

# *Desert Tracks*

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

January 2014



**The San Antonio-El Paso Road**

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

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**Table of Contents**

**From the Editors . . . . . 1**  
**Letter to the Editors (Ahnert) . . . . . 2**  
**Reviews**  
*Empire of the Summer Moon* by S. C. Gwynne (Hill) . . . . . 3  
**The Searchers: The Novel, the Film, the Analysis (Lawrences)**  
*The Searchers* a novel by Alan Le May . . . . . 4  
*The Searchers* a film by John Ford . . . . . 5  
*The Searchers: Making of an American Legend* by Glenn Frankel . . . 6  
*Massacre at Point of Rocks* by Doug Hocking (Sandoux) . . . . . 7  
*Old Man's Love Story* (Dalton) . . . . . 7  
**Socorro Vigilantes (Harden) . . . . . 8**  
**Geronimo Springs Museum (Tompkins) . . . . . 9**  
**San Antonio-El Paso Road (Lawrences) . . . . . 10**  
**San Antonio-El Paso Road (Hudspeth) . . . . . 12**  
**Howard's Well Massacre (Hudspeth) . . . . . 15**  
**Lieutenant Barrett's Grave (Volberg and DeVault) . . . . . 17**  
**Trail Turtles' Fall Mapping Trip (Greene) . . . . . 21**  
**STC 2014 Spring Meeting in Temecula . . . . . Inside back cover**

**On the Cover:**

**The San Antonio-El Paso Road as  
it descends Lancaster Hill towards Fort  
Lancaster.**

*photo by Claude Hudspeth*

## From the Editors

We welcome Claude Hudspeth of San Angelo, Texas, to these pages and to the Southern Trails Chapter. Claude is an authority on the Lower Road that the military and emigrants used to travel from San Antonio to El Paso. We include a photo essay taken from a presentation that Claude gave to an OCTA symposium in 2012, as well as an article on the Howard's Well massacre of 1872 that took place not far from Hudspeth's ranch in Crockett County, Texas.

In keeping with the Texas theme, we include a review by Walter Drew Hill of the recent book *Empire of the Summer Moon* by S. C. Gwynne. The book concerns the rise and fall of the Comanche nation. It begins with the history of the Comanche raid on Fort Parker in 1836, during which Cynthia Ann Parker (mother of Quanah Parker) was taken as a captive. The search for Cynthia Ann by her relatives was the basis of the novel *The Searchers* by Alan Le May, which was itself the basis of the western movie of the same title by John Ford. A recent book by Glenn Frankel relates the history of these events and then examines the role of Le May's book and Ford's film on the status of the Parker legend. We provide a review of both books and the movie.

Alan Dalton of Santa Fe reviews *The Old Man's Love Story* by Rudolfo Anaya, one of the deans of Hispanic culture in the Southwest. We have also included a review by our friend Rahm Sandoux of Doug Hocking's book on the 1849 massacre at the Point of Rocks on the Santa Fe Trail. Hocking is a member of the Southern Trails Chapter. A resident of southern Arizona, he is a free lance writer who has written three novels on southwestern themes.

This fall, several Trail Turtles visited the Geronimo Springs Museum in Truth or Consequences, New Mexico. They were invited by Levida Hileman, who had discovered boxes of material that the family of Keith Humphries (1907-2002), a local authority on the history of southern New Mexico, had contributed to the museum. We include an article by Rose Ann

Tompkins on their discoveries, and a photo of a painting by Humphries on the back cover of this issue.

Tracy DeVault and Mike Volberg contribute an article on their efforts to locate the grave of Lieutenant James Barrett, who was killed in the Civil War skirmish at Picacho Peak and buried in the vicinity.

The Trail Turtles returned to the Mimbres River basin for their fall mapping trip. Richard Greene's article describes their effort to locate several branches of the trail that forked off east of the river and then rejoined on the west side.

Paul Harden's brief article on the Socorro vigilantes relates fascinating history of territorial New Mexico during a period of lawlessness and racial violence.

On the inside back cover, we include the agenda for the Southern Trails Chapter's spring 2014 symposium in Temecula, California. It promises to be a stimulating event.

### *Deborah and Jon Lawrence*



Cynthia Ann Parker and her daughter Prairie Flower.

## Correction

David Miller has informed us that an incorrect image of Rock Mary was included in the June 2012 issue of *Desert Tracks*. The correct image is provided below.



## Letter to the Editors

The map in the article titled “Finding Leach’s Well with Dennis Wells” by Greg McEachron (*Desert Tracks*, June 2013) indicates that I disagree with McEachron about the location of Leach’s Well. McEachron believes the well to be in the vicinity of the Montezuma Head Tanks, while I think the well is precisely where it is shown on Leach’s map. This well is clearly the same one that Leach mentions in the description in his report where he states that it is “[a]bout the middle of the plain . . .” Although many of the maps of his time were not to scale, Leach did show the important geographic features of the area that can be seen today. These include the small lone hill that Greg speculates is near the location of Leach’s Well, which is ten miles away from where Leach locates the well on his map. When the hills, the wash, and the plain shown on Leach’s map are compared to present day topographic maps, it becomes clear that the wash must be the “West Prong Waterman Wash.” The plain is the Forty Mile Desert. “About the middle of the plain . . .” would be close to the nineteen miles from Maricopa Wells to the well shown on Leach’s map. Greg’s site is only nine miles to the west of Maricopa Wells, and not in the middle of the plain.

The West Prong Waterman Wash is about at the midpoint of the Forty Mile Desert and about five miles from the foot of Pima (Butterfield) Pass. In further support of my hypothesis that this would be the logical place for Leach to dig a well to aid travelers, I note that emigrant journals (for example, *Mexican Gold Trail* by George W. B. Evans and *The Gila Trail* by Benjamin Butler Harris) mention that the most commonly used camping ground in the area was five miles from the pass.

McEachron’s map also suggests that the well is at the same location as the Desert Stage Station. The map on page 97 of my book *The Butterfield Trail and Overland Mail Company in Arizona, 1858-1861* shows the station located on the other side of the wash, about one third mile to the east. The Desert Stage Station did not exist at the time that Leach dug this unsuccessful well in September 1858 and so is not shown on his map.

*Gerald T. Ahnert*



Trail Turtles working at the Geronimo Springs Museum.  
Left to right: Brock Hileman, Rose Ann Tompkins,  
Levida Hileman, Tracy DeVault, Judy DeVault.  
*photo by Mike Volberg*

## Reviews

*Empire of the Summer Moon: Quanah Parker and the Rise and Fall of the Comanches, the Most Powerful Indian Tribe in American History*

S.C. Gwynne

New York: Scribner, 2010.

ISBN: 978-1-4165-9105-4.

Hardcover, \$26.00; paperback \$16.00.

Quanah Parker was the oldest son of Peta Nocona, a Quahadi Comanche chief, and Cynthia Ann Parker, an Anglo-Texan captive. Quanah rose up in the leadership of the Quahadi band to become the last and greatest chief of the Comanches, the tribe that ruled the Great Plains for most of the 19th century. Spiraling outward from the biography of Quanah Parker, *Empire of the Summer Moon* tells the story of the rise and fall of the Comanches, setting it in the larger context of the American West.

Gwynne's history begins with the May 1836 Comanche raid on Parker's Fort near present-day Groesbeck in eastern Texas. Having emigrated from Illinois, the Parkers worked 16,100 acres on the edge of Anglo westward expansion into Comanche territory. When a band of Kiowa and Comanche warriors attacked the fort, they mutilated, raped, and tortured everyone that they could, except for two women and three children whom they kidnapped. Among the captives taken into the depths of Comancheria was Cynthia Ann Parker, a blue-eyed nine-year-old.

Such a raid was not out of the ordinary for the Comanches, who used brutal tactics to repel anyone encroaching on what they considered their rightful territory. The horse gave the Comanches an astonishing mobility. It not only gave them mastery over the buffalo, but transformed them from foot soldiers into cavalymen. This allowed them to keep the Spanish empire from spreading onto the plains beyond Texas. They gained a military dominance over Anglos, Mexicans, and other tribes. Even the Apaches farther west were a mild threat by comparison. Gwynne asserts that the imperial

dominance of the Comanches was no accident of geography: "It was the product of over 150 years of deliberate, sustained combat against a series of enemies over a singular piece of land that contained the country's largest buffalo herds" (24).

Although Cynthia Ann Parker quickly assimilated into this Comanche culture, her surviving Parker relatives did not forget her. Her uncle James Parker, a Texas Ranger, spent eight years looking for her. Alan LeMay's novel *The Searchers* (1954) immortalizes the story of Cynthia Ann's uncle's search for his niece. Similar to the novel, director John Ford's classic 1956 western, *The Searchers*, is less interested in Cynthia Ann than in the obsessed uncle. Played by John Wayne, the uncle devotes years of his life in a dogged pursuit of his niece – not to rescue her, but to kill her in an attempt to enforce his own twisted notions of sexual and racial purity.

Cynthia Ann, known as Nautdah, married Peta Nocona, the son of Iron Jacket who was well known for wearing a Spanish coat of mail. They had three children, including Quanah, who was born about 1848. In 1860, at age 34, Cynthia Ann was recaptured along with her young daughter Topsana at the Battle of Pease River in northwest Texas and reunited with her Parker relatives. She was re-immersed into white society against her will. Permanently traumatized, she spent the last ten years of her life unable to readjust. She died in 1870.

Twelve-year-old Quanah was with his mother when she was captured by white troops, but he managed to escape during the fight. He rose to become a chief who refused to accept the provisions of the 1867 Treaty of Medicine Lodge, which confined the southern Plains Indians to a reservation in Indian Territory. But in 1875, as the U.S. finally came to dominate the Comanches, Quanah and his band surrendered peacefully at Fort Sill in present-day Oklahoma and were sent to the Kiowa-Comanche-Apache Reservation.

Unlike his mother who was not able to fit back into the Anglo world from which she was taken in

1836, Quanah became, according to Gwynne, the most successful and influential Native American of the late nineteenth century. Resigned to life on the reservation, he transformed himself into a prosperous cattleman, became the only man ever to hold the title Principal Chief of the Comanches, and lobbied Congress for fairer treatment for Native Americans. He sat on the local school board, moved into a home called “Star House,” got a telephone and a car, appeared in the first two-reel western movie, and earned the respect and friendship of Teddy Roosevelt. A few months before his death in February 1911, Quanah spoke to an overflow crowd at the Texas State Fair in Dallas. “I used to be a bad man,” he said. “Now I am a citizen of the United States. I pay taxes same as you do. We are the same people now” (317).

Curiously, Gwynne does not cite Pekka Hämäläinen’s book *Comanche Empire* (Yale 2008), which contains exceptional scholarship and original analysis on the ways in which the Comanches paved the way for U. S. expansion in the Southwest. Another surprising omission is Brian DeLay’s book, *War of a Thousand Deserts* (Yale 2008), a history that focuses on Comancheria in the early-to-mid 1800s. These complimentary volumes are considered to represent the finest recent scholarship on the Comanches. They certainly deserve inclusion in a book that touts the subtitle “Quanah Parker and the Rise and Fall of the Comanches, the Most Powerful Indian Tribe in American History.”

While it is not cutting-edge western history, *Empire of the Summer Moon* is nevertheless a very readable contribution to the history of Texas, Westward expansion, and Native America.

### **Walter Drew Hill**

Fort Parker.  
photo by Deborah  
Lawrence



### *The Searchers: A Novel, a Film, and an Analysis of the Legend*

#### *The Searchers*

Alan Le May

New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1954.

Reprint: New York: Kensington Publishing, 2013.

ISBN: 9780786031429.

Paperback, \$6.99.

Le May’s novel is at heart a captivity narrative set in Texas. It is based loosely on the abduction of nine-year-old Cynthia Ann Parker in eastern Texas by Comanche raiders in 1836. (See the accompanying review of *Empire of the Summer Moon*.) Le May’s focus, however, is not on Cynthia Ann, but on her uncle James, who in the novel is renamed Amos Edwards. Indeed, the actual protagonist is the captive’s fictional foster brother, Martin Pauley.

Le May moves the story forward to 1868, allowing him to turn Amos into an angry, implacable Confederate war veteran. White settlements are being attacked by Kiowa and Comanche raiders. Henry and Martha Edwards and their children, Lucy, Debbie, Ben, and Hunter live at the edge of civilization with Martin Pauley, a young man whom the Edwards adopted when Comanches slaughtered his family. They are visited frequently by Henry’s brother Amos, a man who is in love with his brother’s wife and consequently returns to the ranch time and again. Martin and Amos are lured away from the ranch after a Comanche party steals a herd of cattle. They pursue them for quite a distance before realizing that they have been duped by the Indians whose real goal is a murder raid. By the time they arrive back at the Edwards’ ranch, it is in ruins, the parents and the boys are dead and scalped, and the girls are missing.

What ensues is Martin and Amos’ five-year search for the girls. At first, Martin is driven by a memory of how he ignored Debbie on her last day of life. Amos, like Melville’s Captain Ahab, is obsessed by an all-consuming revenge. During the course of the search, the two survive intense heat on the summer plains, severe cold and winter winds in the mountains, and

gun battles with Comanches and ruthless outlaws. As he matures, Martin changes from a frightened teenager into an experienced, determined young man. He becomes the leader, speaking to and negotiating with the Indians. He continues to stay with Amos because he is worried that Amos, who believes Debbie has been defiled by the Indians, will kill her if he finds her. Developing a respect for Martin, Amos makes him his heir. The two are known to the Indians as “Bull Shoulders” (Amos) and “The Other” (Martin).

Set in the early 1870s, the tale plays out during the period of the transition from Grant’s peace policy to the Red River War, when the Comanches were finally subdued and forced onto the reservation. The final scenes, when Debbie is eventually discovered, involve a fictionalized version of one of these battles.

People from all levels of society read westerns, and Le May’s novel is among the best. The key images of the genre are all here: the chase on horseback, the fistfight, the codes of conduct, the lonely landscape. Wedded to violence, the book embeds exciting action in a reasonably accurate version of history. Le May does an excellent job portraying the characters and their motivations. And, reader be warned: there is deep pathos.

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***The Searchers*: a 1956 Western film.  
directed by John Ford**

The Western is our most mythic national genre and John Ford’s *The Searchers* is arguably our greatest Western. Based on Alan Le May’s book, it follows the quest of the uncle, renamed Ethan Edwards (John Wayne), and his adopted nephew Martin Pauley (Jeffrey Hunter) who search for Debbie (Natalie Wood), who had been captured by the Comanches.

In the book, the focus is on Pauley, his loss, his despair, and his growth through tremendous trial. The emphasis of the movie is quite different. John

Wayne dominates the film. He is perfect for the role of the uncle. It is almost as if the novel was written with him in mind.

At the beginning of the movie, Ethan Edwards is identified as a war veteran who has just returned home. He wears a long Confederate overcoat and strapped to his saddle roll is a saber with its scabbard wrapped in the gray silk of the Confederate Army. Still carrying his cavalry saber – years after Lee’s surrender – Ethan continues to see himself as a member of the Confederate Army. He says, “I don’t believe in surrenders. I still got my sword.”

In the movie, Ethan dislikes his nephew because he is a half breed. This allows Ford the opportunity to emphasize his portrayal of Ethan as a virulent racist and Indian-hater. And similar to the novel, the film’s central question is not whether they will find Debbie, but what will Ethan do if he finds her. Crazy by his hatred of Comanches, Ethan would rather see his niece dead than living as an Indian. He searches to find her, but not in order to restore her to her family: he plans to kill her.

The two searchers begin a journey that takes them through southwestern Texas, Colorado, and the New Mexico Territory. A series of false leads takes them from one Indian tribe and cavalry outpost to the next, until they eventually discover Debbie, now a teenager and one of the wives of the notorious Chief Scar. When Ethan attempts to shoot her, Martin shields her with his body and a Comanche shoots Ethan with an arrow. At the end of the movie, the two men return to Scar’s camp. Martin kills Scar and then tries to rescue Debbie from Ethan who appears intent on killing her.

Although it received no major Academy Award nominations, the film was a commercial success. Since its release, it has come to be considered a masterpiece. In 2008, it was named the Greatest American Western of all time by the American Film Institute, and it placed 12th on the American Film Institute’s 2007 list of the 100 greatest American movies of all time.

*The Searchers: The Making of an American Legend*  
Glenn Frankel

New York: Bloomsbury USA, 2013.

ISBN: 9781608191055.

Hardcover, \$28.00.

Using previously unpublished accounts and other archival material, Frankel discusses the history of the Comanche attack on Fort Parker, the abduction of Cynthia Ann Parker, and her “re-capture” on December 19, 1860, after a battle at the Pease River in Texas. He describes her inability to readjust and her early death. Then he explores the story of her son Quanah Parker, a warrior who became a peacemaker, a land baron living in a conventional house, and a co-founder of the early Native American Church (where peyote was the sacrament).

After examining the events from a historical standpoint, Frankel describes how the Parker story moved from fact to legend, leading to Alan Le May’s novel and John Ford’s film. A Pulitzer Prize-winning former *Washington Post* reporter, Frankel asserts that the facts surrounding Parker’s captivity were in some cases exaggerated and even invented to fit each storyteller’s purpose. He also describes how every generation has re-imagined Parker and then has changed what it needs to fit its own sensibility. Whereas in the nineteenth century, Parker was a heroine to some for surviving her captivity and to others merely a white Comanche, one hundred years later she was viewed as a proto-feminist, the original tough Texas woman. According to Frankel, “[t]he truth was less triumphalist and more poignant. Cynthia Ann was not the hardy survivor but rather the ultimate victim of the Texan-Comanche wars, abducted and traumatized by both sides” (87).

Le May’s *Searchers* came to the attention of John Ford, who bought the film rights. Frankel sees strong connections between the original story, the novel, and the film. In an interview in the *Austin Chronicle* (February 15, 2013), Frankel emphasized that what all the versions have in common is “gender, the

way women are looked at. Because that’s out there from the very beginning, in the way that polite society deals with [Cynthia Ann] while she’s a ‘white Comanche’ they can’t find, and then when she does return and she’s so different from what they expected.”

However, there are major differences as well. Most importantly, Ford followed Le May in darkening the character of Cynthia Ann Parker’s uncle. Ethan Edwards is not the quintessential Western hero, but a racist Indian-hater whose desire for revenge is limitless. Even Debbie eventually becomes the object of his murderous rage. This role of the dark knight was furthered through the casting of John Wayne as Ethan. In the book, Frankel writes that John Wayne’s character “shoots the eyes out of a Comanche Indian corpse, scalps another dead Indian, disrupts a funeral service, fires at warriors collecting their dead and wounded from the battlefield, and slaughters a buffalo herd to deprive Comanche families of food for the winter. Still, because he is played by John Wayne, we identify with Ethan’s quest even if we recoil from his purpose” (6).

Frankel emphasizes Ford’s highly visual form of storytelling – his ability of conveying meaning without having the characters speak. Comparing the original screenplay to the finished version, Frankel sees evidence of Ford’s restraint as a filmmaker. In the *Austin Chronicle* interview, he explained that every time the screenplay and finished version differ, it was because Ford had eliminated exposition, dialogue, and explanation, leaving the viewer with pure visual storytelling. This creates ambiguity, where the viewer has to decide why the characters do what they do. “And that’s the art of the film.”

In *The Searchers: The Making of an American Legend*, Glenn Frankel’s excellent research and fine writing provide the reader with a fascinating journey from fact to fiction, from brutal event to myth.

***Deborah and Jon Lawrence***

*Massacre at Point of Rocks*

Doug Hocking

Sierra Vista, Arizona: Treble Heart Books, 2013.

ISBN: 9781938370328.

Paperback, \$13.99.

In 1849, James White, a Santa Fe Trail merchant, was traveling with a wagon train led by Francois X. Aubrey. When the wagon train camped at a place where it was deemed that the dangerous part of the trip was passed, White took his wife Ann, their baby daughter, and a black servant ahead of the slow moving wagon train. After a few days of traveling by themselves, they stopped at the Point of Rocks. The group was approached by a band of Jicarilla Apaches, asking for presents. Later, being refused several times, they attacked the settlers. Everyone except for Ann White, her child, and the servant were killed.

When Aubry heard of the murders, he offered a \$1,000 reward for the return of Mrs. White. Captain William Grier and his soldiers were sent out from the Army garrison near Taos to rescue Mrs. White. Although they were accompanied by two experienced guides, Antoine Leroux and Robert Fisher, Grier persuaded Kit Carson to join them. Finally they came upon the unsuspecting Jicarillas on the banks of the Canadian River near Tucumcari Butte. Catching them unawares, Carson, who was in the lead, moved towards the camp, motioning the others to follow. A shot was fired that struck Captain Grier, causing no serious injury, but the delay allowed all but one of the Indians to escape. The body of Mrs. White was found, still warm, shot through the heart by an arrow.

Doug Hocking's *Massacre at Point of Rocks* is a fascinating story of historic events along the Santa Fe Trail in 1849. It's filled with adventure and revenge, but offers little in the way of redemption. And like other westerns reviewed in these pages, it posits perseverance and endurance, not so much as the ability to make an effort as the ability to sustain it. Setting the White massacre and captivity in context, Hocking reveals to readers the ethnic side of the frontier, showing how Indians, Mexicans, and blacks were just as much a part of that historical tapestry

as the white men were. He brings characters like Kit Carson, Grier, Comancheros, and the Jicarilla Apaches to life, revealing how tough life was on the frontier for all of its inhabitants.

A member of the Southern Trail Chapter, Hocking grew up on the Jicarilla Apache Reservation and attended reservation schools. Most likely this is what lies behind his detailed and interesting depictions of the Jicarilla Apaches and their culture. Hocking's style is not dense or difficult, but he does not trim his story down. Instead, he develops the characters' motivations and feelings, explaining their actions at every step of their way.

*Massacre at Point of Rocks* will definitely be of interest to readers who want to learn more about the history of New Mexico and the Santa Fe Trail.

***Rahm E. Sandoux***

The book can be ordered through the website

<http://shop.doughocking.com>.

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*The Old Man's Love Story*

Rudolfo Anaya

Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2013.

ISBN-13: 978-0806143576.

Paperback, \$19.95.

"There was an old man who dwelt in the land of New Mexico, and he lost his wife." Thus begins Rudolfo Anaya's intensely personal novella about a nameless narrator who must learn how to deal with his life without his beloved wife. And the author does not hide the fact that he is writing about himself, his wife Patricia Anaya who died after an illness in 2011, and their marriage of 44 years. Incorporating references to *Randy Lopez Goes Home* (2011), *Tortuga* (1979), *Heart of Aztlan* (1976) and *Bless Me, Ultima* (1972), Anaya uses the book to process his grief.

Anaya's lyrical writing is filled with curiosity about the spiritual nature of existence and death. Without his wife, the old man finds himself lost. Her spirit

visits him and attempts to help him through his grief. She talks with him, comforts him, listens to him, and encourages him to move on and make new memories. The old man struggles to do so and tries to continue on with his daily activities – swimming, gardening, and spending time with his friends and family. But he is constantly reliving memories he shared with his wife. Eventually, out of his intense loneliness, the old man attempts to begin a new relationship, but he finds it is not easy. Feelings of guilt and worries about sexuality and lost vitality of old age haunt him.

We follow him as he buys groceries, sits in the garden with his dogs, and goes to a senior citizen center. He complains about his aching body, his loss of memory, his lack of appetite. It is a difficult time, exacerbated by the old man's aging process. Kids skateboarding at the mall on 2nd and Central in downtown Albuquerque think the old man talking to no one in sight is losing his mind. He agrees that maybe he is. He balances on the edge of the spiritual world, seeking a way to hold his wife's hand again. He feels her presence so keenly that he keeps up an ongoing dialogue with her.

The love between the couple is touching. While most of Anaya's work concerns the culture of Hispanics in the Southwest, this book is more general and yet, at the same time, more personal. In *The Old Man's Love Story*, Anaya's character speaks to anyone who has suffered the loss of a loved one.

***Alan Dalton***

## **The Socorro Vigilantes and Ethan Eaton**

***by Paul Harden***

In the 1880s, racial tensions between Anglo Americans and Hispanics were building up in Socorro, New Mexico. In part this reflected the refusal of Sheriff Luis Tafoya and Jesús Baca to arrest certain criminals believed to be their close friends or relatives. The editor of the *Socorro Sun*, A. M. Conklin, was fairly vocal about these problems in his newspaper. In 1880, he was shot at point blank range and killed as he exited his church after Christmas Eve service. His killers were Antonio, Onofre, and Abran Baca. Witnesses testified that Onofre pulled the trigger. These three were possibly cousins and/or brothers, and they were also related to Sheriff Baca. They were not arrested but were allowed to flee town, which pushed racial tensions even higher.

The Socorro Vigilantes were formed to track down the Baca cousins and bring them to justice. The three men scattered. Antonio was killed while trying to escape. Onofre was discovered in Mexico by a Texas Ranger. Enroute to Santa Fe, the Socorro Vigilantes overwhelmed the ranger and relieved him of his prisoner. Onofre was hung that evening in Socorro. Abran was captured in Texas, stood trial in Socorro, and found not guilty. To escape the vigilantes, he wisely left town. Returning in 1900, he lived the rest of his days in Socorro County.

Most evidence indicates the Vigilantes were formed and headed by Colonel Ethan Eaton. Eaton was a Civil War Union officer and most references to him are given as "Col. Ethan Eaton" up to his death. He appeared to have sufficient influence in local business and politics that he was essentially untouchable for some of his darker exploits and for skirting the law. He served a single term as mayor in 1885-1886.

The Vigilantes were active for about three years. They murdered seven men – six by hanging – mostly people whom Colonel Eaton thought were not given

*continued on page 20*

## Geronimo Springs Museum

Levida Hileman, a volunteer at the Geronimo Springs Museum in Truth or Consequences, New Mexico, recently discovered boxes of material that the family of Keith Humphries (1907-2002) had donated to the museum after his death.

A former civil engineer at the White Sands Missile Range, Keith Humphries was a New Mexican author, historian, and painter. As a young man, his family lived in Toyah, Texas, next to the Van Horn Wells stage station. Humphries listened to the memories of old timers in the area and these stories fueled his desire to record history. He wasn't able to pursue his passion until retirement. He wrote a book titled *Apache Land from Those Who Lived It* and painted Wild West scenes to recount some of the older stories. In 2000, Humphries received a New Mexico Historic Preservation Award for his lifelong devotion to the preservation of southwestern history.

Hileman sent Tracy DeVault and myself several scanned copies of Humphries' material that she thought might be useful for our trail research. Prior to the fall mapping trip, four of us – Tracy DeVault, Judy DeVault, Mike Volberg, and myself – met Levida and Brock Hileman at the museum. They introduced us to the staff who had prepared tables for us to set up our computers and scanners. [Photo on page 2.] They also provided us with lunch. It was a wonderful opportunity to work on this collection, view the displays at the museum, and browse in their small shop of books and local art. One evening I gave a trail presentation to interested patrons.

Besides examining the extensive notes of Humphries and scanning a number of items that we considered relevant to our research, we photographed over 80 of his paintings. [For an example of his art, see the back cover of this issue.] Although only a few of them are on display, all of them were made available to us. We plan to give them a digitized record of all the information and photographs when we have processed everything.

*Rose Ann Tompkins*



Humphries' sketch of the remains of the Butterfield station at the Mimbres River. The list of what he found there follows:

### EVIDENCE FOUND AT MIMBRES STATION (STAGECOACH, BUTTERFIELD) STAND 5/23/38

- Coke At NW corner near blacksmith shop
- Old spades
- Many barrel hoops (rusty iron) later date, very likely.
- Remnants of old Army dishes (thick)
- Same as found at Forts Bowie, Cummings, Seldon and Fillmore
- Old type plaster on walls, same as Bowie, Seldon, Fillmore and Cummings
- Plow (recent probably)
- Old tree stump used for anvil with horseshoe nails still in stump
- Anvil near NE corner (?) probably of later date.
- Heavy Nails – old bolts, Many horse shoes
- All walls had heavy stone foundation;
- If walls were made of stone, then rock was hauled away. Possible adobe walls.
- According Roscoe P. Conklin, El Paso walls were 11 ft. high
- Shells of 1882 on Hill to East.
- Marked trail of misquite bushes leads direct to stand. No misquites in vicinity of trail.
- Caused by stock.
- Trail leading west only slight depression on ridges and knolls. Well defined by misquites

## The San Antonio-El Paso Road

Historic background for the photoessay by Claude Hudspeth on page 12.

In the late 1840s, three groups sought to establish roads through west Texas. Merchants sought a route from San Antonio and other cities of southeastern Texas that would allow passage of wagons to the city of Chihuahua in Mexico. Such a route could either go through El Paso or through Presidio del Norte (near La Junta, the junction of the Rio Conchos with the Rio Grande, 350 miles west of San Antonio and 200 miles southeast of El Paso). The intent was to provide an alternative to and competition with the trade that went down the Santa Fe Trail from Westport, Missouri, to Santa Fe, New Mexico, and then on to Chihuahua. Following the Mexican War, the U. S. Army also sought to establish roads through Texas that would help supply troops stationed at El Paso and in southern New Mexico. Third, with the advent of the California Gold Rush, large numbers of emigrants sought to travel through Texas to link up with the Southern Emigrant Trail near Doña Ana, New Mexico.

In late 1848, Captain John Coffee Hays, the noted Texas Ranger who had fought with distinction in Mexico, was asked by San Antonio merchants to determine the route of a wagon road to El Paso. Captain Sam Highsmith and a detachment of Texas Rangers joined Hays, as did the San Antonio merchant Samuel Maverick. The group became hopelessly lost and ended up at La Junta, from which they returned to San Antonio. While they were not successful in finding an appropriate route, they did learn a considerable amount about the land between San Antonio and the Trans-Pecos region of Texas.

In 1849, Lieutenant William H. C. Whiting, an army engineer, and Lieutenant William F. Smith, a topographical engineer, were ordered to scout the territory and determine whether a military route could be established from the Gulf Coast through San Antonio to El Paso. Richard Howard, who had accompanied the Hays expedition, was chosen as scout. From February to May, the group established what was to become the “lower road” or “military road” which went west from San Antonio to the lower reaches of the Devils River (near its junction with the Rio Grande), across the highlands between the Devils and Pecos Rivers, fording near what became Fort Lancaster. The road then went west through Comanche Springs (later to become Fort Stockton) to the Davis Mountains, joining the Rio Grande about 100 miles downstream from El Paso and then following the river upstream to its destination. In June, a large military train under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Joseph E. Johnson and Major Jefferson Van Horne traversed the trail with 225 wagons and 2,500 animals – the first wagon train to follow the lower road. The Whiting expedition also explored some of what became the “upper route” that went from San Antonio to Fredericksburg, through the Hill Country to the San Saba, and then west to the Horsehead Crossing of the Pecos. From there the upper route travelled west to traverse the southern edge of the Guadalupe Mountains past Hueco Tanks and then on to El Paso.

During 1849 and 1850, large numbers of gold seekers traveled both routes. The earliest travelers had great difficulties, but wagon tracks soon established an easy-to-follow road. While most emigrants initially followed the upper route, with time the military route became favored. This was in large part because the army established a series of forts that protected the lower road. Founded in 1852, Fort Clark was located on the eastern end of the trail on Las Moras Creek between San Antonio and the Devils River. It later became the headquarters for the Seminole-Negro Scouts, who served at Fort Clark from 1872 to 1914. Fort Davis was established in 1854 at the base of the Davis Mountains. It became a key post for safeguarding the west Texas frontier against Comanches and Apaches. It is today considered to be one of the best remaining examples of a frontier military base in the Southwest. Fort Lancaster was initiated in 1855 on Live Oak Creek near the site where the San Antonio-El Paso Road crossed the Pecos. In 1867, a large band of Kickapoo Indians attempted to raid the fort’s horse herd, making it the only fort in Texas that was attacked by Indians. Camp Hudson was established on a tributary of the Devils River in 1857 and Fort Quitman was built in 1858 on the Rio Grande at a site 80 miles south of El Paso.

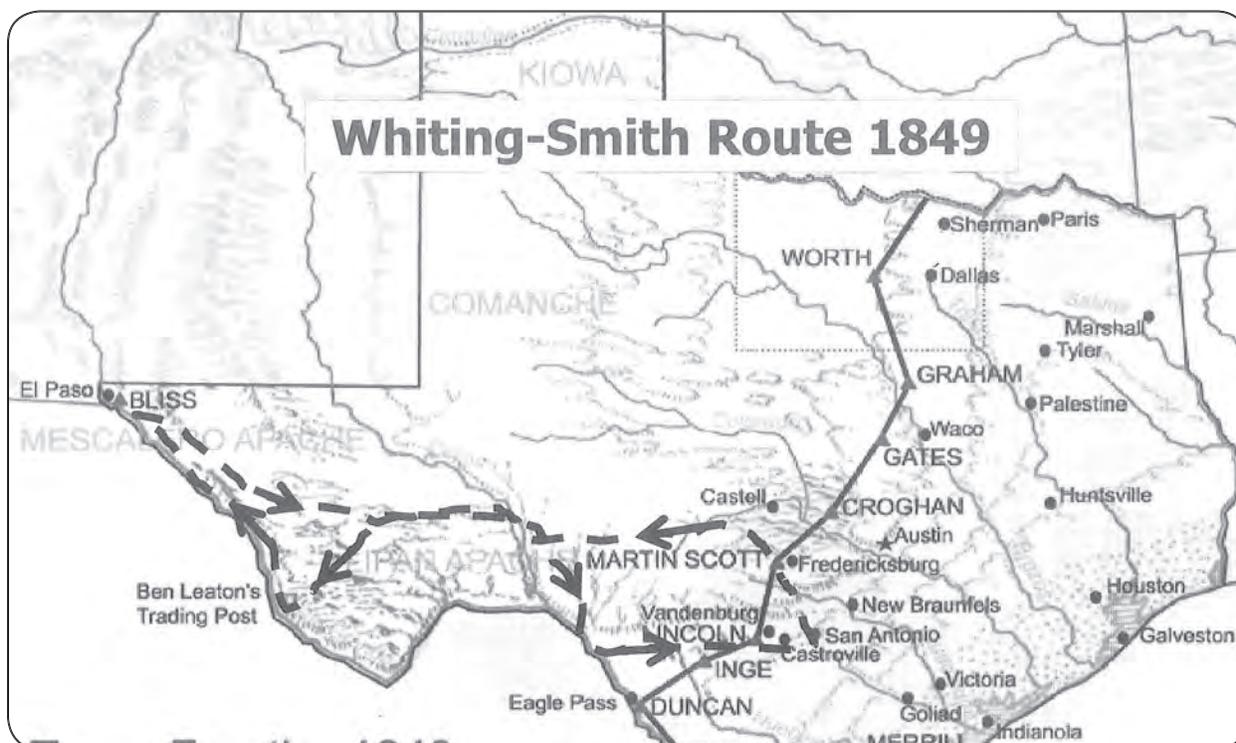
Prior to the Civil War, the lower road was used to transport mail. In 1851, Henry Skillman obtained the first contract to deliver mail from San Antonio to El Paso. In 1854, he formed a partnership with George Giddings. In 1857, Giddings became partners with James Birch to establish the San Antonio-San Diego Mail Line, which used the lower road as far

as El Paso. The Butterfield Mail joined the upper road in the vicinity of the Concho River. The initial route in 1858 followed the upper road through the Horsehead Crossing of the Pecos to the Guadalupe Mountains, Hueco Tanks, and El Paso, but it was quickly rerouted to go from Horsehead Crossing to Fort Stockton, from where it followed the lower road to El Paso.

The west Texas forts were all abandoned by both Union and Confederate forces during the Civil War, leading to an increase in activity on the part of the Indians. The forts were re-garrisoned after 1865, as part of the final campaigns against Apaches and Comanches. Wagon and mail services also were gradually re-established. In 1879, Lieutenant John L. Bullis established a shortcut from the lower Devils River to Fort Davis, which cut off the big loop up through Fort Lancaster and Fort Stockton; this new route was known as the New Military Road.

The San Antonio-El Paso Road went out of major use after the Southern Pacific Railroad was completed in 1883.

*The Editors*



When it left San Antonio, the Whiting expedition followed part of what became the upper road through Fredericksburg and across the Texas Hill Country. Whiting then travelled west, joining the Pecos River at Live Oak Creek where Fort Lancaster was later founded. From the Pecos the expedition travelled to Comanche Spring (later to become Fort Stockton) and then to the Davis Mountains. Following an encounter with hostile Apaches, they travelled southwest to La Junta, where Ben Leaton's trading post was located. From there, the group travelled up the Rio Grande, realizing that the terrain was too tortuous for a wagon road. About 100 miles from El Paso, they entered a plain where wagon travel became possible. On the return trip, the expedition followed essentially what became the lower road all the way back to San Antonio. The military road went straight to the Davis Mountains from El Paso, then through Fort Stockton to the crossing of the Pecos near Fort Lancaster. It crossed the high country between the Pecos and the Devils River, and then followed the latter river to the Rio Grande near present day Del Rio. From there it went east to San Antonio. *map courtesy Claude Hudspeth*

## The San Antonio-El Paso Road, 1849-1883: Sites East of the Pecos

*a photo essay by Claude Hudspeth*

“Scarcely a mile of it but has its story of Indian murder and plunder; in fact from El Paso to San Antonio is but one long battle ground.” Edward F. Beale, July 7, 1857

### Timeline:

August-December 1848: Hays-Maverick expedition.

February-May 1849: Whiting-Smith expedition.

July 30, 1852: Fort Clark established.

September 3, 1854: Fort Davis established.

August 20, 1855: Fort Lancaster established.

June 7, 1857: Camp Hudson established on the Devils River.

1857: Giddings and Doyle’s mail route between San Antonio and San Diego established.

1858: Butterfield Mail established.

September 28, 1858: Fort Quitman established on the Rio Grande.

March 28, 1859: Camp Stockton established at Comanche Springs.

April 1861: West Texas forts abandoned by Federal troops.

October 26, 1861: General Henry Hopkins Sibley leaves San Antonio with 3,700 Confederates to invade New Mexico.

1862: West Texas forts abandoned by the Confederates; stage lines ceased operating.

April 1, 1866: First wagon train after the Civil War from San Antonio to El Paso.

July 1, 1867: Fort Davis and Fort Stockton reactivated.

1868: Camp Melvin established on the Pecos River.

December, 1869: August Santleben began wagon train service to Ciudad Chihuahua, Mexico.

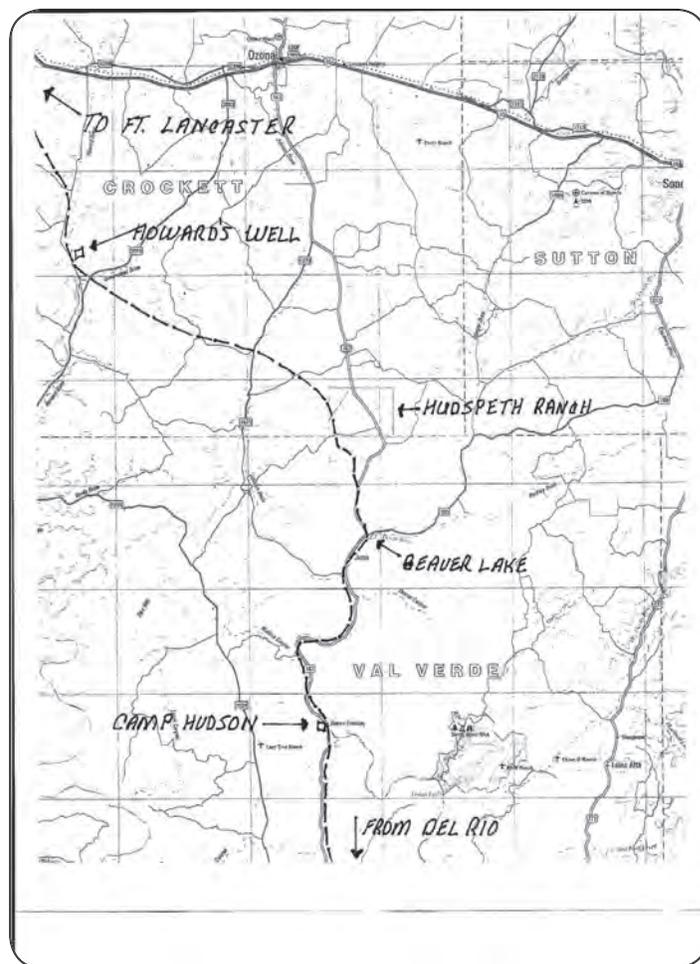
April 1872: Anastacio Gonzales’s train ambushed at Howard’s Well and all 17 men killed.

September 16, 1875: Indianola, the starting point for the Chihuahua Road, destroyed by a hurricane.

1879: New Military Road developed by Lt. John L. Bullis.

January 12, 1883: Southern Pacific Railroad completed near Langtry, Texas.

[Editors’ note: Claude Hudspeth is a retired airplane pilot who is the Region 10 Director for the Texas Archaeological Society and a steward for the Texas Historical Commission. He also serves on the board of directors for the Crockett County Historical Commission and Museum. He owns a portion of the ranch of his grandfather, Claude Benton Hudspeth, who was a noted west Texas rancher and politician in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The San Antonio-El Paso Road runs through the ranch. The images and text in this photo essay are taken from a talk that Hudspeth gave at a joint OCTA/El Camino Real de los Tejas NHT Association symposium in Austin, Texas, on April 27, 2012.]



Map of the route of the San Antonio-El Paso Road through Val Verde and Crockett Counties. The road turned east towards San Antonio in the vicinity of what is now Del Rio, Texas. To the west of Howard’s Well, the road climbed over a ridge and descended into the Pecos River drainage near Fort Lancaster.

**It was a road of many names:**

The Chihuahua Road  
The Whiting-Smith Road  
The Chihuahua Trail  
The Military Road  
The Government Road  
The San Antonio-El Paso Road  
The San Antonio-San Diego Overland Mail Road  
The Jackass Mail Road



Site of Beaver Lake Station.  
Destroyed by Indians in 1860.



Camp Hudson was on the Devils River in the upper central part of the landscape shown here. Its location was roughly 20 miles up the river from the Rio Grande.



San Antonio-El Paso Road on the Hudspeth Ranch.  
The fact that the road leads to a gate indicates that the road was still in use when ranching began.



Rocks lining the road on a portion of the Hudspeth Ranch in  
Val Verde County, Texas.



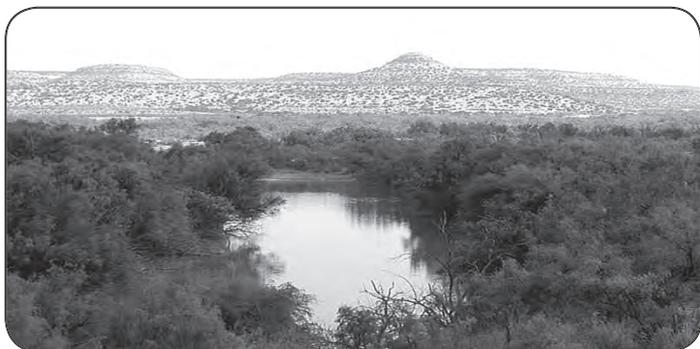
Unknown graves.



Wagon wheel grooves on the Hudspeth Ranch.

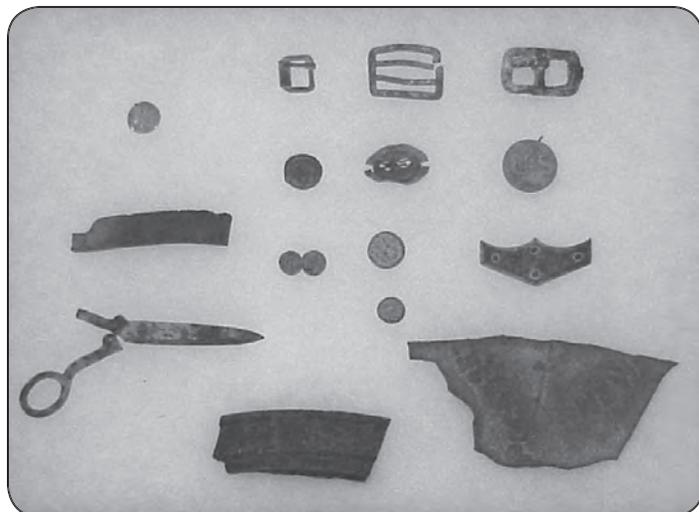


The ruins of Fort Lancaster.



The Pecos Crossing.

Artifacts in the Crockett County Museum in Ozona, Texas, that were found on the San Antonio-El Paso Road. The objects include an 1855 dime (upper left), buckles (top), buttons (center), a McLellan saddle ornament (center right), cooking utensils (bottom), and a straight razor (center left).



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## Howard's Well Massacre

by *Claude Hudspeth*

On May 1, 1872, the *San Antonio Herald* reported that the freighting firm of Adams, Wickes & Co. had received a letter from Fort Clark stating,

A Mexican train [was] captured by Indians at Howard's Well, on the 17th instant, and calculating the time that his train has been out, that it might have been that of Anastacio Gonzales. Immediately, on being informed, General Merritt detached in pursuit a company of Cavalry, Lt. Vincent in command, which overtaking the Indians a fight ensued which resulted in the wounding of the officer in command.<sup>1</sup>

Two days later, the *Herald* reported having received letters from several correspondents at Fort Clark.

These letters provided

details in all their horrors, and we can in truth say that never in the long life that we have spent on the Texas frontier have we any recollection of anything equaling in atrocity these barbarous murders at Howard's Wells, *nine persons burned at the stake.*<sup>2</sup>

On May 3, 1872, the *San Antonio Daily Express* published a letter from Mr. L. Largeost to Mr. L. Sarihages which in part states,

[U]pon arriving at Howard's Well on the 30<sup>th</sup> . . . there found that the Indians had been there and had taken the mules belonging to the train of Anastacio Gonzales of your City, had burned the train and all the freight to the ground, and killed him and all the party that was with him, except one woman and three men. The three men who escaped were badly wounded. The woman is suffering from distress, as her husband, child and mother were killed. The Indians took her prisoner and let her go. It was the most horrible affaire that has happened on this road, as the Indians fired the train and as they supposed, killed all the party, as they were found. They tied them in the wagons, threwed them in the fire and burned them alive – eleven in all – and left with their booty.<sup>3</sup>

August Santleben, a well known freighter on the Chihuahua Road, wrote of the incident in 1910 in his biography.<sup>4</sup> As he was returning to San Antonio, hauling salt from Juan Cordona Lake near the Pecos River, he was followed all the way to Howard's Well by Indians and had to remain constantly on

alert. Upon arriving at Howard's Well, he met the wagon train of Anastacio Gonzales, of whom he was well acquainted. He states the train consisted of six wagons. Santleben warned Mr. Gonzales of the Indians and cautioned him to be ever on alert. Upon arriving at Fort Clark, Santleben learned of the Gonzales massacre. He believes he was the last white man to see Gonzales alive.

In 1873, an essayist in San Antonio wrote that when the wagon train was captured by Indians at Howard's Well, the teamsters were tied to the wagons, which were then set on fire. One teamster was released when the flames burned off his hands. All but two of the others perished.<sup>5</sup>

The army's *Chronological List of Battles* gives the date (April 20, 1872), the two units of the Ninth Cavalry that were engaged (Companies A and H), and the place ("[n]ear Howard's Well, Texas").<sup>6</sup> Major General Hazen, in writing about this incident for the June 3, 1872, issue of the *Daily Express*, stated that 16 charred bodies were found at the site. He claimed that Comanches and Kiowa from the Fort Sill reservation were responsible for the attack.<sup>7</sup>

It is clear from the preceding that there is uncertainty as to the actual date of the massacre and of the actual number of persons killed. Santleben, one of our best sources of information about this incident, only



Howard's Well Massacre Site. *photo by Claude Hudspeth*



Howard's Well. photo by Claude Hudspeth

mentions Gonzales and that there were six wagons in his train.<sup>8</sup> It is not clear where Hazen's figure of 16 persons killed came from; it is in conflict with the statements in the *Herald's* May 3 article ("nine persons burned at the stake") and in the *Daily Express* May 3 article ("burned them alive – eleven in all – and left with their booty"). Numerous articles and books that were written later about the massacre also state that 16 were killed. There is a Howard's Well Historical Marker located at Fort Lancaster's visitor center which states the following: "There on April 20, 1872, Comanches and Kiowas surprised a large wagon train led by a man named Gonzales, and killed 16 persons." Perhaps this number originated with Hazen's article. It should also be noted that the date of the massacre on the Fort Lancaster marker, as well as in the *Chronological List of Battles*, is in conflict with the date April 17 given in the *San Antonio Herald's* article of May 1.

In *Three Roads to Chihuahua*, Roy L. Swift states that other than the above mentioned sources, "[t]here are virtually no other sources, so it has been impossible to make a valid assessment of the army's part in the matter or even to decide how many people were killed that unhappy day at Howard's Well."<sup>9</sup>

In 1942, the Crockett County Historical Society erected a steel cross about a mile north of Howard's Well to mark the site of the massacre. It was said at that time that some remains of the wagons were still present. Crystelle Childress, the present owner of the site, states

that when her father purchased the land in 1950, "there were old cans, wagon wheels, wagon bows and many wagon parts, where the metal cross is still standing today. This is definitely the place of the massacre." I have inspected the area of the cross and there are, in fact, metal artifacts in the form of hole-in-the-top tin cans and barrel hoop parts. I have not located anything that could be considered a wagon part. It is very possible that in the past – especially during the flood of 1954 – the remaining artifacts and graves of those killed were washed away. I see no reason to doubt that the steel cross placed in 1942 is in fact located at the massacre site.

Notes (For bibliography, see page 14.)

1. *San Antonio Herald*, May 1, 1872, 2.
2. *Ibid*, May 3, 1872, 2.
3. *San Antonio Daily Express*, May 3, 1872, 2.
4. Santleben, 143.
5. The essay by Sidney Lanier is included in Corner, *San Antonio de Bejar*.
6. A listing of battles from 1789 to 1902 titled "Chronological list of battles, actions, etc., in which troops of the Regular Army have participated, and troops engaged" is given in Heitman, 2: 391-474. The Howard's Well incident is listed on page 437.
7. Rister, 148-149.
8. Santeleben, 144-145.
9. Swift, 257.



Post-Civil War Stage Station near Howard's Well.  
photo by Claude Hudspeth

## The Quest to Locate Lieutenant Barrett's Grave

by Mike Volberg and Tracy DeVault

In late 1861 the Union army learned that Brigadier General Henry H. Sibley and his Confederate army were threatening to invade New Mexico and Arizona from Texas. The California Column, with Colonel James H. Carleton in command, was quickly organized and men and supplies were staged at the Yuma crossing of the Colorado River.

In late February of 1862, a company of Confederate troops totaling about 65 men under the command of Captain Sherod Hunter made their way to Tucson where they were welcomed by a large number of southern sympathizers. In California, Colonel Carleton received word of Hunter's operations in Arizona. Not knowing that Hunter had already arrived in Tucson, Colonel Carleton ordered Captain William McCleave, then in Yuma, to quickly proceed into Arizona and to capture Captain Hunter and his command when they entered Tucson.

For his part, Captain Hunter began to move west over the Overland Mail Road, capturing supplies intended for the forthcoming Union troops. In early March, Hunter's patrol arrived at Ammi White's mill on the west edge of the Pima Villages where they captured White and the supplies he was stockpiling. On March 6,<sup>1</sup> Captain William McCleave and two men, well in advance of the rest of his command, arrived at the White's mill.<sup>2</sup> Captain McCleave, unaware that the Confederates had moved that far west, walked into the mill unarmed and was promptly captured. Realizing that Union troops were not far away, Captain Hunter sent scouts west to destroy supplies at the Butterfield stations along the road. He then returned to Tucson with prisoners Ammi White and Captain McCleave.

In late March, Captain William P. Callaway was moving east from Fort Yuma with a command of about 250 men. On March 29, Callaway's command arrived at the Stanwix Stage Station where they camped for the night. During the evening, Captain

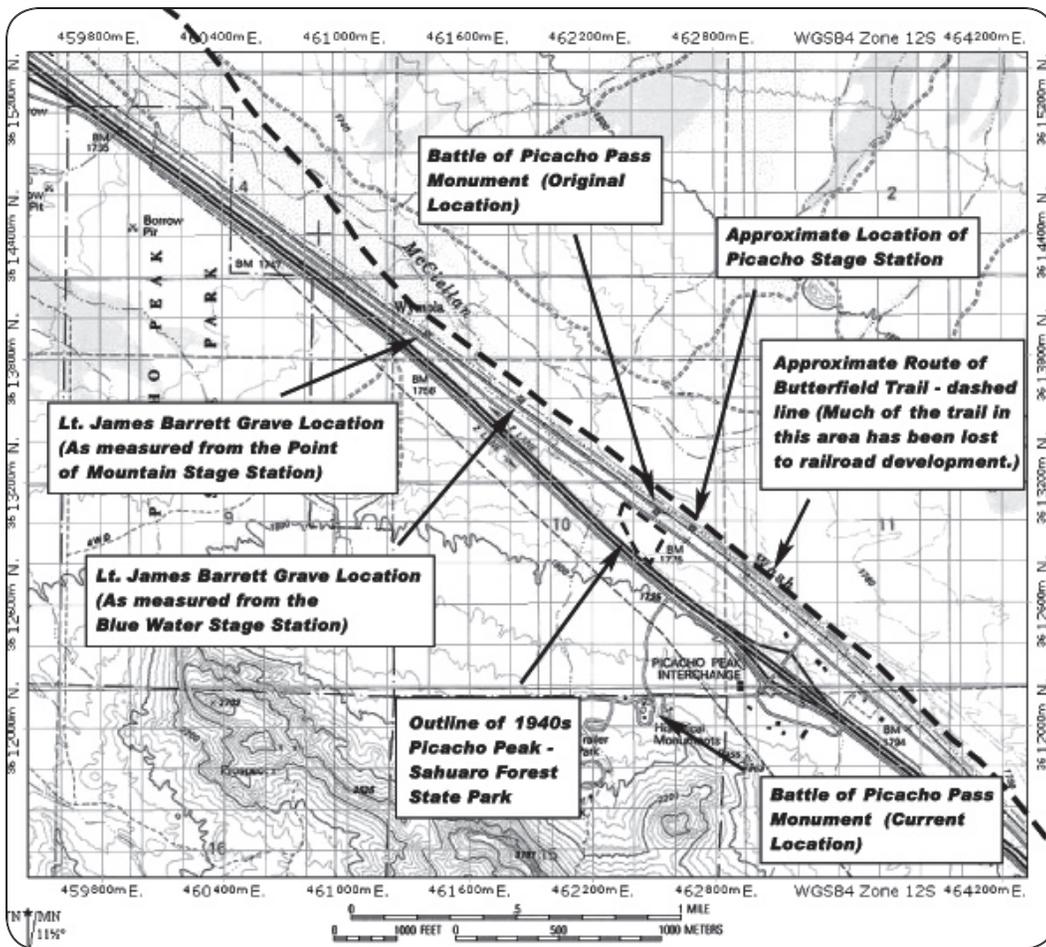
Hunter's scouts came upon Callaway's pickets. Shots were fired and one of the Union pickets was slightly injured. The Confederates quickly retreated to Tucson, leaving a picket guard of ten men at the Picacho Pass Stage Station. The stage was now set for the farthest-west battle of the Civil War.<sup>3</sup>

Captain Callaway advanced to the Pima Villages where he learned of the Confederate men stationed in Picacho Pass. He devised a plan to capture the Confederates such that none could escape back to Tucson. At Blue Water Station, 15 miles north of Picacho Pass, Callaway dispatched Lieutenant James Barrett and 12 men to travel east of the pass and approach the station from the southeast. Lieutenant Ephraim Baldwin and 10 men were to travel west around the pass and approach the station from the southwest. Callaway, with the bulk of the troops, would continue south along the mail road, cutting off any possibility of Confederate retreat to the north.

The plan might have worked but Lieutenant Barrett made two major mistakes. First, he did not wait for the others to arrive before starting his attack, and second, although advised otherwise, he insisted on attacking on horseback. After the battle, Lieutenant Barrett and two of his men were dead, three Union troops were wounded, three Confederates had been captured, and seven Confederates had made their escape back to Tucson.

The bodies of Lieutenant Barrett and Privates George Johnson and William S. Leonard were buried side by side near the road a mile north of the stage station. The graves, hastily dug, were not very deep and were covered with cactus to prevent the coyotes from uncovering the bodies.

This skirmish, now known as the Battle of Picacho Pass, took place on April 15, 1862. In the months following the battle, several thousand California Column troops, including Captain Richard H. Orton, passed the grave. Years later, after the advent of the Southern Pacific Railroad, Orton passed by the grave and said it was within 20 feet of the railroad tracks.



Map of the area near Picacho Peak. *courtesy Tracy DeVault*

Sometime after 1866 the bodies of the two privates were disinterred and reburied in the government cemetery in Tucson. No one knows why Lieutenant Barrett's body was not also reburied. In 1874 the two privates' bodies were moved to the newly established cemetery at Fort Lowell. Finally, in 1892, the bodies of the two privates were moved to their final rest at the National Cemetery in San Francisco.

In the early 1920s, Mr. H. M. Stone, a signal supervisor for the Southern Pacific Railroad, found a grave marker just west of the railroad track in Picacho Pass. The marker read:

LIEUT. JAS. BARRETT. and COMRADS  
CO. A. 1ST. CALIF. VOL. KILLED APR. 15,  
1862

Supervisor Stone decided something should be done to commemorate the site. He recruited several fellow railroad workers and the Arizona Historical Society (AHS). Plans were made to build a monument from

native rock and a bronze plaque was cast in the railroad shop in Tucson. In a 1961 newspaper article,<sup>4</sup> Mrs. George F. Kitt, then secretary of the historical society, recalled the installation of the marker base. "They were digging about three feet below the surface . . . then we saw fragments of cloth." Excavating around the find, they uncovered what appeared to be pieces of an old Army blanket. "Wrapped in the remnants were human bones."

One of the bones, pieces of the blanket, and the wooden cross were taken to Arizona Historical Society (AHS) where they remain today.

A cement base was cast directly over the grave and a tall, conical monument was built. The memorial was dedicated on April 15, 1928, the 66<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the deaths of Barrett, Johnson, and Leonard. In attendance were the Arizona governor, W. P. Hunt; state historian, Major George H. Kelly; Mrs. Kitt; and over 200 Arizonians. The photograph shown here was taken by Arizona historian and Medal of Honor winner, Will Croft Barnes. It appears to have been taken the day of the marker dedication.

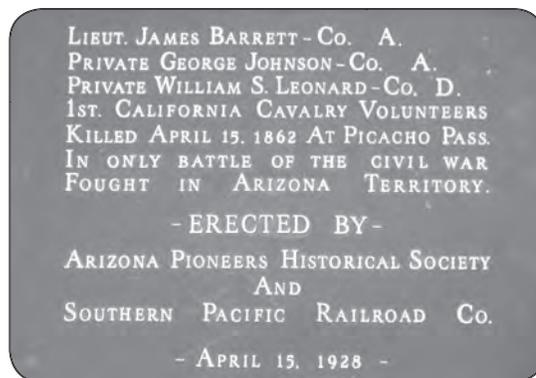
In the mid-1940s a small state park, known as the Picacho Peak-Sahuaro Forest State Park was built across the old highway from the monument. You can still see remnants of building foundations and two public drinking fountains within the old park boundaries. In 1975, the monument was moved to the new and much larger Picacho Peak State Park located on the west side of Interstate 10. There is a small area near the park entrance set aside for a memorial to the Battle of Picacho Pass.



Marker Dedication, April 15, 1928.

*photo by Will Croft Barnes*

(used with permission of the Arizona Historical Society)



ground. Also, the cross is made from modern milled wood and nailed together with modern nails. It is the authors' guess that the cross was not made to deceive people but was placed on the grave five to ten years before H. M. Stone found it. It was probably placed by someone that thought the grave was Barrett's grave. We were back at square one.

We (the authors) camped at the state park during the Trail Turtles' spring 2012 mapping trip and became interested in the Barrett monument. We thought that if we could determine the original location of the monument, we would know exactly where Barrett, Johnson, and Leonard were buried. We visited the AHS archives in March and again in April of this year. One of the things we discovered was the Will Croft Barnes photo. By comparing early topographic maps to a modern topographic map, we were able to determine that the old highway shown in Barnes' photo is now the modern frontage road that runs just west of the railroad tracks. We also were able to determine where Barnes was standing when he took the photo and the exact location of the monument.

Alas, our investigation also turned up some contradictory information.<sup>5</sup> First, several years after the Barrett monument was placed, a study was undertaken to investigate the items recovered from the grave. The blanket turned out not to be an army blanket and the bones were determined to be from a female aged about 25 years old. Also, even a casual examination of the cross found at the grave site reveals that it could not have been placed there in 1862. The only weathering visible is the bottom five or six inches of the upright, where it was placed in the

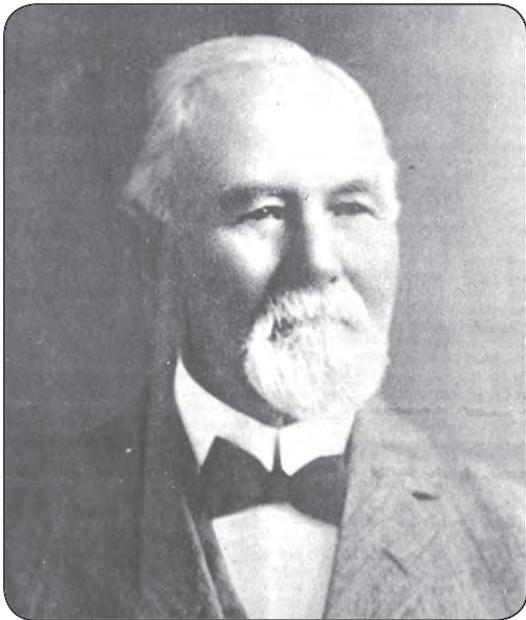
We learned from Gerald Ahnert's recently published book<sup>6</sup> that a Lieutenant John B. Shinn, accompanying the California Column east in 1862, had used a wagon odometer to record the distances along the Butterfield Trail of the stations and other important sites. One of the locations he recorded was the site of the Barrett, Leonard, and Johnson graves. Shinn gives the location as 13.9 miles south of Blue Water Station and exactly one mile north of the Picacho Pass Station. Using General Richard H. Orton's information that the grave was "within 20 feet of the railroad tracks" and knowing that the Butterfield Trail ran on the east side of the railroad tracks, we were able to come up with a pretty good guess as to the actual location. Actually, we have two guesses, since the distance south from Blue Water Station and the distance north from Point of Mountain Station do not quite match Shinn's measurements.

#### End Notes

1. There is confusion in the literature as to the actual date of McCleave's capture. The two dates most often given are March 6 and March 18, 1862.
2. When Captain McCleave moved ahead of his main command with nine men, he left seven of the men a

short distance from the mill. These seven men were also captured by Captain Hunter.

3. Some historians believe that the incident at Stanwix Stage Station was the farthest-west battle of the Civil War. It qualifies in that shots were fired and one man was wounded. However, it has come to be generally accepted that the incident at Stanwix Station was not an actual battle, and the Battle of Picacho Pass was the battle that occurred the farthest to the west.
4. A copy of this newspaper article can be found in the Arizona History Society, but no information as to the newspaper or the publication date is given with the copy.
5. Much of this additional information came from the online article "Battle of Picacho Pass, April 15, 1862," copyright 2000 by Arnold Franks, in *Military History Online* <http://www.militaryhistoryonline.com/civilwar/southwest/picacho.aspx>; see also "Myths and Fallacies of the Fight at Picacho Pass," copyright 2000 by Arnold Franks, *Military History Online*, <http://www.militaryhistoryonline.com/civilwar/southwest/myths.aspx>.
6. Ahnert, Gerald T. *The Butterfield Trail and Overland Mail Company in Arizona, 1858 – 1861*. Canastota, NY: Canastota Publishing Co., Inc., 2011.



Colonel Ethan W. Eaton.  
*courtesy Paul Harden*

proper justice by the local legal system. In addition to hangings, the Vigilantes also "invited" certain men to be on the next train out of town, or else. The first two or three hangings were performed at the corral at the Park Hotel; the others were hung from the famous "hanging tree" not far from the courthouse. The last hung was the outlaw Joel Fowler, reputed to have killed a dozen or more men. During his trial, jurors were found killed and intimidated. Not surprisingly, he was never found guilty. Later, Joel Fowler came to town, got drunk, and stabbed an innocent man to death. He was arrested and placed in the Socorro County jail. The Vigilantes broke him out of jail and hung him.

Eaton was a mining engineer by trade and indeed began building his now famous house [403 Eaton Street in Socorro] in 1881. In 1906, Socorro was hit with a swarm of earthquakes lasting over two years. Eaton reinforced his house with long threaded steel rods holding the walls together. Those steel rods are still seen protruding through the outside walls. As reported in the *Socorro Chieftain*, by 1910 Colonel Eaton was living and developing mining interests in the town of Rosedale [now a ghost town, 24 miles southwest of Magdalena, New Mexico]. This era of his life is relatively unknown, as there are no known extant copies of the *Socorro Chieftain* from 1912 to 1917. He died in his Socorro home in 1913.

It is said that Colonel Eaton's house was stacked to the ceilings with boxes full of his correspondence, papers, and memoirs. Due to walking on both sides of the law, he was secretive, but he left documents of his life, saving almost every letter, invoice, etc. These papers would have given insight into his life and filled in much about his "silent years." Unfortunately, when the house was sold in 1966, ending 84 years of Eaton family ownership, Colonel Eaton's papers destroyed, with no regard for the historical value that they held.

A longer article on this topic can be found under the title "Death of an Editor" on Harden's web page [www.caminorealheritage.org/PH/ph.htm](http://www.caminorealheritage.org/PH/ph.htm)

## Trail Turtles' Fall 2013 Mapping Trip: The Crossings of the Mimbres River

by *Richard Greene*

The fall mapping group consisted of Tracy and Judy DeVault, Richard Greene, Brock and Levida Hileman, Claude Hudspeth, Neal and Marian Johns (with their dog Dixie), Rose Ann Tompkins, Mike Volberg, Cam Wade, and Ken and Pat White.

Tracy, Judy, Rose Ann, Mike, Brock, and Levida spent three days prior to the mapping trip at the Geronimo Springs Museum in Truth or Consequences, New Mexico, where they examined the collection of papers and artwork of Keith Humphries (1907-2002), a local historian who had researched the New Mexico Butterfield stage stations and Butterfield Trail history in the 1930s and 40s. Humphries' family had donated his research materials and a large number of his paintings that depict events in southwestern history to the museum. Levida had discovered the collection while volunteering at the museum. [The Turtles' visit to the museum is discussed in the article on page 9 of this issue of *Desert Tracks*.]

### Wednesday, October 30

Following the spring mapping trip, several gaps remained in our mapping of the Fort Thorn Road. Tracy, Judy, Rose Ann, and Mike decided that it would be worthwhile to spend a day mapping there. Additional trail evidence was found in two areas but not much new trail was identified. The group did find a wagon staple. Any day you find a wagon staple is a good mapping day.

As Ken and Pat White traveled on I-10 towards New Mexico, they took some time to revisit a portion of trail north of the Pima County Fairgrounds near Vail, Arizona. Several Trail Turtles had spent two days mapping in this area after the Tucson symposium last March. The Whites added more information to what was done in March.

The plan was for the entire mapping group to meet in Deming at 4 p.m. Unfortunately, Tracy got his new 4Runner stuck in a sandy wash, which caused the Fort Thorn group to miss the meeting. The Whites and the Johns were also delayed. Topping everything off, our



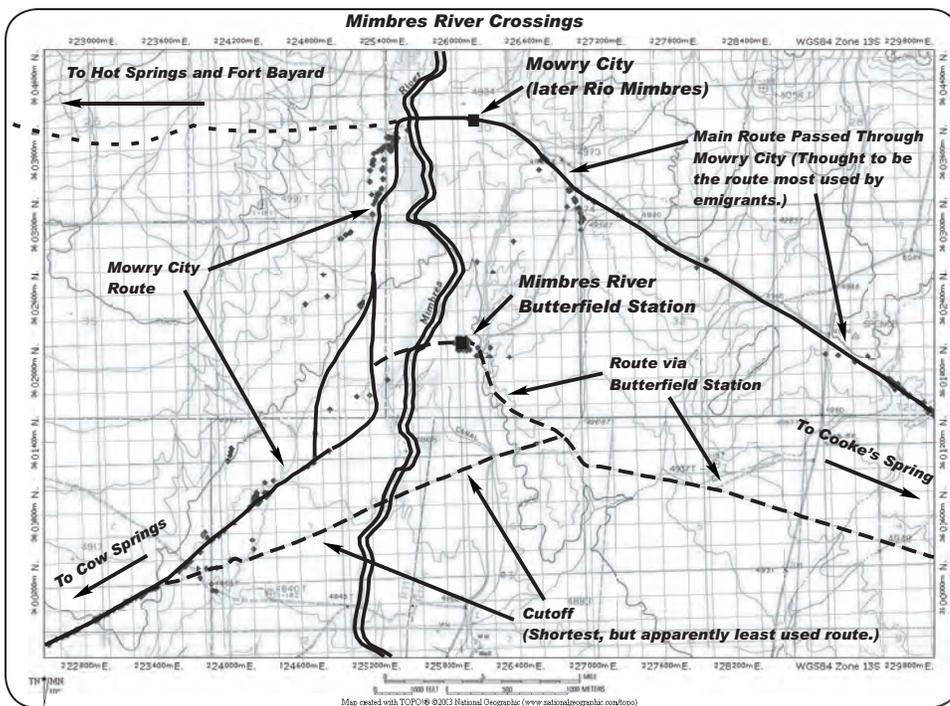
Wagon staple.  
*photo by Mike Volberg*

new member Claude Hudspeth had trouble connecting with those who had made it to the meeting on time. The meeting was delayed until 6 p.m. and afterwards part of the group stayed in motels in Deming while others spent the night at the City of Rocks State Park.

### Thursday, October 31

The group met at 8 a.m. at the junction of Perrin Road and Hwy 180, which is 15 miles north of Deming and about the same distance from City of Rocks. Our group now included Jane Childress and Jim Renn from the Las Cruces office of the Bureau of Land Management. Our plan was to map in the vicinity of the gravel pit where the Trail Turtles ended up on the spring trip.

From Perrin Road we drove north on Highway 180 to the gated road leading to the gravel pit. The road is maintained by the gravel pit workers who lock the gates at the end of their work day. On our last trip we were mapping several miles away from the vehicles when we received word by FRS radio that the gate would be closed within a half hour. It was quite a scramble to get back to the highway before the gates were locked (*Desert Tracks*, June 2013, 27). To circumvent this, Tracy used modern topographic maps to find a route that would allow us to drive directly to where we stopped mapping on the last trip. After a half an hour of driving over tire-destroying, circuitous two-track roads, he admitted that we were not going to be able to follow this route to where we needed to start mapping.



Area explored during the fall mapping trip. map by Tracy DeVault

While mapping on the west side of the Mimbres, we encountered a junction that suggested the possibility that this was where the trails from the multiple crossings came back together, forming one route leading to Cow Springs. Today, we would search for and map the crossing trails on the west side of the river and east of that fork.

Tracy broke us up into groups. The south branch went a little ways but was almost immediately lost in the gravel pit operation. The group following the northern fork was able to follow it to where it dropped off into the wide flood plain of the Mimbres. On this section we found rust, solder-construction cans, and broken glass. Jane Childress had not

The caravan of vehicles returned to the main gate of the gravel pit operation. Tracy and Mike went into the office and soon obtained permission from Jamie Alba, the gravel pit manager, for the group to drive through the gravel pit operation to where we would start mapping, near the north end of the operation. (There is a side story here. Tracy made a disgraceful attempt to extract payment from each of the rest of the Trail Turtles for his having obtained driving access to the trail. He was not successful.) We drove through the pit, dodging the trucks and bulldozers, and parked close to where we would start mapping on the west side of the Mimbres River.

Last spring we found a fork in the main trail east of the Mimbres River and we learned that there were several places, each separated by a mile or so, where early travelers crossed the river. The north branch of the fork led to Mowry City. It appears that the earliest crossing of the Mimbres was at the location where Mowry City was later established. This crossing was probably originally used by Indians and trappers and later by merchants, the military, and by a stage route (not the Butterfield) from the Rio Grande to the silver mines. The south branch led to two crossings, one that was fairly direct and another that led to Butterfield's Mimbres River Stage Station.

used rust rocks to follow old wagon roads before, but in no time at all she was finding the best rust specimens along the trail. She also found and showed us examples of Native American stone tools. Once the trail dropped into the flood plain we could no longer follow it. In general, in areas that have been flooded several times, the trail is difficult to locate. A possible third branch that came from this west-side junction and ran directly towards the Mowry City crossing was also investigated. Some trail evidence was found along this branch but not enough to definitely establish that this was the third route.

Tracy's group decided that as long as they had come this far, they would walk over to the Butterfield stage station site. This entailed crossing the Mimbres River, which was running several inches deep and twenty feet wide. Claude and Rose Ann drove from the gravel pit back to Perrin Road and around to the Butterfield station and then gave Tracy's group a much-appreciated ride back to their vehicles.

The highlight of the day's mapping was an iron ring that Rose Ann found. It appears to be part of a wagon wheel hub that is called a "boxing."

## Friday, November 1

The day was sunny and cool. At breakfast, we decided that we had completed most of what we wanted to accomplish on the west side of the river and our remaining time would be best spent mapping on the east side. We met at Keeler Road, which turns into County Road A008.

We quickly located the point where the Butterfield Trail crossed County Road A008. We split into two groups. Rose Ann, Cam, Neal, Ken, and Pat worked west to the corral and water tank called “Butterfield Windmill” on the topographic maps. Tracy, Mike, Brock, Claude, and Richard mapped east toward another tank and corral called “Butterfield Well.”

Rose Ann’s group found rust and other trail evidence including cartridge cases, square nails, and horseshoe nails. Ranchers do not appreciate having their cattle scared away, so this group stopped mapping about a quarter-mile east of Butterfield Windmill due to the fact that a number of cattle were hanging around the corral and water tank. This part of the trail is hilly but levels out onto a flat plain beyond the windmill. We planned to come back the next day to finish off where we were stopped by the cattle.

Tracy’s group was successful in finding rust and trail artifacts all the way east to the Butterfield Well, but beyond the well the trail petered out into sand, creosote, and mesquite bushes. The trail artifacts found included square nails, horseshoe nails, and cartridge cases. Three buttons, two of which were definitely military, were found together in a small area. It appeared that the county road heading east from Butterfield Well probably destroyed much of the original trail.

While the groups were out mapping, a rancher named Woods stopped by and talked to Levida, telling her what he knew about the trail. Levida took notes and got his contact information. He said his daughter owned Butterfield Windmill and remarked that the road to Cooke’s Pass was rough due to a recent big rain.

Back at the City of Rocks, Claude realized he had lost one his GPS units but believed he could find it again. We wished him good luck.



Rose Ann Tompkins, Tracy DeVault, and Mike Volberg, ready for mapping.

*photo by Judy DeVault*

## Saturday, November 2

The day did not start well. Ken had developed a cold, so he and Pat left for home early in the morning. Neal and Marian announced that they were also leaving. Neal had recently had cataract surgery in one eye. During the night Neal accidentally put Super Glue in his eye instead of eye drops. He quickly flushed the eye and then spent part of the night in the emergency room.

Fortunately, no permanent harm was done.

The remaining group met at the intersection of Keeler

Road and Highway 180. Tracy, Judy, and Mike went west to where we had stopped mapping last spring and worked east. Rose Ann and Cam parked west of Butterfield Well and worked west.

Claude, Richard, Brock, and Levida headed east to Cook’s Canyon to check out some graves. Just before they left, Claude searched the area where he had parked yesterday and, incredibly, found his lost GPS. Richard rode with Claude, while Brock and Levida followed. After some wandering they found the right road to Cooke’s Canyon. This area had experienced heavy rains and the 4X4 road that we had traveled a year ago was now a nightmare of jagged rocks and deep cuts. At the first washout, Brock



Boxing for wagon axle.  
*photo by Rose Ann Tompkins*

and Levida wisely turned around to join Tracy's group. Claude's big Ford 4X4 truck had ten-ply tires and high clearance. He was determined to go on as he had never been over this section of the trail nor visited the graves near Massacre Peak. Claude and Richard were eventually able to get through. They photographed graves along the way. However, they prudently decided to take the much longer but much easier way back, driving out past Fort Cummings, back to Deming over Highway 26, back to Keeler Road over Highway 180, and then traveling up County Road A008 and over the ranch road to Butterfield Windmill where they rejoined the other mappers.

Tracy's group had just finished mapping the trail segment west of Butterfield Windmill when Brock and Levida returned from their adventure in Cooke's Canyon. After lunch, Cam, Brock, and Levida left for home and Rose Ann and Judy headed for Deming. When Richard and Claude showed up from their long highway tour, Tracy, Mike, Claude, and Richard worked the trail segment east of Butterfield Windmill that was left from yesterday's mapping. By 2 p.m. they were finished.

Tracy and Mike wanted to see the adobe ruins that Richard had discovered on the last mapping trip. The ruins were west of the Mimbres River about two-thirds of a mile from the Mimbres stage station site. We drove to the area and then walked gingerly through knee-high thick

grass until we came to a mowed "road" that led us to the flowing Mimbres. We high-stepped across the ankle-deep Mimbres and, after a short walk, we came to the six-foot adobe walls of the ruins. There was plenty of debris. We also discovered a hand-dug well that was dry, 12 to 15 feet deep, and cased with stone. It appeared to us that this was an early homestead that probably did not date from trail days.

On our return to the vehicles, Richard and Claude disturbed a young, three-foot-long, rattlesnake. They walked right over it and may have even stepped on it. Tracy first noticed the snake rise up above the grass while he was still ten feet away. Even though his mind was shouting "Stop!" his legs were not getting the message and he got within about five feet of the snake before he came to a complete stop. The snake was obviously not happy. As we gathered around, he struck at us several times. Since he could only strike a distance of a foot, we were in no danger. Mike took several photos and we moved on. We splashed back across the Mimbres and walked back to our vehicles.

Deer hunting season was starting Monday and hunters were already coming into the area during the days we were mapping. It was a good time to leave.



Tracy DeVault and Mike Volberg work to get Tracy's car out of the sand.  
*photo by Rose Ann Tompkins*

**OCTA Southern Trails Chapter Spring Meeting  
Temecula, CA. March 27-29, 2014**

**“SOUTHERN TRAILS TO CALIFORNIA”**

Location and Co-sponsor: Temecula City Conference Center

**Agenda**

Wednesday Evening, March 26

Welcoming Reception at the Vail Ranch Restoration Association History Center

Thursday, March 27

8 a.m.-4 p.m. Presentations

Friday, March 2

8-12 a.m. Presentations

1-2:30 p.m. STC Chapter and Board Meetings

3-5 p.m. Tour of Temecula Valley Museum

Saturday, March 29

Tour of Historic Sites around Temecula.

**Speakers**

- Will Bagley - “Salt Lake to Southern California: Route and Travelers”
- Phil Brigandi - “Emigrants on the Southern Trails”
- Dennis Carlos - “Anza: The Man and his Route”
- Nick Cataldo - “Over Cajon Pass into the San Bernardino Valley.”
- Anne Miller - “When the Right Trail Goes the Wrong Way”
- Frank Norris - “Butterfield Overland Mail: Update and Status of Historic Designation”
- Tom Sutak - “Mormon Battalion: Yuma Crossing to San Diego”



The Southern Emigrant Trail crossed near this junction of Dripping Springs and Arroyo Seco Creeks, near Temecula, California.

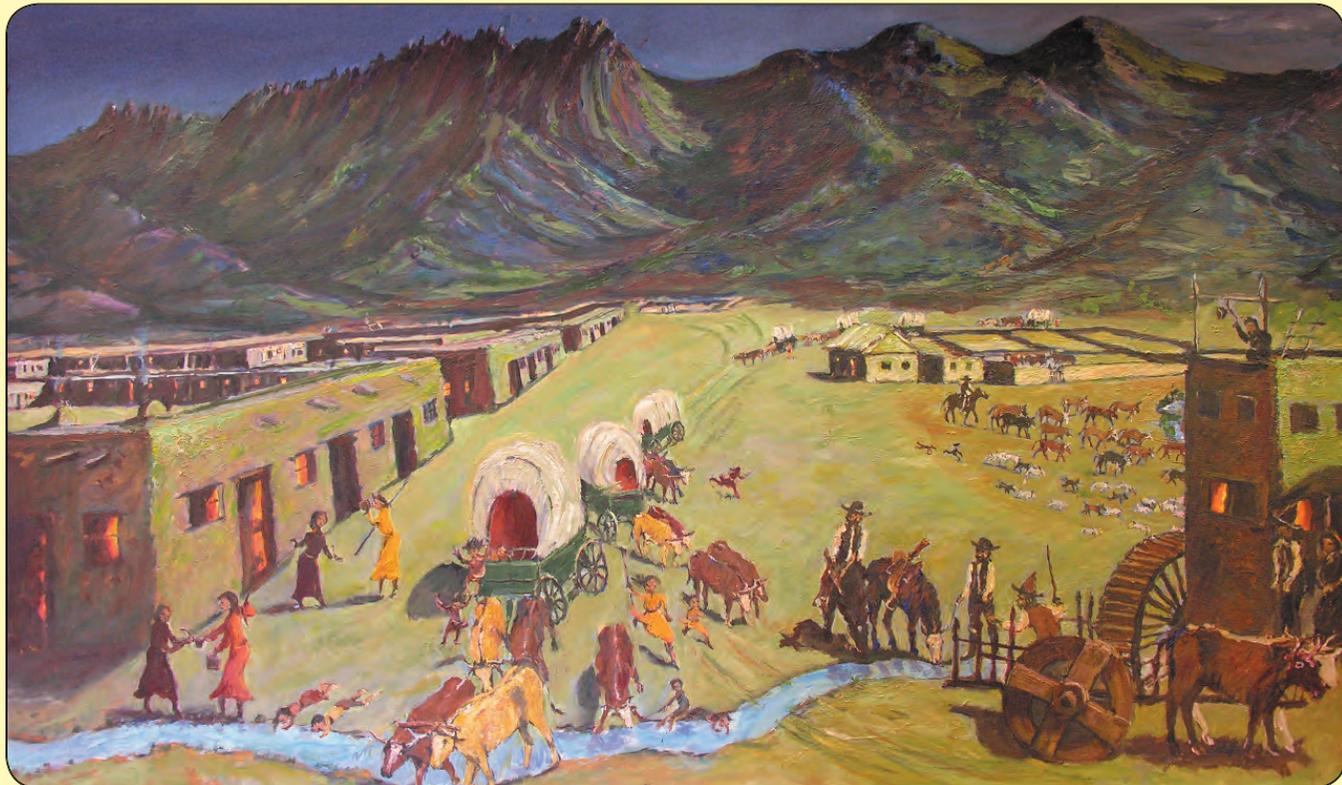
from *The Southern Emigrant Trail through Riverside County*, by Anne J. Miller (Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse, 2012).

# Southern Trails Chapter

Oregon-California Trails Association



**OCTA:**  
**The Oregon-California**  
**Trails Association**



## **“Then Came the Texans” -- A Painting by Keith Humphries.**

“Then came the Texans down Lohman St. in Las Cruces, NM, 1877, across the Water Street ditch to the Molina [flour mill]. The Davis wagon train enroute to Arizona and California follows behind.”

From *Apache Land From Those Who Lived It*, by Keith Humphries (El Paso: The Printing Corner, 1988)