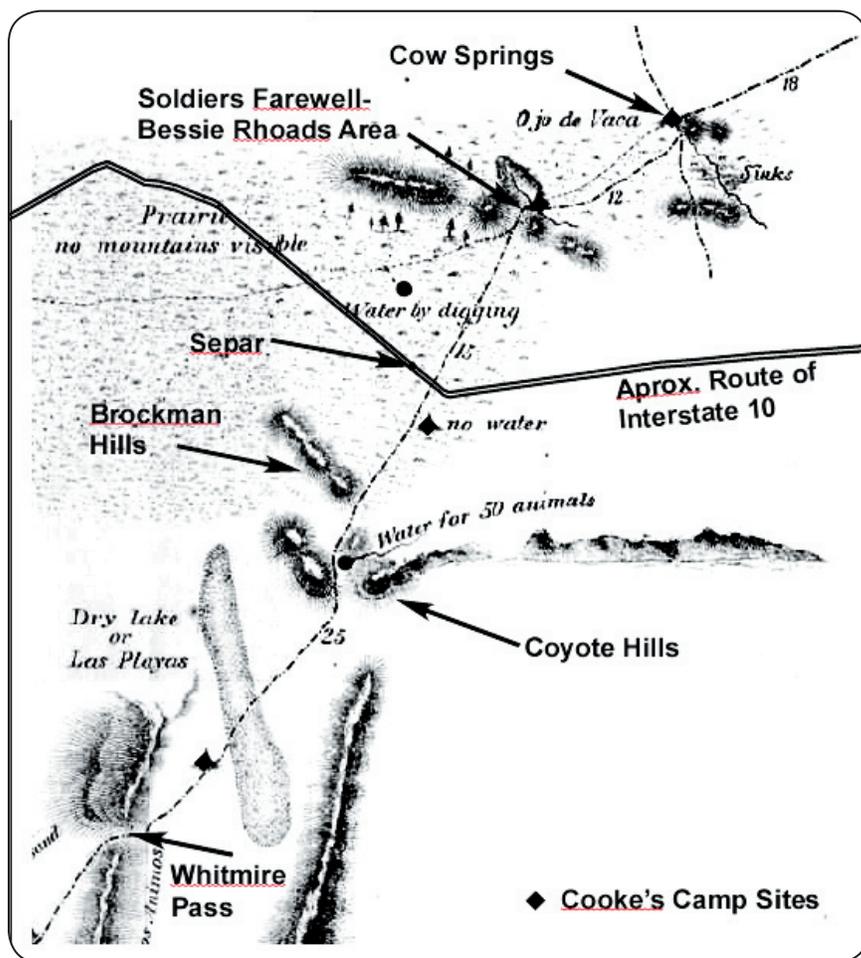
Sunday, October 2

The DeVaults, Richard Greene, and the Hilemans arrived in Lordsburg earlier than the rest of the group in order to have time to explore several possible access routes to our planned first night's camp, a point on Cooke's Route between Coyote Hills and Brockman Hills.

This pathfinder group followed I-10 east from Lordsburg to Exit 34 and took Hwy 113 south, passing over the Continental Divide at 4,500 feet. About sixteen miles south on Hwy 113 we pulled off the highway and tried to get access to a pipeline service road. This route cuts off several miles of very rough four-wheel drive travel, but the access point we had used on previous mapping trips had been closed off.¹

We continued down the highway, turned left on Highway 9, and headed east towards Hachita. After seven miles we left the paved road and went northeast on a good graded county road. This area is south and east of Coyote Hills. We had used this access on the spring trip and followed a ranch road (also known as the Continental Divide Trail) that runs past Vista Tank and up the center of Coyote Hills. This time we were going to go farther northeast on the county road before taking a different ranch road into the area.

As soon as we turned off the highway, we discovered that the Hilemans had a flat tire. While Richard and Brock changed the flat, Tracy and Judy went ahead to try to find a route to our first night's camp. The remaining Trail Turtles, led by Rose Ann, had gathered at Lordsburg and



Map of Cooke's route. From *The Conquest of New Mexico and California* by Philip St. George Cooke.

were on their way to join us. They met up with Richard and the Hilemans and then the entire group caught up with Tracy and Judy.

The ranch road that comes into this area was rough, and some vehicles bottomed out going through deep spots. Lightning flashes surrounded us and the wind howled. Pat White warned us to stay off the hill tops because of the lightning, so Rose Ann chose a camping spot next to the trail in a flat area. Our bivouac was right on Cooke's route, nestled in the north side of the low lying Coyote Hills. A fiery sunset was soon replaced by gathering storm clouds. At 7 p.m., as the first drop of rain fell, we snuggled down into our bedrolls.

Monday, October 3

A cool wind blew the storm clouds away, leaving a clear, starry night. Dawn broke at 5:30 a.m. Dark clouds blotted out the sun, with blue skies fringing the cloud cover. Brief coyote calls around 6 a.m. prompted Dixie to howl back. It was great weather for mapping, with clouds and a cool breeze. Just south of Brockman Hills, Cooke's Route splits into two parallel traces which join back together in the low foothills on the north side of Coyote Hills. We were camped right at the point where the two traces meet. In the morning we examined both routes, but found little trail evidence. Most of us were back in camp by 11 a.m.

After lunch Mike and Neal drove south to a stock tank, while others followed on foot. This tank appears green in satellite images so Rose Ann had dubbed it "Green Tank." The tank, which is kept full by a nearby windmill, sits in a drainage that comes down the north side of Coyote Hills. Richard followed the drainage to the top of a saddle or pass where Tracy thought the trail would have crossed into Coyote Hills. Part way up the hill, the wash coming down from the saddle crosses a rock outcropping. Here the group found a large, bathtub-sized basin. We are quite sure this is the "Water for 50 animals" shown on the map in Cooke's book *The Conquest of New Mexico and California*. This basin, mentioned in many trail diaries, is four by seven feet across and approximately two feet deep. Because it was partly filled with mud, it was difficult to determine its actual depth. Near the basin we found a number of mortar holes indicating that water has been

generally available here for many years. Not far up the wash we found a spring. In historic times this spring was the source for the water in the basin. In modern times the spring was capped and its water re-directed to Green Tank. Tracy, Mike, and Neal walked up to the saddle following the right (west) side of the drainage. They found old cans, a cartridge case, nails, and a windrow of rocks that had been moved out of the trail where it crossed through the rocky terrain.

In order to explore alternate routes, Brock and Richard looked for other channels coming down from saddles in the surrounding hills. The ground was steep and covered with big boulders, making it unlikely that the emigrants had gone this way. They saw no signs of trail.

We returned to camp. Lightning flashed and storm clouds quickly covered over a beautiful orange sunset. We were in bed by 7 p.m. A strong wind arose, but there was no rain, and we had another clear night sky with a display of thousands of stars. It had been a very good day.

Tuesday, October 4

Coyotes yapped just before dawn. The sun peeked at us through the clouds; it was perfect weather for mapping. Marie, Judy, and Levida remained in camp while the rest of the group returned to the site of the "Water for 50 animals." Tracy, Marian, and Neal examined the area north of Green Tank but found little sign of the trail. Richard, Ken, Pat, and Rose Ann went to look at the mortar holes and the "Water for 50 animals" basin. We encountered Border Patrol agents scouring the area on high-tech quad-runners. They told us that they had a tip that illegals were in the area. The Border Patrol agents on the ground were supported by two helicopters hovering overhead. The agents were interested in our boot treads, presumably so that they could distinguish our shoes' patterns from those of any illegal immigrants.

Before arriving at the rock basin, the Turtles found glass, scrap metal, and old tin cans scattered around. We took many photos of this unique and significant water source. Farther upstream, the wash opens out into a small basin at the bottom of a circle of hills. Railroad ties used as posts were situated next to a concrete slab with iron pipes

sticking out and over the wash. It looked like a spring had been capped, but there was no hint of water. About 100 feet away on the opposite side was an iron pipe sticking eight feet into the air. While there was considerable debris associated with the construction, we did not see any obvious signs of the trail leading out of the basin.

On the way back to camp Rose Ann missed a washout bypass and drove into a three-foot-deep ditch. Her truck's rear end stuck up in the air. Under Neal's direction, we cleared the front wheel in the ditch. Tracy got into the truck and put it in reverse to help drive it back. Neal hooked the tow rope to Marian's truck, and Marian pulled the truck out easily. Four Border Patrol agents watched the action.

We decided to head next for the Brockman Point area, which is at the extreme southeastern end of Brockman Hills. After lunch we packed our vehicles and moved to the Pipeline Road camp where we had stayed last spring. Tracy and Rose Ann reviewed e-mail messages from Kevin Henson which gave details about his 2008 trip through the area.² Henson said he had seen the same traces in the satellite images that we had seen, and he also had found the rock basin on the north side of Coyote Hills.

A sprinkle turned into a 10-minute shower. When the rain moved on, Mike and Neal walked to a nearby fence to look for waypoints taken from aerials. Tracy, Brock, Ken, Pat, and Richard searched from the Pipeline Road to Brockman Point, where a ranch road came within 50 feet of a swale. Along the swale they found rust, solder top cans, and a rock foundation with artifacts associated with a homestead.

The weather turned stormy as the evening progressed. The thunder and lightning encouraged us to break up early. We went to bed in our vehicles.

Wednesday, October 5

After the storm passed, we had a clear, starry night. In the morning, we woke to clear skies with a few white puffs of clouds. Just north of camp we crossed a fence and headed towards waypoints that Tracy had recorded from satellite images earlier. Richard followed a line of way points towards the Green Tank area, where he re-explored the "Water for 50 animals" and the wash. He hiked over the

saddle that Henson had mentioned and that Tracy, Mike, and Neal had traversed the day before, finding artifacts along the way. The Turtles explored the terrain beyond the fence and eventually Tracy and Mike found sections of the parallel swales. On-the-ground indicators were a visible swale, a wagon staple, rust, and broken glass.

Later that afternoon, we retreated to Lordsburg for the night. From our Pipeline Camp we took the Brockman Point ranch road north to the old black slag railroad bed to Interstate 10. The Hilemans got their flat fixed and proceeded east to Truth or Consequences. The rest of us headed west to Lordsburg. After dinner, we met in Rose Ann's room to discuss what we had found and to plan our next move. The motel showers and bed were heavenly.

Thursday, October 6

We had decided to revisit the place where Cooke's Road crossed Coyote Hills. We retraced our route from I-10 east to Highway 113, south to Hwy 9 and 7.3 miles east to the county road we had taken on Sunday. After 1.2 miles, we turned left to follow the Continental Divide Trail. We drove 3.6 miles west on this very rough road. On the way we passed the large stock tank known as Vista Tank, which was full of water. In one spot, Tracy's vehicle got stuck trying to cross a gully. We took a bypass and marked the spot to remind us to avoid it on our return. We passed another cattle watering area – a white tank. Our caravan was finally stopped by a deep, wide ravine that crossed the ranch road. It was a good stopping place as we were directly south of the "Water for 50 animals." Our best guess was that Cooke's route would have crossed the ridge to our north and come down somewhere near our vehicles.

The group explored the area where we expected the trail to come over the ridge from the water hole, but found no more evidence of trail. Richard and Charles walked back to see the "Water for 50 animals"; they took photos of the mortar holes – some of which were filled with water from the previous day's rain – as well as of the rock windrows that had been created to clear the trail up on the high banks of the wash. We looked for an easier way up the hill from the wash but decided that the route on which the artifacts were found was the actual trail.

Even though there is more mapping work to be done in this area, we decided to move north of I-10 and explore the area between Separ and the Thorn Ranch. Along the way Tracy had to cut off Rose Ann's mud flap, which was rubbing noisily against her tire. We stopped at Bowlins' Continental Divide store at the Separ exit and then drove north to the Power Line Road and camped. This campsite, which is down in a drainage, provided us some respite from the biting wind. Richard pulled his truck alongside Neal and Marian's truck to create a windbreak. We were determined not to let the wind stop us. During dinner, we fed nearby ants to distract them from bothering us.

Richard drove over to the Thorn Ranch, at the base of Bessie Rhoads Mountain, to obtain permission from the ranch manager to go onto the ranch. He told Richard that we would be able to get on the ranch the following day.

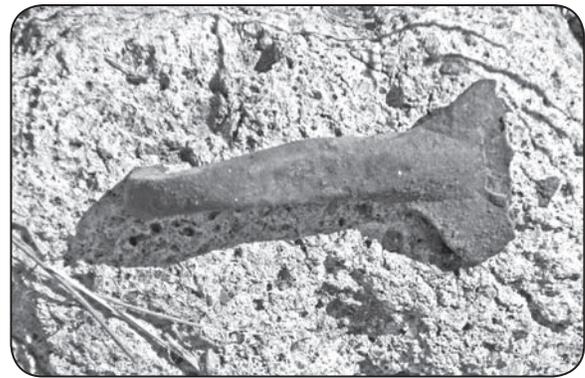
We retreated to our vehicles. The wind lessened to a gentle breeze; the night was starry with a half moon.

Friday, October 7

There was no sun this morning, and the wind required us to wear jackets. Rose Ann, Neal, Marian, Charles, Ken, and Pat drove south to check out the trail closer to Separ. Tracy, Judy, Mike, and Richard drove north, crossed through the Thorn Ranch, and proceeded west to Soldiers Farewell Hill, two miles away.

Judy stayed with the vehicles while Tracy, Mike, and Richard followed the waypoints on their GPSs that Tracy had downloaded from his earlier aerial searches. They found no evidence of trail and concluded that this was not where the trail went. Mike and Richard used the remaining time to visit Soldiers Farewell stage station. While making his way back through the ranch, Tracy spotted a rattler close to his vehicle.

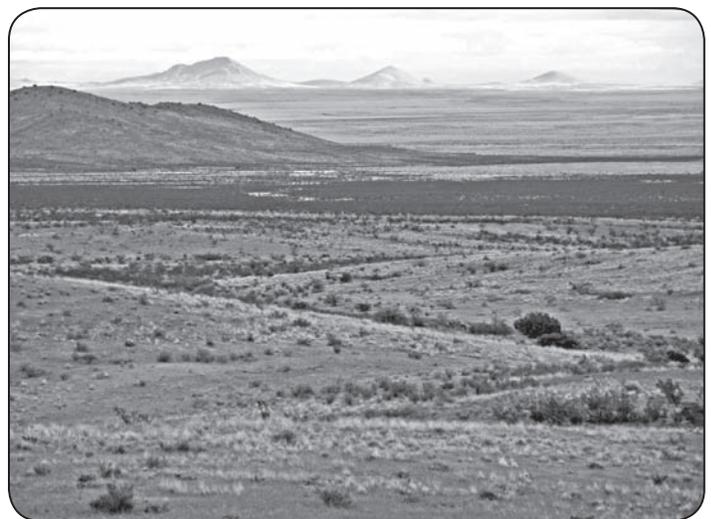
We all gathered by a cattle guard on the road to Separ. Not only had the wind steadily picked up all morning, but the temperature had dropped into the 50s. The weather played its final hand – we folded and retreated to Lordsburg. After Tracy downloaded our GPSs, we exchanged goodbyes and left for home. Even though the trip ended early, we had accomplished a great deal.



Single Tree Clip.
courtesy Tracy DeVault

Endnotes

1. Access to the area we have been mapping has become increasingly difficult, in part due to ranchers trying to keep drug traffickers off their land.
2. In 2008, after several years of planning, Kevin Henson walked Cooke's Route as part of a trek over the Mormon Battalion Trail. (The website <http://www.freerepublic.com/focus/f-chat/2141138/posts> discusses his journey.) The Trail Turtles have had a continuing dialog with Kevin ever since. During the current trip, we received several emails from Kevin, telling us what he had seen when he hiked through this area. Apparently he had found and identified the "Water for 50 animals" basin.



Looking north from Coyote Hills to Brockman Hills. Soldiers Farewell Hill is on the left and Bessie Rhodes Mountain is in the center in the distance. Cooke's Wagon Road follows a straight line from Soldiers Farewell Hill, past the tip of Brockman Hills, and to the left of the low hill from which the photo was taken.

photo by Tracy DeVault

“Water for 50 Animals” – A Long-Standing Mystery is Solved.

In western New Mexico, a section of Cooke’s Wagon Road runs southwest from Cow Springs to Guadalupe Pass, going past or through several well-known landmarks: Cow Springs, Soldiers Farewell Hill, Brockman Hills, Coyote Hills, Playas Lake, Whitmire Pass, Animas Valley, and Guadalupe Pass. The Southern Trails Chapter began its investigations of this section of the road in the late 1980s. To locate the trail, we used the map in Philip St. George Cooke’s book *The Conquest of New Mexico and California: An Historical and Personal Narrative* (New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1878), as well as a number of emigrant diaries. Finding the actual emigrant route in this area has proven to be very difficult.

The segment from Cow Springs to Playas Lake is about 52 miles in length, with very little water to be found along the way. As the road enters Coyote Hills, a single water source is identified on Cooke’s map as “Water for 50 animals.” This would have been a small amount of water for emigrants. Several diarists with the Mormon Battalion, as well as with subsequent emigrant trains, reported passing this water source. They often said that the basin did not contain enough water for the entire train. One diarist estimated the basin’s capacity at two hogsheads (about 126 gallons).

When we first began to research the route through Coyote Hills we were under the impression that Cooke’s Route entered Coyote Hills from the east, went past Vista Tank (a large, man-made earthen pond used to water range cattle) and approximately followed the modern four-wheel drive road that passes through Coyote Hills. Most of the information we have gathered over the years strongly indicates that this could not have been the route nor could Vista Tank have been the water source that the emigrants talked about. Nevertheless, we had a hard time letting go of our original belief about the location of the trail.

More recently, we decided to revisit this section of the road, throwing out our previous conclusions and starting from scratch. We pulled out the old maps, reread the diaries, and applied new techniques – such as satellite imaging – that were not available in the 1980s. This new research identified a possible trace that ran from Soldiers Farewell Hill to the eastern tip of Brockman Hills. On our May 2011 mapping trip we were able to verify that this trace was an early emigrant wagon road. Our best evidence was an ox shoe. (See *Desert Tracks*, June 2011.) We also discovered that the trace bent slightly to the west as it passed the tip of Brockman Hills. Since Vista Tank is far to the east of Brockman Hills, this was the last nail in the coffin of the Vista Tank theory.

After the May trip we revisited the satellite images and found two parallel traces that ran from the eastern tip of Brockman Hills across a broad valley and then entered the north side of Coyote Hills through a low pass. This October we returned to the area and followed the traces we had seen in the satellite images. The parallel traces join together just north of Coyote Hills. As the resulting single trace starts up a draw, it crosses an area of exposed bedrock. To the left of the trace is a catch basin in the rock about the size of a large bathtub. Although now half filled with mud, it was clear that the basin would actually hold water. Near it were a number of mortar holes, which suggested that that water had been available in this area for centuries.

Beyond the basin, where the route gets steeper, we were able to find a number of artifacts, including a single-tree clip. We were all satisfied that we had finally found Cooke’s Road and his “Water for 50 animals.”

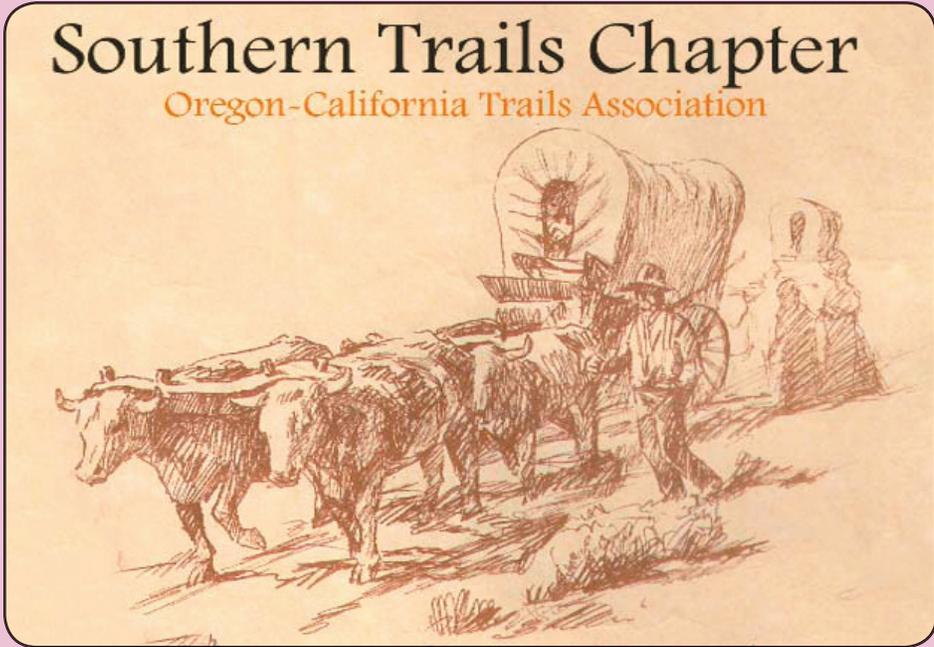
Tracy DeVault and Rose Ann Tompkins



Richard Greene at the site of the “Water for 50 animals.”
photo by Tracy DeVault

Southern Trails Chapter

Oregon-California Trails Association



OCTA:
The Oregon-California
Trails Association



Sunset on the Southern Trail
photo by Rose Ann Tompkins